2022

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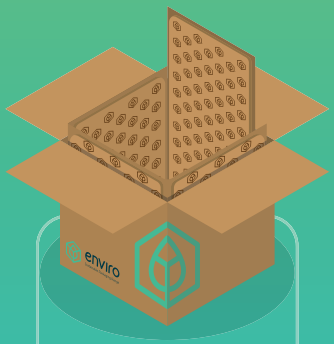
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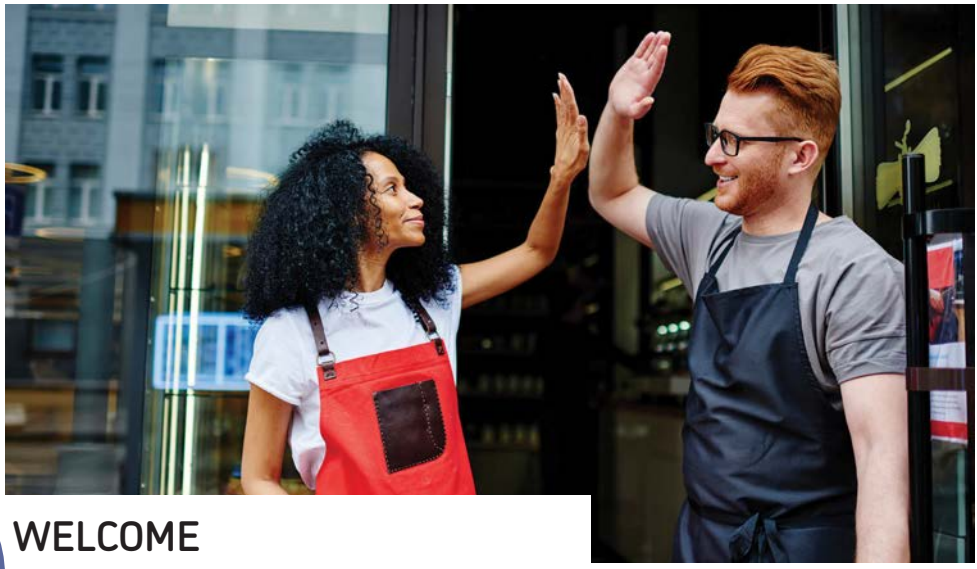
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WELCOME

Welcome to the 2022 edition of *Artisan Essentials*, brought to you by the team behind *Speciality Food*.

After the challenges of the past couple of years, there's never been a better time to evaluate your business, recognise the areas that could do with a boost, and get to work on improving them so that your business can perform at its best. That's why we've collated expert advice on a range of subjects including the sustainability opportunity, display, and what fine food customers want today – as well as highlighting a raft of the very best products on the market right now – so you have a toolkit to assist on your journey.

May you find it a useful resource in the months to come.

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COMING OF **AGE**

When fine food distributor, Cotswold Fayre, became one of the first UK companies to become a B Corporation in 2015, the principles and importance of the accreditation were not particularly well known or understood. But fast forward to 2022, and what a difference seven years have made



There's now a rapidly growing group of purpose-driven businesses that are redefining the way that business is done. The B Corp movement helps these companies to improve their social and environmental impact for all people, communities and the planet through its standards and tools, with the aim of creating an inclusive, equitable and regenerative world.

Today, there are more than 600 B Corps in the UK, across most business sectors, representing some 37,500 employees and a combined revenue of £12 billion. 103 of these B Corps are in the food and drink sector.

Gone are the days when making money was all that mattered with an increasing number of purpose-led companies putting profit, people, and planet on an equal footing. It is no longer good enough for businesses to just say what they plan or hope to do through vague vision or mission statements. Consumers are looking for confirmation that positive actions are actually taking place and actively seek out companies and brands that are doing just this. This has had led to the requirement for retailers to clearly sign-post ethical products. For example, online retailer Ocado now has a searchable 'aisle' just for B Corps.

As the first food wholesaler to become a certified B Corp, Cotswold Fayre leads the way in helping others within their supply chain to seek certification too. Paul Hargreaves, CEO of Cotswold Fayre, and B Corp Ambassador says: "Suppliers are eager to understand more about B Corp and how they can start to work towards accreditation themselves.

"From the outside, the process can look a little daunting. So, this year, we have launched a B Corp Accelerator Programme, working with suppliers to aid them in obtaining accreditation.

"While continuing to encourage all our suppliers to work with us to improve sustainability and lessen their environmental impact across packaging,



PAUL VITA, MARKETING DIRECTOR AT CROSTA & MOLLICA

famous for its authentic Italian products says: "Our business strategy and culture is very much aligned with the ethos behind B Corp, however we recognise that, quite rightly, obtaining accreditation requires rigorous evidence based assessment. "So, when Cotswold Fayre launched their B Corp support programme, we jumped at the chance to become involved. While it is early days, we are seeing the benefit of working with like-minded companies and specialist consultants on our B Corp journey."



PAUL HARGREAVES, CEO OF COTSWOLD FAYRE, AND B CORP AMBASSADOR

says: "The B Corp reassessment is a rigorous process and the absolute highlight of 2021 for me, was receiving a remarkable B Corp score of 107.8 (it was 84 on the two previous assessments). This makes us



product manufacture and logistics."

The newly launched Cotswold Fayre B Corp Accelerator Programme will run every three months, supporting up to ten suppliers on each course, with the aim of adding a further 20 B Corps to its list of 35 B Corp suppliers.

To certify as a B Corporation, a company must score over 80 points on the B Impact Assessment.

Clementine De Zotti, Impact Manager at Cotswold Fayre says: "The businesses on our programme are at different stages in their B Corp development but all have the same strong desire to become a better business.

"They are all committed to the B Corp ethos, and many are doing the right things but need assistance on how to connect what they are already doing with the certification process, and this is where we can really help."

Cotswold Fayre remains committed to making a difference through fine food.

within the top 5% of FMCG B Corp companies in the UK.

"This couldn't have been achieved without the complete commitment of everyone at Cotswold Fayre, with our constant positive change driven by our people. It was truly a great company-wide achievement and one we are all extremely proud of."



JO COLMAN FROM SUMMERDOWN

renowned for its fabulous peppermint products says: "As a family farm and business, sustainability and progressive environmental practices have always been at the heart of what we do.

"People are surprised when I talk about our 50-year business strategy, but when you are custodians of agricultural land, you have to think long term.

"We were confident that our business was a force for good, and that we were doing the right things to protect the planet but were delighted when, in November last year, we were accredited as a B Corp.

"Not only does it let consumers know that we are an ethical business, but it also means we are now part of a global business community all working towards the same goal."



DUNCAN KEITH CO-FOUNDER AT DAYS

launched the 100% beer, 0% alcohol business with B Corp accreditation firmly in mind: "I was very familiar with the fabulous ethos of B Corp through my previous work with Proper Corn, and so right from the start we set-up the business with the balance of people, planet and profit at the front of our minds.

"We applied for accreditation right away, and after the mandatory 12 months of trading, were delighted to be accredited in December last year.

"I am delighted with the recognition that B Corp is receiving and believe that for consumers, it is an excellent way to demonstrate how business is being used as a force for good and I look forward to more businesses qualifying for this valuable accreditation in future."

Cotswold Fayre now has 35 B Corp brands within its portfolio, that's fifteen more than last year, demonstrating the movement's progression

- Belazu
- Brew Tea Co
- Dash Water
- Days Brewing
- Divine Chocolate
- Doisy & Dam
- Dr Wills
- Ella's Kitchen
- Emily Crisps
- Flawsome!
- Freestar
- Graze
- Hattiers Rum
- Higgidy
- Innocent
- Jude's
- Little Soap Company
- Mrs Crimbles
- Nojo
- One Water
- Pip & Nut
- Proper
- Pukka
- Roddas
- Rubies in the Rubble
- Rude Health
- Scrumbles
- Stroud Brewery
- Summerdown Mint
- Teapigs
- The Cheeky Panda
- The Collective
- Tony's Chocolonely
- TrueStart
- Wilton London Ltd

COTSWOLD FAYRE*
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Rowcliffe

Clemency Hall brings quality, value and exclusive cheeses to the independent counter. The range of artisan cheese and fine foods is exclusive to Rowcliffe, and is full of character and made by artisan producers for the independent retailer. Products have been sourced from local producers in Britain and Europe, and include some award-winners. The collection also boasts a selection of the finest olives and antipasti which have been hand selected from the Mediterranean.
For retailers who have little space for stand-over deli counters or store staff, the Clemency Hall range provides the opportunity to still offer speciality and premium cheeses.

01892 838 999 sales@rowcliffe.co.uk rowcliffe.co.uk



Thursday Cottage

Thursday Cottage have been producing their range of artisan preserves in small batches for over 55 years. They hand pour the finished product into traditional glass jars to ensure that each jar is packed with as much whole fruit as possible to make a more flavoursome preserve. Thursday Cottage's range of Curds are their most popular products mainly because of how versatile they are when used in baking recipes – Lemon is not the only Curd! Contact their sales team with any questions you have, to order directly from them or to find a wholesaler who stocks their products.

