



By Chris Komorek

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AFC takes in-depth look at emerging consumer trends



Delegates hear how brands can meet the ever-changing desires of Asian consumers

It is estimated that 37 per cent (US\$4.26tn) of global grocery spend will occur in Asia by 2023.

The need for businesses and brands to provide consumers with new experiences, such as convenient delivery services, close-to-home grocery pick-up points, interactive in-store displays and brand activations, is more important than ever in order to maintain consumer engagement.

One company at the forefront of new developments is Fruitday, China's leading fresh produce e-commerce platform.

Head of supply chain, Huang Jing, explained to delegates at the 2019 AFC session 'Retail and Consumers: Marketing Moves', how the company is finding new ways to innovate.

"Bricks and mortar stores find it difficult to take advantage of consumers wanting their fresh produce delivered," said Jing.

In 2017, Fruitday partnered with established brick-and-mortar fresh produce store, City Shop, and sales tripled, according to Jing.

"We were able to build on the trust we had already established with consumers through Fruitday, and transfer that to City Shop," she explained.

Identifying who the consumer is and how they go about their lives, is a vital part of marketing produce, according to founder of The Solution, Jerry Clode.

Clode highlighted three main consumer groups that brands could target when trying to promote its product: young professionals, midlife mavericks and super mums.

"Young professionals want brands to help them grow up by introducing a routine in their lives," said Clode.

"For this group, brands should provide an experience that can inspire."

"Midlife mavericks just want to be healthy and relevant; they don't want to make changes to their routine, but they are interested in the brand's story."

Brand activations, like half-marathons, work really well for this category of consumer, to the point where they are taking holidays around the world just to run in international marathons.

"Supermums are too busy to notice that they're busy. They always talk about themselves before they talk about their children. They want to pass on a better life for their children," he said.

"Supermums are particularly concerned about the environment and the impact their consumption will have on their children's future."

It's a different story in Japan, where consumers associate fruit consumption with an unhealthy lifestyle, due to the high levels of sugar.

Toshihiko Shoji is a leader of the

Functionality Evaluation Unit, a division

"This is thanks to the presence of

One such option is CityBox, a vending

<http://www.fruitnet.com/americafruit/article/1474/parts-of-san-diego-quarantined-as-psyllid-count-mounts>

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of Food Function Research of the Food Research Institute at the National Agriculture & Food Research Organization (NARO).

In 2015, NARO worked closely with the Japanese government to develop a food labelling system, Food with Function Claims (FFC), that aimed to inform consumers of the attributes contained in food, which also includes fresh fruit and vegetable, and to encourage consumption.

This led to the development of the Prime Apple! brand, which Shoji explained comes with guarantees that consumers can trust.

"We received FFC certification for Prime Apple! because we could guarantee consumption would reduce visceral fats and help consumers lose weight," said Shoji.

procyanidins in the fruit."

Although the price is slightly higher when compared to other apple products on the market, Shoji estimated 10,000 cartons would be sold by 2022, assisted by increased exports to Taiwan and Hong Kong.

To help encourage sales, NARO has developed individual packaging for each piece of fruit. The packaging helps consumers identify the apple from other options at the market, and also allows NARO to promote the FFC message.

Individual packaging also provides convenience for some consumers, which all three of the panellists agreed was an important factor.

Fruitday is working on a plethora of options that aim to meet different consumer requirements.

machine stocked by Fruitday that provides shoppers with products such as milk and eggs within one to five minutes, depending on location.

If a CityBox is not meeting KPIs or gaining consumer interest, Fruitday can move it to a new location and gain a deeper insight into consumer habits.

As consumer expectations develop and new trends emerge, businesses and brands must work proactively to maintain customer awareness and market relevance.