

WHAT IS EXPO WEST AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Expo West is the biggest natural products show in the world. Period. It's our industry's CES, the biggest of all food shows, bringing food industry executives, retailers, distributors, food service operators, health practitioners, and the media together to experience the newest products making their way to the marketplace.



3,000+ EXHIBITORS

This is the show that can make or break a brand. It's the opportunity for brands to capture the attention of all who attend, especially retailers and the media.

67,000+ IN ATTENDANCE

Estimates vary, but it's believed that this year's show brought at least 10,000 more attendees than 2022. In 2019, the show brought more than 80,000 to Anaheim.

70,000+ STEPS

Legs were sore and FitBit badges were earned by many.

MARCH 8-11, 2023

The show operates from Wednesday through Saturday, and the hustle's on from sunrise to sunset.

ANAHEIM CONVENTION CENTER

Every exhibit hall was filled – some were more or less visited. North Hall upper and lower floors and Hall E offered the hottest of hot products.

EXPO WEST PITCH SLAM

Seeing founders share their vision for their emerging company, brand, and product is what makes any pitch slam so exciting. The Expo West Pitch Slam is always impressive and this year's participants took the stage to share their experience and insight-led innovations with a massive audience at the show. At the end, it was the experience-led innovation that won our hearts and won the show.

The judges picked Yasameen Sajady, CEO and Co-Founder of **Maazah** as this year's first place winner, and we love that this HPP product is spectacularly delicious!! Maazah is more than a chutney or aioli; it's more than a family recipe; it's an Afghan cultural experience with a narrative that's as rich as the flavors shared inside every bottle of Maazah. What's even better? Maazah is mission-driven, giving 1% of total sales to support Malala Fund's work for girls' education around the world. This is truly a special sauce, bringing together the founder's lived experiences and hope for the world she knows with consumer's growing affinity for Afghan flavors. Food is love and we love that Yasameen and Maazah are inviting us all to the table to share their beautiful chutneys and aiolis.



1ST PLACE : YASAMEEN SAJADY, MAAZAH

Photo Credit: maazah.com



MOTHER NATURE'S SNACK BRAND ... FRUIT!

We know from the consumer research we conduct for ourselves as well as clients that most consumers would like to eat more fruits and vegetables. Why don't they? Well, there's so much other good stuff to eat that's really convenient and really craveable. This could change in the next year or so, when FDA rolls out their new regulatory criteria for marketing a product as healthy. Fruit generally fits the bill. Every aisle at Expo was like walking the rows of an orchard: fruit was everywhere. In stand-up squeeze pouches for consuming on the go, enrobed in chocolate, dried using conventional and new techniques, and showing up all over the freezer case from fruit pops to bite-size indulgences. Even familiar fruits showed up in new forms.

We particularly liked the sour apple + egg white aerated crunch of [OBA Bites](#), the chocolate-coated, fruit dusted [Juliettes Date Nibbles](#). And we loved the true fruit flavor of [Chum Bites](#), with no added sugar, particularly the transparent way they communicate their sugar content relative to other fruit snacks.

MOTHER NATURE'S SNACK BRAND... FRUIT!

NEW **FROOZE BALLS** **NEW**

NEW TO THE FROOZE BALLS FAMILY ARE THESE FRUIT-TASTIC BALLS OF YUM!

- Made with NZ grown apples
- Lunch-box friendly
- No added sugar
- Plant-based
- Gluten free
- Non-GMO
- Unique and delicious
- RSP: \$ 49
- 5 balls per 2.5 oz pack

DUCC DE LECHE
TRIPLE CHOC FUDGE

HAVE A BALL WITH OUR INCREDI-BALL NEW FROOZE BALLS FLAVORS!

REAL FRUIT. TASTY NUTS. ZERO JUNK.

+ FROOZE BALLS

BOOTH #N231 • HELLO@FROOZEBALLS.COM

CHUM FRUIT BITES PEACH

42 Calories

INGREDIENTS: Apples, Pears, Peaches

- ✓ 100% FRUIT
- ✓ NO ADDED SUGAR
- ✓ HIGH IN FIBER
- ✓ GLUTEN FREE
- ✓ VEGAN

100% WILD NO FAKE STUFF
100% WILD NO ADDED SUGAR
WILD!D!