01621 814 529 jams@thursday-cottage.com
thursday-cottage.com

Stag Bakeries

Featuring a choice assortment of their favourite savoury biscuits, the Stag Bakeries Cheeseboard Selection Box is ideal for gifting, sharing, or livening up any cheeseboard. This selection box offers a variety of flavours and textures, and the mini cocktail size of the biscuits makes them ideal carriers for a wide variety of cheeses, along with other toppings such as meats, fish and pâté. Contained inside the Cheeseboard Selection box are four varieties of water biscuits (Original, Parmesan and Garlic, Chilli, and Rosemary), along with traditional Scottish oatcakes and wholemeal biscuits, ensuring that there is something for every menu and occasion.

01851 702 733
sales@stagbakeries.co.uk stagbakeries.co.uk



Belvoir Farm

Look out for a new taste in the shape of low calorie Botanical Sodas from Belvoir Farm. From the depths of the garden, right into the glass, Floral Fizz, Bitter Orange Spritz and Spicy Ginger Fizz (each 500ml, £2.25) bring something deliciously different to adult soft drinks and low & no, with three distinct plant-based flavour profiles to make summer drinks pop. Inspired by nature and bubbling with botanical character, the sophisticated trio of non-alcoholic, sparkling sodas also delivers a healthier hit of hydration with less than 4.5g of sugar and fewer than 20 calories per 100ml.

01476 870 286 info@belvoirfarm.co.uk belvoirfarm.co.uk



4 WAYS TO BUILD A LOYAL AUDIENCE

Strengthen your customer base by unifying your brand message and offering the services and experiences today's shoppers crave



Fine food retailers are known for their excellent customer service – alongside shelves packed with brilliant products, of course. This means they're in a strong position to build a devoted customer base. Discover four avenues that retailers can explore to improve their on- and offline services and boost customer loyalty...

> "ALMOST A THIRD OF PEOPLE BELIEVE IT IS NOW MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER TO SHOP LOCALLY"

1 Refine your off- and online services

The e-commerce boom is showing no signs of slowing down, so independents will benefit from providing excellent online shopping experiences. But Tim Edwards, founder of supercharged commerce, explained that offering a top-class online experience alone won't keep customers loyal in the long term. "In our latest research, 63% of customers think it's still important post-pandemic for brands to have a physical as well as an online presence, with this figure rising higher when it comes to younger demographics. With this in mind, the route to success for ambitious retailers post-pandemic is consistent customer experiences across every channel. Customers' expectations are such that the norm is now for 360-degree views of their products, instant customer service, and omnichannel purchasing across devices," Tim said.

2 Provide access to unique experiences

As well as desiring a seamless shopping experience both online and in-store, customers crave new experiences tied in with their shopping trips. "In many cases, people are spending the money they would have spent on a trip abroad on experiences back home," Tim said. "This is great news for fine food retailers as they can often offer some of the culinary experiences customers would traditionally expect on holiday." From cookery courses, cheese tastings and meal kits all the way to pick-your-own events and on-site yoga offerings, there are a wide variety of ways that shops can master experiential retail. "It's a chance for fine food retailers to really create a point of difference from the big supermarkets and get customers spending again, as well as fostering a more loyal customer base," Tim explained. "Here, you could increase loyalty and customer spend by packaging up a series of themed offerings – a monthly 'evening with' night perhaps – and offering these to customers for a slightly discounted rate if multiple are purchased over the course of the year."

3 Shout about your local credentials

Local, artisan food products have seen an exciting boost during the Covid-19 pandemic as consumer demand for food and drink with provenance rose.



This is backed up by supercharged commerce's data, too: "Of those surveyed, 28% said it was more important for them to shop at independent retailers than it was 12 months ago," Tim said. "Almost a third also believe it is now more important to shop locally." Retailers with a strong local angle should shout loud and proud about the provenance of their products in their marketing and brand story. "Keep this consistent across all channels – whether that's in store, online, on social media or even in how employees are trained to talk about the business to customers," Tim advised.

4 Nail down your brand story

While building up new physical experiences and online channels, retailers must not forget the values of their brand. "Fine food retailers should be really careful to ensure that, regardless of the experience or channel, it properly reflects the quality of the brand," Tim said. "For example, if you've always offered a luxury, in-store experience, but your online food box turns up on a customer's doorstep plain and slightly battered, it'll reflect badly on your brand. Instead, think about tying everything you're doing into one central brand, with a centralised look, feel and tone of voice." Fine food retailers have proven their adaptability and grit over the pandemic, and with demand for local food and drink and experiential retail rising, it seems exciting times are ahead for the industry.

TAKING THE FIRST STEP

Jess Latimer, co-founder of The Grocery List, says that knowing your business's USP is the key to unlocking customer loyalty. "Consumers are fickle beings, and unless you're one of the global mega brands, attracting and retaining consumers must be your top priority. But first, understand what attracts your customers to your business in the first place. What is it about what you do and how you do it that sets it above your competitors? Whatever it was that initially wooed your consumers will keep them coming back for more as people want to engage with businesses they can relate to, feel understood by and who they generate personal connections with. Once you've identified your USP, it's far easier to build a customer base and to keep it loyal. Your consumer could be motivated by price, quality, sustainability or locality, and it's crucial to know how to attract them. Much like job-hunting: a scattergun approach rarely delivers the goods. Targeting is key. You have to identify who your customer is and the reason why they buy. Do your research and find out who is the decision maker."

Puréety Gourmet Flavours

Puréety makes life taste better with a huge range of tasty, high-quality seasonings and marinades, providing anyone and everyone with the skills to cook up restaurant-quality dishes at home! All of their recipe seasonings contain a shopping list and recipes inside the packaging, plus their website is packed full of recipe inspiration for your customers to enjoy. With a clean ingredient declaration, Puréety is proud to say that their products contain nothing artificial ever! Express your shelves with Puréety gourmet products.

01772 282 834 shop@pureety.com pureety.com





Drivers Pickles

Drivers Pickles, a fourth-generation family business based in Leicester, have added new products to their expansive range of gourmet pickles, relishes and chutneys. For 120 years, Drivers Pickles has been producing award-winning products and the introduction of Spicy Calypso Chutney, Caramelised Red Onion Relish and Bread & Butter Pickles into the range doesn't disappoint! Many products in the range are gluten-free, certified Vegan or Vegetarian and all packaging is fully recyclable. Starting off as a grocery store in 1902, Drivers Pickles has expanded their retail range and now supplies beautifully packaged gifts for all types of food lovers!

07489 061 906 press@pickle-lovers.co.uk pickle-lovers.co.uk

Thai Taste

The Thai Taste brand is all about authenticity, and it prides itself on bringing the taste of Thailand to the UK – giving shoppers the Real Thai Experience. Made with locally sourced fresh ingredients, that contain no artificial colourings, flavourings or preservatives, the Thai Taste product range has universal appeal. Flavours are fresh and delicious, colours are lively, and the recently redesigned packs are bold and strong – reflecting the vibrancy of Thailand and its cuisine.

0208 537 4080 sales@empirebespokefoods.com empirebespokefoods.com





Peter's Yard

Savour the crunch of these sourdough bites, made using Peter's Yard's signature sourdough starter that's slowly fermented for 16 hours. Crafted from Shipton Mill flour, they're hand-baked and generously seasoned with all-natural ingredients for a moreish snack. Available in three flavours – West Country Sour Cream & Chive, Suffolk Cyder Vinegar & Sea Salt, and Anglesey Sea Salt & Cracked Pepper – all of which are under 100kcal per 26g serving. The baked bites have 60% less fat than regular potato crisps and are a source of fibre. Available in 26g single bags, 90g sharing bags and in a new mixed 'display' case.

07968 803 781 matt@petersyard.com petersyard.com



WHAT FINE FOOD CUSTOMERS **WANT NOW**

New trends in consumer behaviour reflect post-pandemic desires and a growing sense of conscious consumerism

The fine food industry has spent the past two years attempting to grapple with the ever-changing ebb and flow of consumer habits during the Covid-19 pandemic. Tracking trends through consumer and market data, predictive analytics and expert recommendations, market researcher Mintel identified shopping trends to find out what consumers really want in 2022...

They want to be in control

In times of uncertainty, consumers crave a sense of control over their lives. "Feelings of precariousness and financial insecurity both created, and exaggerated, by the pandemic mean that consumers are looking for a sense of control over every aspect of their lives," said Simon Moriarty, director of Mintel Trends, EMEA.

