

"Deep" Trends for 2011: Formulating with an Emotional Edge

Investigating the buying behaviors of and offering psychological insights on consumers both domestic and international, Atlanta-based flavor and fragrance company Arylessence released the 10th edition of its TrendWatch, the company's annual consumer data report that features information on demographics, marketing, industry growth and perception, and more, via the fragrance and flavor industries. The report focuses on what it calls "deep trends," or trends affecting various industries and consumer behaviors.

"Part of our marketing service at Arylessence is to ensure we support our clients with fragrances and flavors that meet specific customer expectations and this would include a comprehensive understanding of each target market," says Lori Miller Burns, marketing director at Arylessence. "We profile key trends, and we communicate enduring trends. We don't want pipe dreams, or things that are 10 years down the road; that's not where our client base lives. We are looking for things that are going to help product development in a very realistic way, that connect to the hearts and minds of consumers."

Miller Burns explains that the trend Emotive Edge, which describes creating an emotional connection with the consumer through sensory touch points, was found to be the most essential in this TrendWatch, as it affects so many behaviors and product categories. "Emotive Edge was No. 1 for us because of the need—because it is such a competitive market out there—to create an emotional connection for any brand's fans. You really need to be infusing those emotional elements into products through any and all of the sensory points—scent, flavor, visual, touch and sound," she says.

The trends also include Style Rewind, a throwback to vintage fashion and old world glamour; Eco Evolution, the continually growing global commitment to living sustainably; Modern Menu, or how consumers' focus on food is changing; Bang for Your Buck, a redefinition of what constitutes value by consumers; The Power of Nature, reflecting nature's nurturing, nourishing traits; and Cause an Effect, about products and actions that give back to make the world a better place.

Additionally, trends focus on what's hot where. American Stories is a trend the report identifies as "a passion for American values, patriotic themes, and increasingly, locally sourced and locally produced foods, beverages, clothing and accessories." That is juxtaposed with the South America trend, which looks at how the South

American culture of countries such as Brazil is reflecting "creative vitality" and "the diversity of natural, exotic and nurturing ingredients sourced from the Amazon rainforest and other regions."

"We focus on an international scope," Miller Burns says. "Though there are demographic drivers that are going to vary slightly from country to country, as well as consumer attitudes that vary by country—there are always variations due to personal preferences and lifestyle nuances—we want to support the client to meet their consumers' expectations."

Even if two trends seem at odds, Miller Burns notes that it is important for companies to learn the whole story

on all of them. "Today, every brand needs to know every trend. They all need something new and exciting to trigger consumer interest, and any of these trends can be that trigger," she says. "Even an established franchise can mix them up year to year with regard to flavor and fragrance in order to create the next winning product."

"And many of the trends can overlap or intertwine within a product story. The Power of Nature could be using a more natural platform within a private label product, coupling the Bang for You Buck trend with The Power of Nature—both of these trends in one product would resonate with consumers," she continues. "And if you're not putting emotional connection into your brands via Emotive Edge, then you may be missing one of the most important consumer connections."

The best way to use the trends, then, is to figure out the mix that suits a product best, Miller Burns explains, saying, "We customize our approach to all client interaction in order to effectively connect to our client's end users. TrendWatch not only enlightens clients to key consumer attitudes and lifestyles trends that drive purchasing habits, but it takes clients deeper into key product development strategies such as packaging trends, demographic studies and color selection."

The new ideas and product and brand tweaks developed from trends can lead to major launches and adjustments, or they can be small moves taken to shift a product to align better with a niche market. Miller Burns notes, "Most of the trends will live for at least the next 12–18 months, and they may morph a bit in terms of how consumers respond to different products, as well as the different nuances companies can incorporate for a different focus. And then they always keep evolving, bringing these trends to the next level."