+ CHUM FRUIT BITES

+ TRÜ FRÜ

trü frü
NATURE'S FRUIT in CHOCOLATE

+ JOOLIETTES BY JOOLIES

Jooliettes Date Nibbles
 MATCHA DARK CHOCOLATE

Jooliettes Date Nibbles
 SEA SALT DARK CHOCOLATE

Jooliettes Date Nibbles
 BLOOD ORANGE DARK CHOCOLATE

CHOCOLATE COVERED DRIED DATES
 CHOCOLATE COVERED DRIED PINEAPPLE
 CHOCOLATE COVERED DRIED DATES

100% FLOUR-FREE

OBA ORGANIC BAKED APPLES

LIGHT & CRUNCHY APPLE SNACKS

MADE FROM ORGANIC APPLES

+ OBA

+ JUST ABOUT FOODS

ORGANIC DRIED PINEAPPLE SPICY MANGO/CAJUN D'ANANAS SECHES
ORGANIC MANGO SPICY MANGUES SECHES
ORGANIC MANGO SPICY MANGUES SECHES BIO ERCE

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REAL. NO, REALLY! NO FAKE THIS, NO FAKE THAT.

There was no shortage of plant-based alternatives this year, from burgers to chick'n to plant milks to seafood. But as often as people marvelled at the progress plant-based brands have made, the plethora of alternatives forced a question for a lot of show-goers as they navigated the aisles:

“Is this real cheese?” “Is this real chicken?”

And for those selling conventional cheese, chicken, and more it was clear that many are positioning themselves as the real deal. We saw the word **REAL** in the branding of Nexty-winning **All Real Bars**, touting their signature ingredient: grass-fed Irish milk protein. The Ireland-based company also features a compostable wrapper, for “REAL impact.” It’s a really compelling story.

Katie’s Pizza & Pasta was letting attendees know their real pizza had real cheese, and real meats. Real fruit shows up in freezer pops and shelf-stable smoothies.

And cauliflower powerhouse **Caulipower** shouts, “REAL CLUCKIN’ CHICKEN!” As a vegetable brand that makes alternative product, this was unexpected, but smart, as we would have guessed their tenders would be plant-based. Since their previous package didn’t indicate real chicken, maybe that’s why they had new packaging at the show.

These days, plant-based is closer and closer to the real thing. You gotta ask!



REAL. NO, REALLY! NO FAKE THIS, NO FAKE THAT.



+ **FORECAST COFFEE COMPANY**



+ **FORECAST COFFEE COMPANY**



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PLATE-READY PASTA



Retorted pasta in a pouch. What took them so long?!

Retort rice transformed the category with 90-second side dish convenience. Now pasta is available in the same format.

And yes, this is REAL pasta, made with REAL wheat. Go ahead, let yourself mangia pasta! And some brands also have gluten-free SKUs, so if you must eat unreal, twirl away.

Of course, pasta behemoth **Barilla** has been selling their Ready Pasta for years in conventional grocery. Texture has always been a challenge for shelf-stable pasta, as the retort (canning) process is harsh and tends to break pasta down, resulting in mush. Barilla really nailed it with their technology.

We were pleasantly surprised that newcomer **Greenfit's** (among others) was al dente as well.

PLATE-READY PASTA



The conventional incumbent!

+ BARILLA



+ PRESTY!



+ GREENFIT



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*Tomato Alla Vodka Cannellini Beans
Apricot Glazed Baked Beans
Kimchi Sesame Navy Beans
Coconut Curry Chickpeas
Harissa Lemon Chickpeas*

RETORT REVITALIZES CATEGORIES BOTH NEW & OLD

We reported on this trend in our [2022 Expo East Trend Round-Up](#), but it was in full force at 2023 Expo West, so we're re-running it here with new examples!

In 1795 France's military leader Napoleon Bonaparte realized a trained militia was no good if they were starving in the trenches. Being a shrewd strategist, he offered a reward for anyone who could figure out how to preserve food to feed his troops. Nicolas François Appert came up with the idea of heating food in sterile jars and voila! Canning was born. This is to say that canning is hardly a new technology. It's one of the oldest.