With misinformation making it harder for consumers to make the informed decisions they crave, they will be looking for clarity, transparency and flexibility. "Brands will need to work harder to deliver reliable information and balance censorship and authenticity," he continued. This trend could lead to a growing desire for food and drink that caters for individual, personalised needs, for instance. In terms of services like online ordering and delivery, it could cause consumers to seek out more flexible options when shopping.

They seek enjoyment everywhere

After a tough two years, shoppers are ready to shake off their stress and get out into physical retail by embracing new experiences. "Consumers are seeking sources of joy as the continuing pandemic and other local and global crises have caused them anxiety and stress. Many may be feeling a kind of 'survivor's guilt' and, as a result, brands are recognising the importance of uplifting people by giving them

permission to feel happiness once again," Simon said.

For retailers, this could take the shape of in-store experiences or a more interactive and playful social media account. But, Simon warns, be aware of pushback to this in the form of consumers seeking "a more mindful approach to pleasure and enjoyment".

They're checking your ethics

Businesses have started to understand the importance of declaring their values loud and clear and speaking out on sometimes controversial topics. Consumers want to see more of this going forwards, and they want retailers and producers to be making measurable progress, too.

"Consumer demand for, and expectations of, brands' ethical commitments are evolving," Simon said. "They have moved beyond simply wanting brands to 'be ethical' and are demanding to see measurable, transparent and consistent actions from those they choose to support. Consumers will look beyond a brand's achievements and strengths; businesses will need to be transparent about their weaknesses, too, where and why they fail and how they plan to address these issues in future."

Creating an open line of communication with customers around issues like sustainability is key to this – and it can also offer independents ideas for how to change for the better. Data is also critical, however. Simon said, "If a company isn't properly measuring what they aim to fix or change, it's difficult to determine whether progress is being made, let alone communicate that progress in a way that consumers will understand."

These three consumer trends will change the landscape for fine food retailers once again, but by keeping newfound desires and habits at the forefront of their shop offering, independents will be best-placed to succeed in 2022.

> "CONSUMERS ARE SEEKING SOURCES OF JOY AS THE CONTINUING PANDEMIC AND OTHER LOCAL AND GLOBAL CRISES HAVE CAUSED THEM ANXIETY AND STRESS"



5 OPPORTUNITIES TO LEVERAGE NOW

SIMON LATHAM, A SENIOR MANAGER AT 4C ASSOCIATES, ON HOW TO SUCCEED IN THE 'NEW NORMAL'

1. Improving online margins

It is essential that retailers ensure that they are able to run their online business at an acceptable margin over the longer term, especially as competition and consumer expectations increase. To achieve this, retailers must undertake extensive profitability analysis across both products and customers.

2. Efficiency upgrades

Supply chain collaboration and outsourcing may be the key to driving higher efficiency and recruiting reluctant online shoppers could provide an opportunity to further scale operations and efficiency improvements, thereby increasing margins.

3. Right-sizing bricks and mortar

There are good opportunities to optimise existing space, without compromising store accessibility by forming in-store concession partnerships. This can drive new revenue, while also developing the customer experience and attracting new customers who would otherwise shop online or with competitors.

4. Retaining and attracting customers

Capturing, analysing and using data to better understand customer needs and create tailored sales and marketing strategies at a hyperlocal level will be key to improving customer service and retaining and attracting shoppers. It is important for fine food grocers to use loyalty schemes in ever smarter and more targeted ways to maximise market share.

5. Sustainability

If retailers can source food locally to support regional producers and minimise food transport miles, they can meet the growing customer desire to shop more sustainably. This can provide a point of differentiation with competitors and provide opportunities to create higher margin product ranges.



The Artful Baker

2022 sees The Great British Biscotti company transition into The Artful Baker, a lightly baked metamorphosis marked by a revamped, six-strong range, including four enhanced offerings: Triple Belgium Chocolate; Sour Cherry & Dark Chocolate; Smoked Jalapeno & Lime; and Sundried Tomatoes, Kalamata Olives & Oregano and two new arrivals: Salted Caramel, Pecan & Toasted Hazelnut and Fennel, Pink Peppercorn & Salt.

07715 322 868
paul@theartfulbaker.co.uk theartfulbaker.co.uk

Summerdown

Summerdown is best known for growing, harvesting and distilling their signature Black Mitcham peppermint on their family farm in Hampshire, creating their award-winning range of chocolates, teas and treats. But the bees and butterflies also love them for their rolling fields of aromatic camomile and they've now created a range of 100% plastic free restorative teas. You'll find a relaxing and soothing Peppermint & Camomile tea which is made from camomile flower heads infused with Summerdown's pure peppermint essential oil. Meanwhile, their mild and calming camomile tea is made from the floral camomile heads grown on the farm.

01256 780 252
sales@summerdown.com summerdown.com





Snowdonia Cheese Company

Snowdonia Cheese Company is a family business, founded in North Wales in 2001. Inspired by the lush greenery of beautiful Snowdonia in North Wales, they began by using fresh ingredients to craft natural, premium Cheddar and Red Leicester cheeses that married an extraordinary depth of flavour with a remarkable creaminess. They were an instant success in local markets and their multi-award-winning range is now enjoyed in over 25 countries around the world. Their newest launch Rock Star is a vintage Cheddar, aged in Welsh slate caverns in the heart of Snowdonia for a distinctively rich flavour.

01745 360 246 info@snowdonia-cheese.co.uk snowdoniacheese.co.uk

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Register free at
farmshopanddelishow.co.uk

William Reed.

This is a trade event. No under 18s will be admitted.



Olina's Bakehouse

Olina's Bakehouse is now an established brand in the speciality food market. Their Wafer Crackers are thinner than traditional crackers but remarkably robust with a subtle taste, lighter texture, and choice of flavours. The Double-baked Seeded Toasts are made with premium ingredients including real fruit, seeds and nuts and are also available with gluten-free variations. The Simply Seeded Flatbreads & Crackers offer consumers looking for free-from products a delicious seed biscuit snack to accompany soups, dips and condiments. They are vegan and keto friendly with any compromise on quality and taste. With unique flavours and ingredients, Olinas Bakehouse artisan products are perfect for home and casual-style entertaining, lunchtime desk snacking or alfresco eating.

07771 981 420 mash@gourmetpartners.co.uk gourmetfood.au/uk

HOW TO **STAND OUT FROM THE CROWD**

Discover how to optimise your business and catch the eye of your customers, even during an uncertain time



Business owners can underestimate the power of marketing, and when new challenges arise, it's often the first area that's put to the side. Although the worst of the Covid-19 pandemic has, we hope, passed, you never know when a new variant – or uncertainty of another kind altogether –could be around the corner. Investing in your business can help boost your brand image and increase your market share into the future.

Step 1: Have a marketing strategy

Marketing can help boost your brand profile. Petra Smith, managing director and founder of Squirrels & Bears, a marketing consultancy helping small businesses increase their brand visibility, tells us, "Relying on hope as a marketing strategy is never a good idea; it's essential to have a marketing plan in place. The already highly competitive environment will be even busier, and brands will have to really stand out to reach and attract their returning and new customers' attention. Uncertainty is high and cash is low, but keeping existing clients and fighting for the share of a smaller consumer base is more important than ever."

> "TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS BY TAKING CARE OF PEOPLE, INCLUDING CUSTOMERS, EMPLOYEES OR SUPPLIERS, WILL GO A LONG WAY"

Step 2: Create an engaged customer community

One key way to make your business stick out from the competition is by engaging with your customers and the wider community. "F&B brands play an essential role in a community, from the way they support local suppliers, to how they've been able to help the communities they're part of," explains Nick Coleman, CEO and founder of Snaffling Pig and Startup Logistics. "Covid-19 has brought about a real consciousness in supporting local, independent businesses, so the demand has sky-rocketed for smaller businesses.

"Engagement with your customer community has got to be at the heart of any marketing strategy," Nick says. "Covid-19 is a perfect example of this: while our in-trade revenue streams are on pause, our e-commerce sales were up 10 times compared to the same period last year. There's no way we could have pivoted so effectively to a direct-to-consumer model without that loyal and engaged customer community, who trust and believe in our brand."

Step 3: Build trust

Trust plays a huge factor in your brand's image and not only determines whether a consumer will purchase from you, but whether they will continue to come back and advocate for your brand through recommendations. In 2019, a survey by PR company Edelman of 16,000 consumers revealed 81% of people said that trusting a brand to "do what is right" plays a key role in purchase decision, whilst three-quarters said



they would continue to buy from a brand they trust, even if another one becomes "hot and trendy".
Build a relationship with customers to create a rapport, entice customers to stay engaged by keeping them updated through your online community and make the most of data to better understand their habits, values and desires.

