



FRUIT JUICE MATTERS



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1. Understanding Consumer Trends

In a previous article we touched on some of the global mega trends and mega brands. An **Understanding of Consumer Trends** is a key driver of marketing success. Of course, there are many expert analysts of consumer behaviour and the sheer volume of information and insights is difficult to comprehend and convert into a useful marketing framework. In this article I draw on some of the comments from Euromonitor International who developed an international overview of major global consumer trends.

- 1.1 Many of the trends are about consumers, facing a chaotic world, searching to take back control and asserting themselves. This has led to a focus on “back to basics”; concern about the environment; efficiency driven lifestyles and instant gratification; selective and intentional choices; and more.
- 1.2 Consumers are becoming sceptical of mass produced and generic products and are looking for simplicity and better quality with an implied level of status. They are searching for authentic and differentiated products and experiences. There is a strong move to local products with low environmental impact. The rise of craft beer is well known, but there is a strong trend to craft spirits such as vodka in the US and the rise in popularity of gin internationally. Have a look at the variety of craft gins available in SA - and maybe cider some day?
- 1.3 The negative impact of consumerism has led to a mindfulness of the well being of other human beings, animals and the environment. The increasing attractiveness of plant based foods has for instance driven the introduction of the “veggie burger” by selected KFC restaurants in SA.
 - Plastic pollution is a global problem. The statistics are alarming and emotive. The WWF reports that 8m tons of plastic are dumped in the ocean every year and 90% of seabirds have plastic in their stomachs. Plastic has become the preferred material for packaging (63%) for a range of reasons such as versatility, flexibility and durability. However the rate at which this vast quantity is recovered, recycled and re-used is far from satisfactory. This is exacerbated by our current “throw away society”. Indeed collection also does not guarantee recycling and in the US 70% goes to landfill.
- 1.4 People are living longer and no longer have a passive attitude towards ageing. They are taking better care of their health, appearance and well being and want to remain active and relevant. The extent of this market is often underestimated - for instance in Japan half of the population will be over 50 by 2025. Moreover, these consumers are higher average income earners than the rest of the population. Many are still working having reached senior positions or have inherited wealth - and this sector provides a profitable target group for marketing of discretionary purchases.
- 1.5 These trends have been supported by technology which has evolved from facilitating communication to enabling multi dimensional interaction and collective experiences.
 - The growth of the development and use of “APPS” is significant and is projected to continue in this trend. For instance 200m people currently use digital dating apps monthly and in the US more than a third of all marriages began digitally.

- Globally 45% of people share photos and videos weekly. Social media has given a new meaning to “word of mouth”.
- Internet retailing is on the rise as consumers search for hassle free and efficient procurement and delivery.
- Incredible access to a wealth of information allows everyone to become an expert, be more self-sufficient and to make wiser choices. In addition there are many educational and medical applications.
- The opportunities are boundless and this chapter is still in the writing (including some of the negative implications).

Whilst the above is especially true in developed markets, we can expect the same trends to follow in due course in developing markets like SA.

2. Non-alcoholic beverage trends

Drawing from a recent report from Foodbev Media, consumer awareness about both the environment and health are two important factors which are currently dictating the future of the beverage industry. Potential trends include

- **Functionality:** Consumers are seeking more from their drinks than hydration. This includes protein ingredients for many ready-to-drink beverages; vitamin enhancement and energy drinks; and an abundance of cannabidiol infused drinks.
- **Fermentation:** These fermented drinks are probiotic-rich and have become much more popular. Fermented tea and kefir drinks are examples of innovation.
- **Alcohol-free alternatives:** Consumption of alcohol globally fell in 2018. On the one hand this has led to the attractiveness of alcohol-free sparkling drinks aimed at adults. Popularity of Zero % beers is growing – some even infused with cannabis.
- **Personalization:** An example of this is a hydration platform which allows water dispensers to customize individual choice in respect of flavours, carbonation and temperature.
- **Sustainability:** The main focus of manufacturers currently is to ensure that packaging is made from 100% recyclable or reusable material in the future.

3. 2020 Juice Conference

Following on the very successful 2018 conference, the 2020 Juice Conference will be held on the 19th and 20th of May 2020. Details in terms of invitations, agendas, registrations, sponsors and any other related matters will follow in due course.