You wouldn't know that, as it's seeing renewed growth with more and more products showing up in stand-up, shelf-stable pouches. It's likely that our return to center-store staples during COVID shutdowns has given this burgeoning sector new life. We saw lots of new products being sold in this format, including hummus, riced vegetables, and more.

But it's also driven by the updating of old canned category favorites. That means all sorts of beans, like [BeanVivo](#), some of which contain meat. Or, [NONA Vegan](#) plant-based alternatives to Alfredo and cheese sauces, made rich and creamy from cashews. We also love the bold, boundary-pushing varieties of [HeyDay Canning Co.](#)

Our favorite product, though, is the [Walking Tamale](#), a waaay-better-than-you're-expecting treat you can eat cold (we don't recommend) or hot, straight from the pouch. LOVE this innovative food and the innovative use of an old form of preservation.

RETORT REVITALIZES CATEGORIES BOTH NEW & OLD



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PLANT-BASED CONVENIENT MEALS

We have been quoted in the media saying that plant-based growth in the near term will come from convenient meal solutions. A movement cannot be sustained by single ingredients like burgers, nuggets, and milk. Consumers are stretched for time, and the more a brand can make their products function as meal solutions, the better.

We were pleased to see in action at Expo West a slow but steady march in the direction of convenience. On March 1st, **Just Egg** announced their first launch of ready-to-heat frozen meals.

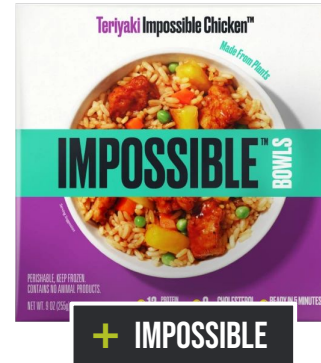
Daiya continues to push into new categories, like flatbreads positioned for the lunch daypart, in creative flavors like Caramelized Onion & Fig. **Strong Roots** leverages nutrient-dense vegetables like spinach and purple carrots to make convenient sides and snacks.

Beanvivo bean-based meals are an example of both retort tech used in new (and old) ways, with a plant-based twist, offering plant-based versions of the old canned staple, chili, along with chorizo tortilla stuffers and more.

Perhaps the most ambitious launch was **Konscious Foods**, which hits on two of our trends (Convenience, Seafood Snacking). Their plant-based sushi bowls, rolls, onigiri, and a turnkey program for retailers to offer grab-and-go was mind-blowingly well-executed. But this should come as no surprise, as it was the brainchild of long-time plant-based pioneer Yves Potvin, of Gardein and Yves Veggie Cuisine.



PLANT-BASED CONVENIENT MEALS



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SEAFOOD SNACKING: BOTH LAND & SEA

For decades we've snacked on conventional beef, pork, and chicken snacks. Think jerky, pork rinds, chicken nuggets, and meat-and-cheese snack blends such as Oscar Mayer's P3.

But leave it to the natural foods channel to bring seafood snacking to the health-focused consumer. We tasted some delicious products that leave the old buttery cracker + mayonnaise-y tuna salad combo in the dust.

Scout sells tuna kits, but theirs bring contemporary twists that make it feel fresh, fun, and functional. Their Seafood Snacks start with the first moment of truth on-shelf. Scout's paper cup merchandises the kit, but also allows the user to mix the snack and eat out of a more human-friendly vessel (versus eating out of a can). The varieties sound like a spice and heat-seeker's dream: Chile Crisp, Chile Jalapeño, and Za'atar. But the most unique thing about this kit is the separate packet of crunchy toppings, that add a textural contrast, not to mention those spices and chiles. It's one way of making tinned seafood fresher all around.

We also saw many versions of seafood jerky, and a few smoked salmon snacks. We particularly like **Honey Smoked Fish Co.**'s Salmon Stackers, which pair their amazing sweet-and-smoky salmon with cream cheese and crackers for on-the-go seafood goodness.