Step 4: Watch trends

Trends have always played a big role in the food industry and continue to do so. Keeping an eye on these trends has the potential to put your business or brand ahead of demand, according to Natalie Orringe, head Of communications and engagement at the Institute of Development Studies. "Change in consumer behaviour has been driven by the impact of technology, including social media, that can cause patterns in food consumption to go viral. Whether it is the shift during Covid-19 to buying 'direct' from the farm or peak in demand for flour as people turned to home breadmaking, spotting emerging patterns is critical to accelerating growth."

Step 5: Communicate

Communication has been particularly important during the pandemic, from keeping in touch with customers to spreading a message about your brand's purpose, and doing well here will help to keep your brand at the forefront of people's minds. "Communicating with your customers and providing the best possible service, even during challenging circumstances, will impact how they see your business now and in the future," Petra says. "Taking care of business by taking care of people, including customers, employees or suppliers, will go a long way. They are all vital to your business, and they are also strong brand advocates, essential for your future survival and growth."

BUILD LOYALTY THROUGH EMAIL

1 Attract customer email addresses by offering something tangible, be it an exclusive discount or a special recipe, or tap into their desire to be part of something by inviting them to be member of a 'club'.

2 Look to your sales reports, check out the latest trends and think seasonally in order to make your words really speak to current – and new – customers.

3 If your website has e-commerce capabilities, it's worth stepping beyond weekly newsletters if you want to really maximise sales.

4 If you're spotting a trend for customers filling their online baskets then leaving your site without paying, consider sending them a polite nudge – it might be just what's needed to get them spending.

4 WAYS TO GROW YOUR BUSINESS IN 2022

What will the year bring for the speciality food industry? We discover indies' plans and expectations for 2022

We take a look at the plans shop owners are hatching for 2022, the trends they think will be top of consumers' minds and the expectations they have for another year of pandemic retailing.

1 Branching out to new business models

Considering testing out a new arm of your business? Now is the perfect time to turn your ideas into reality. The Norfolk Deli's managing director Mark Kacary said his shop is planning a brand new subscription service. "They come under the title of Norfolk Food & Drink Clubs, with a subscription service for cheese, cheese and chutney, Norfolk spirits, Norfolk beer, Norfolk wine and a monthly hamper subscription packed with local goodies.

"Customers can order these to be monthly, bi-monthly, quarterly or half-yearly. It's the gift that keeps on giving," Mark told *Speciality Food*. With hampers producing big sales for the business over Christmas – 2021 was The Norfolk Deli's best year ever in terms of hamper sales – it's also a good time for a packaging revamp. "First impressions are incredibly important, so we are designing a range of hamper boxes and outer boxes to take us a few steps closer to the Fortnum & Mason look and feel."

While the tactile elements of fine food retailing are always important, diving into the world of digital commerce can have a significant payoff too. For The Norfolk Deli, a big investment last year into the shop's new website platform came at a critical time, as online contributed around 35% of hamper sales. "We have really benefited from using the add-on apps that are available to manage data and to use that more effectively. This has improved how we market the business, how we talk to our customers and how we involve our online community with everything we do. We see this as the long-term approach that will see us ride out any future storms."

2 Keeping 'localism' alive through innovation

Local shops welcomed new customers in their droves during the pandemic. Two years in, will this hold up? Will Docker, co-founder of Balgove Larder in St Andrews, believes it will. "We're predicting that shoppers will continue to be loyal to local, having rediscovered the joy of cooking with speciality ingredients which aren't available in the supermarkets, incredible quality fresh produce and local meat from our farm shop and butchery counter."

The Covid-inspired local revival also led to a boom in staycations that was good news for fine food retailers. "Hopefully in the late spring and summer we will be welcoming international travellers as well as staycationers who have remembered just how wonderful a British holiday can be," Will added.

One of the attractions of independent retailers is their innovative spirit and ability to chop and change and try new things all in the interest of serving their customers. "We're looking for creative opportunities to expand and



grow during the new normal," Will said. "Last year we saw a huge demand for takeaway, and in the next few months we will be relaunching our Pizza Box and growing the offering."

With another busy year potentially on the cards for local retailers, looking after staff will also be key. "Maintaining staff morale and team happiness remains a top priority," Will told *Speciality Food*.

3 Building community, the Covid-safe way

Community is at the heart of speciality retailing, but Covid-19 disrupted socialising as we knew it. Retailers weren't deterred, however, and brands like Macknade forged ahead with Covid-safe plans that turned out to be a hit. "The pandemic has shown that coming together through food and drink is essential to both community and individual wellbeing, and we continue to believe in the power of food and drink to create, enrich and heal communities," said Shane Godwin, managing director. "2021 saw us open a new site in Tunbridge Wells, launch a brand new website to expand our online offering and develop our outdoor Food Village."

Also central to many retailers' plans for the year ahead is sustainability, and Macknade plans to lead the charge. Shane said the business will be "offering customers choices which both do good and feel good. We're constantly on the lookout for new initiatives to improve our sustainability as a retailer, without compromising on the premium quality of the products," he said.

4 Growing locally and further afield

While Covid and Brexit have caused bumpy waters for those looking to export their products, as the storm calms and we adapt to the 'new normal', international expansion is back on the cards. "This year we are looking to focus on establishing our brand nationally and in selected international markets," said Robert Hicks, co-founder of Ullapool-based Highland Liquor Company.

Yet the growth of 'localism' means that markets closer to home are more valuable than ever. "For the last few months of 2021, retail really shone for the business, and we're delighted to now be working with Fenwicks department stores and the Westmorland group, as well as many, many more fabulous independent retailers," Robert added. "This approach is one that will carry through to 2022 and we will be attending a number of trade shows to get out and meet people face to face again after a few years of virtual interaction."

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THE TRENDS TO KNOW **FOR 2022**

From the industry-altering food movements to the biggest buzzwords of the day, these are the trends that retailers can cash in on this year



Since Covid-19 hit, shifts in food and drink trends have accelerated, new desires have emerged and once-niche categories have gone fully mainstream. Understanding the top buzzwords of 2022 can only benefit your business, so strap in and read on to find out exactly what's set to sell in the year ahead.

6 food movements to watch

These six shifts are no flash-in-the-pan trends – they are redefining the food and drink sector as we know it.

1. FLEXITARIAN

In Whole Foods Market's latest Trends Council report, 'reducetarianism' was dubbed a top trend for 2022, perfect for "plant-curious eaters" who aren't ready to give up meat entirely. Stocking a good selection of vegan products is key, but on the flip side, the 'less but better' movement calls for higher quality meat, dairy and eggs too.

2. SUSTAINABLE

With shoppers ever more aware of animal wellness and environmental concerns, sustainable credentials are a sure-fire way for a brand to seal the deal. Waitrose's *2022 Food & Drink Report* revealed that nearly 70% of surveyed customers said the carbon footprint of their food was important.

3. LOCAL

The desire to support local shops remains strong, found a recent survey from payments firm Cashflows. It revealed 62% of Brits say they enjoy buying from independents, such as farm shops. What's more, nearly three in four are willing to spend up to 10% more on an item from a local provider versus the same item from a large chain.

4. CONVENIENCE

Convenience is back on the menu in the form of grab-and-go snacks and tasty ready-to-drink cocktails. Pre-mixed cocktails have shed their less-than-sparkling reputation as speciality drink industry brands revamp the category to ride the wave of premiumisation in drinks. It's certainly one to watch this summer.

HEALTH BUZZWORDS TO WATCH FOR 2022

The health trend has taken on a life of its own this year. With so many avenues to explore, here are five of the top trending health crazes to know:

- Immune-boosting food
- Gut health
- Adaptogens aiding anxiety or sleep
- Clean label
- Low-alcohol drinks

> "FROM TRADITIONAL SPICES LIKE GARAM MASALA AND CARDAMOM TO AMERICAN-STYLE BARBECUE RUBS, BRITS ARE SHOWING A GROWING INTEREST IN ADDING A POP OF TRAVEL-INSPIRED FLAVOUR TO THEIR DISHES"



5. INDULGENCE

The desire to treat oneself isn't going anywhere, although the products that individuals consider to be 'treat-worthy' has broadened. From 'conscious indulgences' like vegan and reduced-sugar chocolates to retro foods and wholesome, home-cooked meals, the scope of indulgence is wide, but one unifying quality remains the same: comfort.

6. HEALTH AND WELLBEING

NielsenIQ called health and wellness the single most powerful consumer force today. In a 2022 survey, the market researcher also revealed that mental wellness (65%) and physical wellness (63%) were the top two areas that consumers said would be most important over the next 12 months. These were followed closely by stress management, relaxation and sleep (59%).

5 TRENDING FOOD STYLES FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Travel restrictions over the last two years meant consumers had to get their international foodie fix at home. This broadened shoppers' horizons – and there's no going back now.

1. Japanese flavours

At Waitrose, sales of the retailer's own-brand Umami Paste were up 17% compared with 2019, while sushi sales saw a 54% increase. Consumers were also keen to try their hand at making their own sushi, with 2021 sales of sushi mats up 57% and nori sales up 56% compared to the same period in 2020.

2. Levantine food

The Levant, which comprises a large area in the Eastern Mediterranean, has become a mealtime inspiration for more and more Brits. Searches for Levantine on Waitrose's website rose by more than 2,500% last year, with products like pomegranate molasses, Turkish Urfa chilli flakes and Feta parcels flying off the shelves.

3. Korean fare

The rise of Korean food and culture has been no secret thanks to the success of the popular Netflix show *Squid Game*. Korean food trends like Dalgona, or sugar candy, have taken off. So too has gochujang paste, also known as 'Korean ketchup'. This Korean storecupboard staple is quickly becoming one to watch in the UK.

4. Ethiopian cuisine

We've known for decades Ethiopia produces sublime Arabica coffee, and now it's being appreciated for its cooking, too. Waitrose magazine named Ethiopia as one of its tastes of 2021. In September, online retailer Tastesmiths launched its Ethiopian curry kit. With bold flavours and new ingredients to explore, it's one to watch for home cooks.

5. Spice from abroad

From traditional spices like garam masala and cardamom to American-style barbecue rubs, Brits are showing a growing interest in adding a pop of travel-inspired flavour to their dishes. In fact, sales of herbs and spices at Waitrose were up 41% last year after a strong 2020. Top performers in this category include Middle Eastern spices and speciality salts.

STAFF TRAINING **101**

Matthew Pinto-Chilcott, owner of Consensus HR and an advisor at Enterprise Nation, explains how to successfully implement employee development





DO

Firstly, decide what type of development you wish to use to get the best results dependant on your company sector, culture, product and facilities. The four most common formats of development are: class-based workshops, learning on the job, learning externally, and one-to-one mentoring.

Once you have decided on the format you wish to use, you must cover off the following points:

- Ensure you write a clear, comprehensive overview of the development which includes:
- Title of the course
- Who is the course aimed at?
- What are the benefits of attending the course for the employee and organisation?
- Course syllabus: what will be covered on the course?
- Training format: presentation, group discussion, group exercises or Q&A session
- Objective: what is the objective of the development?
- Review – reviewing the course prior to it taking place and once it has taken place to ensure it covers all the areas you have identified the need for

> “ALL EMPLOYEES SHOULD FOLLOW THE COMPANY RULES, AND YOU MUST ENSURE THEY ARE FULLY AWARE OF THOSE RULES AND MANAGE APPROPRIATELY IF THEY DO NOT FOLLOW THEM”

Location: Ensure you have a suitable location for the training to take place. Is it going to be on the job and in the kitchen or in a training room? Is it going to be away from the workplace?

Tools: What tools will be needed to run the development? Ensure you have pens, paper and any other tools that will be needed and used. If using a PowerPoint presentation, print out handouts of slides and the information used.

Workbook: Write a workbook for the course, with a main heading and a place for delegates to write notes during the development if needed

Learning styles: Remember that everybody learns in different ways and ensure that you are covering all the different learning styles such as Visual, Auditory and Kinesthetic.

Evaluation: Plan and manage with the delegates when you are going to review the development to ascertain if it has made a difference to what it was aimed to achieve or if it needs amendments.

Sign, date, further information: Ensure all delegates sign and date to confirm they have received the development and know where to go to find out further information if needed.

Development folders: Provide all delegates with a professional folder where all the information from the day is collated for use in the future, if needed.

Confirm understanding: Ensure throughout the development that you are continually discussing the subject whilst gaining feedback from the delegates on their experiences.

Standards: Make it clear that if the company has set standards for achieving the workshop topic the delegates are informed of this and know where to find them if needed.



On the job: Plan the safest and most practical spot to do the development, where all the tools are available in a friendly, accessible area and be of minimal inconvenience to the team and business. Ensure the person developing the employee is a member of your team that demonstrates the correct attitude and behaviours required by your company.

Mentoring: Consider who within the team would be best to mentor the delegate in best procedures, health and safety measures, and if applicable food hygiene procedures.

DO NOT

- Ignore any delegates' comments or suggestions.
- Ensure you do not do death by PowerPoint and continually go through slides and read from the screen.
- Rush the development.
- Make the assumption that everyone learns the same way.
- Forget health and safety, and where important locations such as evacuation points and toilets are.
- Forget the tools required to run a successful development workshop

HR FAQ

Q: We have a member of the team that continually turns up late and it is now causing team and operational problems with the running of the shop. What can we do? Can we sack them?
A: In the first instance, informally discuss the issue with the employee on a one-to-one basis and have examples of when the issue has occurred to hand. Find out if there are any mitigating circumstances and explain to them that you will be monitoring it over the next week. Based on what they have told you and events that occur during that week, next follow up with the employee and take any action – if needed – to solve such as support, change in hours or disciplinary action. Employers need to ensure that they carry out a thorough investigation prior to any disciplinary measures taking place to ensure a fair process for the team and business.

Q: How long does a new starter have to be working before they are given a copy of their Terms & Conditions?
A: All employees should be given a copy of their T&Cs by day one of employment so that they can fully read them and gain an understanding whilst asking any questions if needed.

Q: How do I handle ever-changing employee legislation?
A: I advise that you speak to a HR consultant or visit the Government's ACAS website to find out what the current law is in relation to employees.

Q: Do I have to agree to part-time working?
A: If an employee is already employed for set hours/days and have been employed for 26 weeks or more, they can put in a flexible working request. Requests can only be placed once a year. Employers should consult with their employee to fully identify what the employee is requesting and to ensure all areas are covered for the company and individual.

Q: How do I handle maternity leave?
A: There are a number of procedures, processes and letters that need to be drafted during the maternity period. Letters congratulating them on the baby, letters asking them when the estimated week of confinement is, letters outlining their statutory rights from maternity leave to time off for antenatal appointments. These are just a few of the requirements.

Q: What counts as a disability?
A: A disability is if you have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities, and reasonable adjustments must be made. Employers need to ensure that should they be informed of a disability that the correct action is taken or it could result in a claim to an employment tribunal.

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Award-winning Cambrook Nuts are specialists at baking, seasoning and caramelising the best grades of nuts. Their savoury nuts are baked (not fried), either for salting or for seasoning with original recipes of spices, herbs and flavours. Caramelising is skilfully done in traditional continental roasting pans. It's a slow, gentle process and one that gives the nuts their unique taste and sparkle. Available in 45g, 80g and 140g packets along with glass jars and gift sets, Cambrook has the perfect range to suit all requirements. Their recyclable packaging roll out continues apace, with most products switched from single use plastic to recyclable by the end of 2022.

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REFRESH YOUR DIGITAL BUSINESS

E-commerce was a lifeline for many when the pandemic hit in 2020. Two years later, how can retailers find success online?



There's never been a better time to up your online game. Shoppers are spending more time online than ever before, and on all sorts of platforms – from e-commerce sites to social media and beyond – so it makes sense to boost your assets while the iron's hot.

A strong online presence will boost your business in more ways than one. Not only will it provide a new, profitable arm to your retail establishment, but it will raise the profile of your business beyond your immediate area; potentially attracting new locals as well as consumers from further afield to check out your wares.

Social media, too, is worth an investment of time (and potentially funds). Its various platforms offer a wealth of community-building opportunities for any food business. With that in mind, we've gathered exclusive information to help you boost your business's presence on the internet and excite existing – and potential – customers.



3 WAYS TO BOOST YOUR DIGITAL PRESENCE

RETAILERS' TIME IS PRECIOUS, SO WE ASKED MARK SMITH, SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGIST AND CONTENT PRODUCER AT DOUBLE UP SOCIAL, WHICH THREE ASPECTS OF E-COMMERCE THOSE WHO HAVE A TIGHT SCHEDULE SHOULD FOCUS ON

1. Run social media ads. Set up a simple Brand Awareness or Video Views ad using the Facebook Ads Manager and get your brand in front of people who don't already follow you – and be responsive to those who interact with the ad.

2. Focus on creating engaging stories and Instagram Reels. On Instagram, Reels currently have the most generous organic reach, meaning there's a higher chance one of your reels may go viral. If your audience is on TikTok, utilise this channel too for some quick brand awareness if done right.

3. Be active and create conversations on social media. It does wonders in increasing your social presence. (It's called social media for a reason!) Using polls, questions, memes, etc, all help drum up conversation around your brand, and are often a good way to encourage your audience to tag and bring in new people to your community.



Where to start?

Think about how easy it is for customers to navigate your bricks-and-mortar store. Now translate that to online to ensure that shoppers can easily find what they need. Ensure that images of stock are visually pleasing and that product descriptions are clear and concise. In-store customers have the option to ask questions, so compiling a list of FAQs or adding a live chat function could help to close sales.