Photo Credit: enjoyscout.com

SEAFOOD SNACKING: BOTH LAND & SEA



+ SURF SNAX



+ HONEY SMOKED FISH



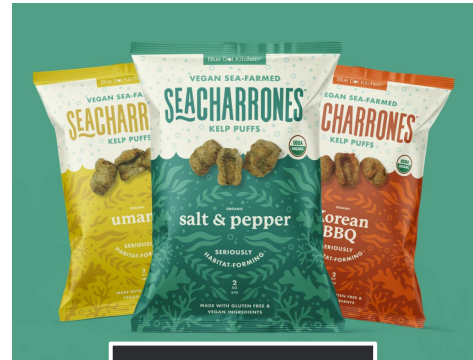
+ 12 TIDES



+ SCOUT



+ KONSCIOUS



+ SEACHARRONES

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TO SEED OR NOT TO SEED? THAT IS THE QUESTION.

If you did the math, you'd probably have seen a ratio of about 50:50 on product claims at Expo West that on the one hand, touted being "seeded," "made from seeds," or "seed-based" versus the other hand, touting "no seed oils."

One of the biggest risks with internet- and social media-proliferated information is that consumers may hear that seed oils are bad and immediately avoid them without doing any of their own research so they can make their own decision. But even worse, they might logically assume this means that seeds, themselves, are bad. The argument for seeds as part of healthy diet is pretty strong and widespread.

So, why did we see so many "No Seed Oils" claims? Well, industry folks are just as likely to jump on a new bandwagon as consumers. In fact, it's often the newest, least-understood claims that generate the most activity, energy and sales.

But if we in the industry are confused, just imagine how baffled consumers are. Only time and science will tell what the real answer is.



OR

Scientists debunk claims of seed oil health risks

June 22, 2022—While the internet may be full of posts stating that seed oils such as canola and soy are "toxic," scientific evidence does not support these claims, according to experts. [Guy Crosby](#), adjunct associate of nutrition at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, was among those quoted in a May 31, 2022 Consumer Reports article who pushed back on the idea that these oils cause health ills ranging from headaches to [heart disease](#).

TO SEED OR NOT TO SEED? THAT IS THE QUESTION.



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HEY, SUGAR SUGAR!

You know the lyrics to this classic... but the tune on sugar is changing, and if you want to sing along – you’ve gotta keep up. Every food and beverage category and brand is making sugar claims in a different way; i.e. – no sugar, low sugar, no added sugar, source of sugar, or sugar alternatives.

Sugar has received a lot of attention and a bad rap, and brands are positioning themselves to deliver alternatives to high sugar and refined sugar legacy products, allowing consumers more choices than ever before, even in categories many don’t traditionally associate with sugar. The role sugar plays in products is multifold – brightening flavor, adding sweetness, providing texture, structure, and even shelf life or stability. So, brands are working harder than ever to meet consumers’ wants and needs in regards to reducing intake of sugar while delivering on necessary category cues and product needs.

We saw brands replace refined sugar with organic cane sugar. We saw more use of fruit like apples and dates to achieve a no added sugar claim; e.g. - [Must Love](#) and [True Made Foods](#). Or, fruit juices and fruit concentrates to deliver additional alternatives to refined sugars, like [DeeBee’s Organics](#). Also, a noticeable reduction in sugar alcohols being used in products while stevia, monk fruit, and allulose continued to show up more frequently, and products using these ingredients tasted better than in years past, as the supply chain continues to evolve: i.e. [Suckerz Organic Candy](#) and [Briannas Sugar Free Dressings](#).

HEY, SUGAR SUGAR!



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BOOSTED

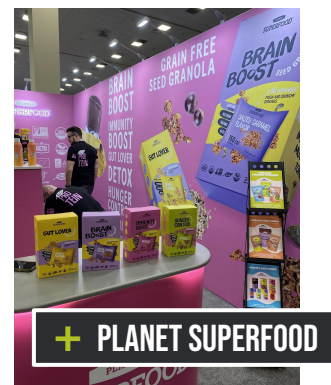
Emerging from the cave of pandemic brain fog, the sunny halls of Expo West were flush with drinks, snacks and supplements focused on boosting our brain function. Thank goodness - help has arrived!

Designed to sharpen the mind, brighten our mood, refresh our memory and energize our day, these products are leveraging active ingredients such as Ashwagandha, amino acids, all manner of functional mushrooms and other nootropic ingredients. And of course, our old friend caffeine! With all of that, some of the products actually tasted pretty good too.