Running a bricks-and-mortar store alongside an online shop requires laying good foundations. Choosing an e-commerce platform is the first stage. There are plenty out there, such as Wix or Shopify, that give you everything you need to get started on a budget and provide all the checkout functionality needed. An important element to keep in mind is that the physical store and online shop need to reflect one another and work together, for example sharing a similar aesthetic and brand message.



CREATING A LOYALTY SCHEME

HARRY DANCE, HEAD OF DIGITAL MARKETING AT KAYO DIGITAL, EXPLAINS WHY NOW IS THE TIME TO TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR DATA

A big item on your to-do list for 2022, if you haven't already got one, is to create a loyalty scheme.

Since new privacy regulations and increasing pressure from consumers to provide more protections for online data, third-party cookies [which help websites remember your information] are being phased out. Google said they'll be removing cookies from 2022.

What does that mean to you and me, other than our own personal details will become more secure? It means targeted advertising will become harder, using data you do not own will become less effective, the data you do own becomes increasingly valuable and the more data/relationships you have with your clients the better.

The outcome of this to your business means you should value your current customer and connections that much more. This is where a loyalty scheme should kick in. Loyalty schemes allow you to:

- Talk to your clients regularly
- Improve sales
- Allow sustainable growth
- And – most importantly – build a community you're responsible for and own, saving you money on advertising and making growth future-proof in a world where third-party data is starting to disappear and owning data is increasingly valuable

Ciaran Bollard, CEO of Kooomo, says it's key that all the pieces of the digital commercial puzzle come together within the customer journey: "Retailers should look for a platform that is flexible enough to handle the seasonality of catalogue management so that products and images can be added quickly, pricing can be adapted in line with stock levels and promotions can be easily managed."

STEP UP YOUR DIGITAL PROWESS WITH OUR EXCLUSIVE, FREE GUIDES

Learn tips for your digital shop with *The Ultimate Guide To Online Retail*, and discover how to reach your online potential with *Mail Order Masterclass*, available via specialityfoodmagazine.com



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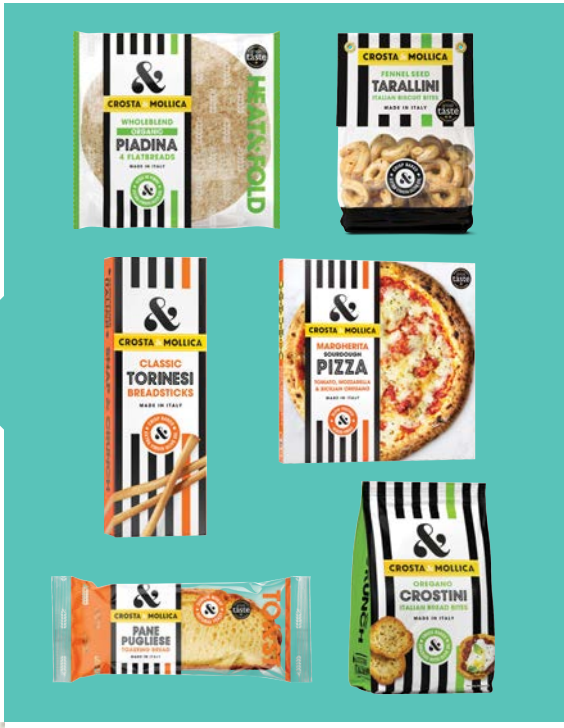
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CHIMILOVE

At CHIMILOVE, a unique range of plant-based South African condiment sauces, the team lives and breathes natural flavours. They balance fresh, natural ingredients to create a great selection of sauces that are packed to the brim with unique South American flavours. The sauces are produced in the UK, and because they care about the planet, all CHIMILOVE products are packed sustainably. They also donate profits for every jar they sell to plant trees around the world with the foundation, Just One Tree. The CHIMILOVE range includes a delicious variety of chimichurris, spicy Aji sauce and Chimichurri & Mayonnaise to offer customers the ultimate condiment sauces that will elevate any dish.

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GROW YOUR BASKET, **GROW** YOUR SALES

Catherine Erdly, founder of The Resilient Retail Club, explains the importance of increasing your average spend – and how to do just that



An important tactic for increasing revenue is improving your average basket spend, also known as average transaction value (ATV).

Making the most of every customer that comes into your store can have a profound impact on your bottom line. If each person spent 15% more, then your sales would increase by 15% with no additional footfall needed.

> "ARE THERE SIGNS, OR OTHER WAYS YOU COULD CONVEY PRODUCT INFORMATION IN-STORE TO ENCOURAGE THE PURCHASE?"

Growing UPT

Units per transaction is an average of the number of items purchased in each sale, so if you sold 40 items across five transactions, your units per transaction would be eight (40 divided by five).

One of the keys to driving units per transaction is excellent customer service. Proactively making suggestions to customers about ways that they can pair food items is a simple way to drive your UPT. Do you have recipe suggestions that introduce new and exciting products to customers, and also encourage them to purchase more items?

Store display has a role to play in growing UPT. For example, putting crackers next to cheese on a display encourages additional purchases. If you are offering in-store samples, try putting multiple items together so that the customer is encouraged to buy not just the main item but the accompaniments as well.

Till points and queue lines are also important when it comes to building UPT because this is where you can maximise any last-minute pickups. Consider alternating what is on your till point according to the season and try to find the item that the customer is most likely to pick up. Even if each customer buys one extra item that is just £1, over time this incremental improvement will have a major impact on your bottom line.

Growing ASP

The other key element that has a major impact on your ATV is the average selling price or ASP. For example, if you generated £500 across five transactions that included 10 items then your average selling price would be £50 (£500 divided by 10).

Customer service again comes into play. Higher priced items often will



require more input in order to sell them. For example, fine wine may need an explanation from a knowledgeable staff member to help with the sale. Ensure that your staff are fully trained and confident with selling higher priced items.

Think also about the information that you have in the shop to allow the customer the confidence to buy some of the more expensive items by themselves. Do they have enough information about the features and benefits of those products? Are there signs, or other ways you could convey product information in store to encourage the purchase?

Bundles

Bundling products together is a powerful way to grow your ATV. For example, putting together a lunch hamper that pulls together multiple items and is easily purchased by the customer.

When deciding on the types of bundles you want to offer, it is important to start with the customer in mind. Focusing on this type of offer from a place of service ensures that they work well for your customers and make their lives easier. Bundles work well for gifting – people are often time-poor, so if you've pulled together a selection of items that they can easily gift then that will be highly appreciated.

Bundles can be linked to money off, for example offering all of the items needed to make up a certain recipe with a 10% discount off the cost of the items purchased separately. However, bundle offers don't always have to be based around discounts – especially when they are about ease of shopping for the customer.

> "IT CAN TAKE TIME TO SEE PROGRESS, BUT KEEP EXPERIMENTING AND OVER TIME YOUR BUSINESS WILL REAP THE REWARDS"

Other elements that impact ATV

Returning customers spend more than new, and people who shop with you across multiple channels, for example your website and your store, will also spend more. Part of your drive to increase your average transaction value should focus on increasing the loyalty and the number of customers who come back and buy from you more frequently. Do you have a loyalty programme or an email newsletter to encourage repeat purchases?

You can also trial promotions that target ATV growth, such as a gift with purchase over a certain amount, discounts for buying multiple items, free shipping in your online store, or a "bounceback" voucher where spending over a certain amount means a voucher to spend in store next time you visit. It's worth trying these to see what helps push the ATV, but don't feel like promotions are the only way to grow this number.

Once you've made the decision to grow your ATV, decide where to start and then monitor the ATV, UPT and ASP on a monthly basis. It can take time to see progress, but keep experimenting and over time your business will reap the rewards.

WHAT MAKES UP THE AVERAGE TRANSACTION VALUE?

Your ATV can be calculated as the units per transaction (UPT) multiplied by your average selling price (ASP). So if you sell three items per transaction on average, and your average selling price is £10, your ATV will be £30 (three multiplied by 10).



PUTTING ON A **SHOW**

Artful display can make all the difference when it comes to seasonal profits, finds Ellen Manning

We eat with our eyes, as the old saying goes. But the effect of what we see on what we do doesn't end there. From wanting something to buying it, eating it and enjoying it, everything we consume comes back to that first time we see it. Especially when it comes to food. Which is why display remains key when it comes to selling us that food. For visual merchandising professional Iain Kimmins, director and chair of the British Display Society and a former visual merchandising manager at both Harrods and Selfridges dealing with the food hall and wine department, the phrase "You don't get a second chance to make a first impression" is key. Iain now runs his own VM Consultancy, the Creative Download, and for him display is more than being creative and making things look nice. "It is a commercial driver for the business," he says. "Re-merchandising, store layout, fixtures, product categories/ product adjacencies all come under the visual merchandising remit. The store is where the action is. The need to create exciting stores, driving sales through marketing, merchandising, store layout, retail theatre, graphics and VM sites."