Beverages were the most common form, both sparkling and still, and many new entrants were cold, fruity and quite sweet (with alternative sweeteners). We also found some snacks like the Lemon Ginger [Wise Bar](#) that was packed with adaptogens, mushrooms and MCT oil and still managed to be quite tasty. We feel smarter already!



BOOSTED

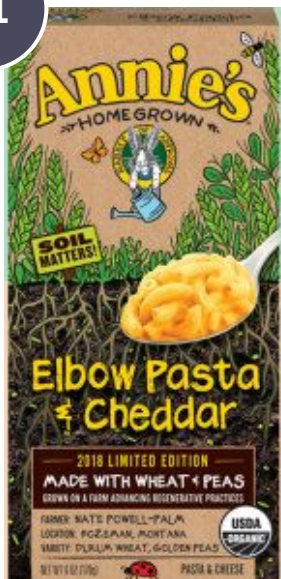


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Regenerative
Organic
Certified™

V1



V2

REGENERATIVE IS THE NEW ORGANIC

B'bye organic! The bar has been raised and **regenerative** is the shiny new thing. That was very clear walking the halls of Expo West. Or, to be more precise - Regenerative Organic Certified (ROC).

And what does that mean exactly? Certified Regenerative farms maximize soil health while mitigating the negative impacts of humans and livestock. On a practical level, this means doing things like mulching, planting cover crops, increasing plant diversity and keeping land as permanent pasture. And healthier soil leads to better food quality, improved farmers' livelihoods and greater sustainability.

Sounds like a good thing! But that's a lot to explain to consumers on a milk carton or a bag of chips. That's what **Annie's** learned with their first attempt at launching a product made with regenerative ingredients. V2 told a much different, much simpler story.

The **Regenerative Organic Alliance** has created a certification program and logo that will be coming to stores near you very soon, if not already. That button will become the new shorthand for food and beverage products that take care to use ingredients that are not only the best for me, but also best for the soil they came from.

REGENERATIVE IS THE NEW ORGANIC



Regenerative
Organic
Certified™



+ LUNDBERG



+ WHATIF



+ WHOLESOME



+ FORECAST COFFEE COMPANY

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SHROOM TAKEOVER: THE LAST OF US?!

We reported on this trend in our [2022 Expo East Trend Round-Up](#), but it was in full force at West, 2023 so we're re-running it here with new examples!

They're everywhere! And for good reason. As a source of animal-free protein with low carbon footprint and meaty taste and texture, OR as a source of adaptogenic alchemy, mushrooms deserve their moment in the sun. Or the dark, which they may prefer.

We tasted them as umami-packed snacks like [Popadelics](#) and [Savory Wild Jerky](#), as well as mood-altering adaptogens in products such as [Rowdy Mermaid](#), [Core Bars](#) and [Lifeway MSHRM Oat Milk](#).

[Quorn](#), the wise elder of the myco movement, began exploring mycoprotein to replace animal protein back in the 1960s, and has paved the way for many myco-loving newcomers like [MyForest](#), [Meati](#) and others.

If you're not already shroomed out, you can find mushrooms streaming on Netflix, Amazon and Apple TV in [Fantastic Fungi](#) which will make you wonder what species is really running the world (100% positive on Rotten Tomatoes!). But if you love cordyceps, DO NOT watch HBO's [The Last of Us](#).



SHROOM TAKEOVER: THE LAST OF US?!



+ ROWDY MERMAID



+ SAVORY WILD



+ POPADELICS



+ LIFEWAY



+ CORE BAR



+ EAT MEATI

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UPCYCLING INTO THE MAINSTREAM

We reported this trend in our [2022 Expo East Trend Round-Up](#), but it was in full force at West, 2023 so we're re-running it here with new examples!

Globally 1/3 of all food is thrown away. With preventable food waste contributing 7% of global GHG emissions and the prospect of not being able to sufficiently feed the world's 10 billion people by 2050, upcycling has caught the world's attention as a powerful tool for change - for both food security and climate impact.

No longer just MSA boxes of wonky-looking root veggies, upcycling is going mainstream with a growing range of value-added products from snacks to beverages to baking mixes, making a seriously delicious, serious difference.