"Given the increase of online shopping, retailers must step-up and draw customers back into their stores with great visual merchandising and retail theatre," Iain says. "Even food can look sexy!" He cites food halls at Fortnum's and Selfridges as great examples of retail theatre, adding, "Presenting your merchandise is more than just putting the item on a shelf. It's creating a stunning environment ensuring that your merchandise looks premium and giving the customer that all-important memorable shopping experience."

Whether you're an internationally renowned food hall or a local deli or farm shop, the importance of display is the same. "It's how you set yourself apart from your competitors, draw customers in and ultimately increase sales", says Rob Coutts, managing director at Weetons Food Hall in Harrogate. Tori Stanley, owner of award-winning Derbyshire-based Tori & Ben's Farm, agrees. "Display is the window

– it's everything. Louis Vuitton makes beautiful bags, we make beautiful meat. It has to look amazing because people buy with their eyes. Whether it's the counter in the farm shop or sending things from the online shop, it all has to look beautiful. Meat is meat – it's not a Louis Vuitton handbag, but it can be beautiful if it's displayed in the right way. So we spend a lot of time on it. At Christmas we do special displays, but I think we're always 110% on our display whether it's Christmas or not."

A window into your store

When it comes to display, windows are the most obvious option for retailers big or small. "Your windows and storefront are the face of your store," says Iain. "They are the cheapest form of advertising and one of the most important elements of your store." For Eve Reid, visual merchandising specialist at consultancy Metamorphosis, changes in the retail landscape mean a window into your shop is far more than the piece of glass on the front of the building. "Your window isn't just a traditional window anymore. It's basically any window where your customer looks into your business. Be it Instagram, Facebook, your windows – it's every sort of visual touchpoint."

For many fine food retailers, display isn't about choosing one aspect but several combined to maximise the opportunity to encourage customers to buy. "We generally rely on our two large window displays, a feature table upon entry and, of course, how the product is displayed on the shelves/stands," says Coutts. It's also about balancing eye-catching displays with making sure people know where they can find their favourites and staples, says Stanley. "You have your promotional table top which is seasonal and 'look at me' but if people want to go and get their horseradish they know where it is and there's no fuss."

When it comes to display, language also plays a part, says Rich Ford, strategy director at Sherlock Studio. "It's about how you can inspire people, which means using an engaging, exciting tone of voice. I think for a long time it was overlooked but Covid has made tone of voice really, really important and it's becoming a differentiator as well. It's a part of your branding, it's a brand asset, your tone of voice, how you feel and come across on social media."

> "YOUR WINDOW ISN'T JUST A TRADITIONAL WINDOW ANYMORE. IT'S BASICALLY ANY WINDOW WHERE YOUR CUSTOMER LOOKS INTO YOUR BUSINESS. BE IT INSTAGRAM, FACEBOOK, YOUR WINDOWS – IT'S EVERY SORT OF VISUAL TOUCHPOINT"

Less is more

"Visual merchandising is all about creating something out of nothing," says Iain. "An experienced visual merchandiser can help drive sales by creating anything from a bay of own-branded products to creating a simple table of products with a few display props to gain height and interest." Iain' pointers include thinking about available space and fixtures, as well as keeping tables well stocked, encouraging customers to walk around them by using different products. For him, remembering that "less is more" is an important lesson. "It is not a requirement to fill every inch of space. Leaving empty floor space gives the customer breathing space on their eye." Reid agrees, advising: "Don't try to show everything. If it looks rubbish, take it out."

DISPLAY 101

DO

- Make sure your display is eye-catching, colourful and visual
- Price everything – people like prices
- Change your displays regularly

DON'T

- Put items you want to sell too low or too high so people can't see them
- Leave off prices
- Overcrowd your displays
- Be inconsistent across your different displays

Peter's Yard

Peter's Yard combines Swedish tradition with British craft and natural, quality ingredients to create their hand-baked sourdough crackers. Each batch begins with their 45-year-old sourdough starter, which is fermented for 16 hours for a unique, subtle flavour. Peter's Yard's baking tradition is inspired by 16th century Sweden when crispbread was baked at harvest time and preserved on a pole over fires to keep crisp during the long, dark winter months. Made in their craft bakery in London, every product in the range is crafted without shortcuts or artificial ingredients for award-winning flavour and crunch.

07968 803 781 matt@petersyard.com petersyard.com





Walker's Nonsuch Toffees

Family company Walker's Nonsuch have been making quality toffee since 1894 using good ingredients such as whole milk and butter. With traditional slow cooking methods, the taste and chew are second to none. The range includes toffee bars, bags, slabs and a unique gift range. There are 14 varieties of twist toffees and chocolate eclairs including favourites of Liquorice, Salted Caramel, Mint and New Coffee Toffees. Each toffee is wrapped in a metallised film. Toffees come in 150g and 2.5kg bags, and in 450g and 1.25kg jars. All the toffee is free from artificial colours, preservatives, hydrogenated vegetable oils and gluten, too.

01782 321 525
sales@walkers-nonsuch.co.uk
walkers-nonsuch.co.uk

Gourmade

Gourmade's founder, Jo, wanted to give her family high quality, delicious home-cooked food, but she also needed more convenience. She began experimenting with batch cooking and freezing her family favourites. When this was a success, and she realised how many other people had the same aspiration, Gourmade came to be. Jo and the team have worked hard to develop their recipes. Each one is made with love and care, using quality ingredients, and frozen from fresh.

0845 241 1568
julia@gourmade.com gourmade.com



HOW TO **MAKE YOUR BUSINESS A FORCE FOR GOOD**

Times are tough – for individuals as well as businesses. But giving back this year could bring an unexpected boost to your shop

In the UK, a record 2.5 million food bank parcels were given out between 1st April 2020 and 31st March 2021, a 33% increase on the previous year, according to the Trussell Trust. And despite easing Covid restrictions, around 70% of foodbanks, charities and community causes were worried about not having enough food to support those in need over the 2021 festive period, a survey by Neighbourly found. A shocking 92% of 600 charities surveyed said they expected last Christmas to be the busiest ever.

With the cost of living rocketing – inflation has risen to 5.4%, the highest since 1992 – it's an important time for communities and the businesses within them to come together.

> "IF YOU DON'T TALK ABOUT YOUR BUSINESS VALUES AND HOW THAT SHAPES YOUR BUSINESS, IS THERE A DANGER THAT YOUR POTENTIAL CUSTOMERS WILL THINK YOU HAVE NOT GIVEN IT ANY THOUGHT OR COMMITMENT?"

How giving back boosts business

Giving back is something that comes naturally for many independent retailers. "Helping the community is one of our most important values here at Bayley & Sage," Andrea Araujo, communications officer at the London-based deli business, told *Speciality Food*. It's one of many businesses that have recently partnered with a charity in order to give back in some way, however big or small.

Rob Amar, MD of RH Amar, which has donated more than £1.5m to 70 charities over the past decade, agrees. "Put simply, it feels like the right thing to do – but more than that, it is an extension and reflection of the values we hold as a business." As well as being part of a founder's personal mission, partnering with causes can boost a business' internal culture, increasing staff loyalty. In fact, a survey by Score revealed that 93% of employees who volunteer are happy with their employer. "We know that it's important to our colleagues, who not only help us choose the charities we support each year, but who also participate in our Employee Volunteer Days – spending time helping charities close to their hearts," Rob added.

Giving to a charity or cause is good for business too – especially in a world where consumers are in search of places to shop that match their own values. Research by Nielsen found that instead of donating money to causes they care about, shoppers under the age of 40 prefer to give back through where they shop.

These desires to support communities from a grassroots perspective have already driven the local shopping movement over the last two years, but small businesses, whether retailers, wholesalers or producers, can also increase loyalty among their 'tribe' by aligning themselves with a cause that's



important to them on a personal level, such as tree planting or supporting a local food bank.

While attracting new customers is hardly the reason any small business decides to give back, it's something that your business should certainly be shouting about. "During the last few years more consumers have become aware of the power of choosing where they spend their cash," food consultant Jane Milton told *Speciality Food*. "If you don't talk about your business values and how that shapes your business, is there a danger that your potential customers will think you have not given it any thought or commitment?"

It's certainly a question worth considering as small businesses are, in fact, big givers. Research by Score revealed that SMEs donated 250% more than bigger businesses to local charities and community causes, and 85% of customers had a more positive image of a business if they give to charity. The traditional season of giving may be over, but for small businesses, building community spirit through volunteer work, collaborations and charitable donations offers a year-round opportunity to become a force for good.

SMES DONATED **250%** MORE THAN **BIGGER** BUSINESSES TO LOCAL **CHARITIES** AND **COMMUNITY** CAUSES, AND **85%** OF **CUSTOMERS** HAD A MORE **POSITIVE** IMAGE OF A **BUSINESS** IF THEY GIVE TO **CHARITY**

SOURCE: SCORE

HOW TO **TAP INTO THE EXPERIENCE ECONOMY**

Being strategic with the experiences you curate could really pay dividends, discovers Anna Blewett



Coined in 1998 to describe the era that would follow the agrarian, industrial and – most recently – service economies, the phrase 'experience economy' relates to the way businesses can curate memorable experiences for their customers, with these memories forming part of the product. Fine food retailers – with your heritage-drenched products, skills for storytelling and the sounds, smells and flavours that inhabit the shop floor – are perfectly placed to benefit from consumers' hunger for authentic experience. So says Sandra Mardin, strategy director for TRO, the 'shared experience agency' that helps clients meet their business goals by harnessing the power of memorable moments both live and online. "Historically, before the world of mass consumerism, market places were not only places of trade but also centres of social life," points out Sandra. "The exchange of goods and trade is inherently a social activity, but over time the focus has been moved to convenience and the boom in mobile technology means people now go online for their transaction. Recent history has pushed physical retail into this social shared experience space. That means the bricks and mortar stores have to work harder to get people to come in, and can't just be a place of transaction."

> "WHEN PLANNING YOUR ACTIVITY YOU NEED TO THINK WHAT THE EXPERIENCE WILL BE FOR PEOPLE BOTH IN-STORE AND ALSO THOSE ENGAGING REMOTELY"

Sandra compares the potential of the in-store retail experience to restaurants, where the presence of other diners elevates the eating experience, or the way films feel more engaging in a full cinema. "Studies have shown that chocolate tastes nicer if you are sharing the experience," she points out. "It makes sense: looking at the reactions of others becomes part of that experience too. The pandemic caused a mass deprivation [of social encounters]; if you take something away you realise how much you love it." Having an oven, espresso machine or other on-site asset filling the space with enticing aromas will certainly engage customers' senses, just as sampling can, but organising activities with a little more ambition and flair can really pay off.

The ripple effect...

Of course, what economic theorists in the 90s couldn't have foreseen was the way social media would amplify experiences, allowing businesses from the largest multinational brand to the smallest indie retailer to benefit from an explosion in social sharing. "Figures from the Institute of Promotional Marketing say 90% communicate an experience to as many as eight different people," points out Sandra. "But 65% communicate to minimum of 300 people via social media.

Usually when people think about investing in an event they tend to focus on the people they're reaching live. It's easy to forget about the ripple effect that can have, but shared online an event is a great opportunity to



reach people that don't live locally." For Sandra, the real art to hooking in an exponential online audience (a real asset if you sell online, or trade in something unique) is to give their watching experience some real thought. "It's not merely about having something in store, taking a photo and sharing it online. You have to give something to people remotely as well. Think about their experience of engaging with that content. How interesting would a straightforward video be for them? Maybe they could have access to something exclusive. When you're planning your event or activity you need to think what the experience will be for people both in store and also engaging remotely."

Of course it's important to be strategic, identifying your marketing goals and evaluating how activities have helped achieve them, but what does that look like? Is it about capturing data around footfall, online engagement and sales? "You could measure those things," agrees Sandra, "but also things like many people have heard about you, how well known you're becoming. A really cheap way of doing that is to follow search trends: how many people are Googling the brand over time. Another thing you might want to measure is how much people are organically talking about you. There's value in coverage you'd normally need to pay for but are you're getting it free; that's saving you money and improving your reach."

Whilst the digital realm can help you amplify activities, Sandra is quick to point out that digital will complement, not replace, live happenings. She cites a live immersive that digital behemoths TikTok recently held in Westfield. "If you only rely on digital ads and digital targeting, you end up speaking to people who already know you or already had an interest. You end up in an echo chamber: you sell to followers but after a while the pool will get exhausted as you're retargeting the same people and you'll get diminishing results.

"What a physical experience can do is just really help with word of mouth. It can help spread the word beyond a very narrow target audience."

MONETISING EXPERIENCE

- Bringing chargeable new services into your shop will add to the buzz in-store and generate revenue. Hiring in gift-wrappers, calligraphers or even personal shoppers – especially during gift-heavy times such as Christmas, Valentine's Day and Mother's Day – can help time-pressed customers get a bespoke service

- Demonstrations can be a great way to sell big ticket items while giving customers a live experience

- In-person events were knocked off calendars thanks to the pandemic, but small-scale occasions and online versions are a way to immerse customers in your world

HOW INDIE RETAILERS CAN CASH IN ON THE 'GREEN POUND'

Ethical consumer spending and finance soared past £100bn during the pandemic for the first time ever. How can fine food retailers make the most of their ethical credentials?

As the pandemic raged in 2020, spending on ethical products sky-rocketed to reach £122bn, according to the Co-op's *Ethical Consumerism Report*, which has tracked consumer shopping habits since 1999. In just 10 years, the 'green pound' more than doubled.

Ethical credentials are becoming an important consideration for every business – particularly in the food and drink sector. In 2020, spending on ethical food and drink surpassed £14bn, up from just £5bn in 2010. "Shoppers are turning up the heat by boycotting businesses which fail to act on ethical or social concerns," said Steve Murrells, CEO of The Co-op Group. Indeed, almost £4bn was withheld on ethical grounds, up 18% in 2020. "The report is a warning to brands that they must do business a better way for workers, communities and the planet," Steve added.

Ethical food shopping trends reflect the changing diets of the British consumer, the report said. Sales in the vegetarian and plant-based alternatives category increased by 34% to reach a value of £1.5bn. Other categories were also boosted: Fairtrade sales grew by 14% and organically certified food rose by 13%. Free range egg sales reached almost £1.5bn in 2020, though sales of sustainable fish fell from £899m to £818m.

The focus on ethical shopping was also reflected in a 6% increase in spend in local shops in 2020, the report said, and the commitment to 'localism' is expected to stay.

> "YOUR BUSINESS SIMPLY NEEDS TO TALK ABOUT WHY YOUR PRODUCT HELPS AND CELEBRATE THAT, NOT WHY YOU'RE BETTER THAN OTHER BRANDS OR WHY YOU'RE THE ONLY BRAND THAT HAS SEEN THE LIGHT ON SUSTAINABILITY. YOU ARE NOT, AND YOU SOUND LIKE YOU ARE PREACHING TO CONSUMERS"

Shout about your ethical credentials

Promoting your shop's ethical credentials, be it through your commitment to local suppliers, your focus on sustainable packaging or a specialised interest in organic products, is clearly important for today's customer. However, it's equally important that efforts to showcase your shop's high ethical standards do not come across negatively.

Sergio Restrepo, VP of innovation at Luker Chocolate, says businesses can do this by ensuring they don't overstate their ethical credentials and focusing on the positives. "You cannot be authentic if you exaggerate the language you use to discuss your ethical credentials. Consumers and peers will see through this immediately. Use clear, concise language to explain what your company does, and why it helps," Sergio told *Speciality Food*.

"You won't connect to consumers by scolding them for their sustainable habits," he continued. "Your business simply needs to talk about why your product helps and celebrate that, not



why you're better than other brands or why you're the only brand that has seen the light on sustainability. You are not, and you sound like you are preaching to consumers," he said.

Brands and retailers can also benefit by using data to back up their claims. "Keep track of what exactly your programmes or initiatives do or save and work into a well-designed report on all the brilliant work you do. For example, Luker have our sustainability report that shows clearly that we have invested more than 1 million USD during 2018-2019 in applied research, technical assistance and education, reaching more than 1,000 farmers who are now better equipped to run their farm as a prosperous business. This can go to media, clients and employees to really show off your ethical credentials with proof to back it up," Sergio said.

With consumers on high alert for any claims that sound false or misleading, it also pays to be aware of greenwashing. "Increased consumer awareness of environmental issues, stoked by media coverage of the pandemic, offers considerable growth potential for ethical food and drink," said Alice Baker, senior research analyst at Mintel. "However, widespread consumer doubts over whether their actions make a difference, and uncertainty over what the different certifications stand for, pose considerable barriers to encourage more ethical shopping habits. It's therefore imperative for companies to give consumers tangible evidence that they can effect positive change through their food and drink choices," she continued.

IN **2020**, SPENDING ON **ETHICAL** FOOD AND DRINK SURPASSED **£14BN**, UP FROM JUST **£5BN** IN **2010**

To discover more about boosting your shop's sustainability credentials, read our free report, *Sustainability: The Future Is In Our Hands,* via specialityfoodmagazine.com

Gruyère AOP

Made in western Switzerland, Gruyère AOP has been produced in the same way since 1115AD, using raw milk from cows fed on grass in summer and hay in winter. It is the only cheese that has won the title of Best Cheese in the World at the World Cheese Awards four times and is available in different maturities: the Classic is matured for six months and has a delicate, nutty, creamy flavour. The Reserve is matured for 10 months and has a drier, more grainy mouthfeel. Gruyère AOP aged for 14 months or more has a much stronger flavour.

gruyere.com





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