Take [Kazoo Tortilla Chips](#), made with 40% upcycled corn germ that's a byproduct of the cornstarch industry normally relegated to animal feed. Not only are the chips just as tasty (and in fact more nutritious), each bag saves 20 gallons of water vs. standard tortilla chips made with 100% virgin corn.

Leading the charge since 2019, the [Upcycled Food Association](#) promotes upcycled products and ingredients with marketing, policy advocacy, industry research and product standards with their upcycled product certification. The race is on!

UPCYCLING INTO THE MAINSTREAM



+ KAZOO



+ FLOCK



+ RENEWAL MILL



+ WAJU



+ UGLIES



+ RIND



+ ASARASI

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THE COLOR OF EXPO WEST, 2023 ... PINK-IES UP!

The color of this year's Expo was undeniably pink. And we don't mean just any pink. Bright pink. Psychedelic pink. Bubblegum-pink. And above all, girly Pink.

Of course, the logical reason would have been that Expo kicked off on International Women's Day. But one look at the IWD 2023 marketing shows the color purple, all around.

We think the Expo pinking signified something else. The **Belgian Boys** (ironically!) echoed what we were thinking: happiness. After 3 full years of pandemic madness, missed Expos, political divisiveness, rampant inflation, war, and climate anxiety, we're burned out on bad. We want to lose the mask. But mostly we all want good news, and no color stands for good things like pink.

So, here's to women founders, majority women-owned businesses (like ours), and natural products for women. Here's to happy pink power!



Photo Credit: [goodtimecrxaeative.com](https://www.goodtimecrxaeative.com)

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY MARCH 8, 2023

Worldwide, everyone everywhere can step forward to truly #EmbraceEquity



THE 😊 COLOR OF EXPO WEST, 2023 💕 ... PINK-IES UP!



MATTSON TEAM PICKS OF THE SHOW / [CLICK TO WATCH VIDEO](#)



MATTSON TEAM PICKS OF THE SHOW



The **Konscious** brand arrived fully formed, with a very ambitious 3 platforms of plant-based sushi (onigiri, maki rolls, poke bowls), not to mention a grab-and-go program for retailers. I was blown away by everything from brand to bowl to first bite.



- **Barb Stuckey**,
Chief Innovation & Marketing Officer



Local Weather is the product of a collaboration backed by Russell Wilson and AJ Vaynerchuck. What they've developed is a best in class, clean sports drink that supports hydration and mental performance with electrolytes, nootropics, adaptogens, vitamins, & minerals. Low sugar, natural ingredients, & the first sports drink in aluminum recyclable / reusable packaging. All good!



- **Pete Brennan**, *VP Innovation*



The positive energy radiating from the hot pink **Belgian Boys** booth drew me in, but it was the taste of the Pancake Cereal that made the Belgian Boys Pancake Cereal a top pick from the show. With "cereal" in the name, I was expecting a hard, crunchy pancake piece but was pleasantly surprised to find they were soft, warm mini-pancakes like you might make at home. I immediately experienced a sense of nostalgia with this comfort food that was clearly designed for kids of all ages.



- **Carol Borba**, *VP Innovation*

2023 EXPO WEST TRENDS ROUND-UP & ANALYSIS

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THANK YOU!



KATE HAGAN

Executive Vice President,
Innovation & Insights

Katie@MattsonCo.com



PETE BRENNAN

Vice President,
Innovation

Pete@MattsonCo.com



BARB STUCKEY

Chief Innovation &
Marketing Officer

Barb@mattsonCo.com

INSIGHTS, STRATEGY, INNOVATION, AND DEVELOPMENT

North America's premier
**food & beverage
innovation company**



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we have been working
with clients at every stage —
**from entrepreneurs to
Fortune 500 companies**



We Make Food Happen

- + From brand and product strategy
- + To new product concepting
- + To product formulation
- + To process development
- + To brand development and design
- + To co-man identification
- + To factory scale-up
- + Informed by consumer research
along the way
— exploratory and/or evaluative



We are a team of 60+

Food Scientists
Culinary Experts
Strategists
Commercialization Specialists
Brand Marketers
Designers

We take you from
where you are now
to launch



We have helped
our clients launch
2,500+ CPG SKUs
**100s of food service
offerings**



What We Believe

- Prototype Prolifically:** get to the food as fast as possible
- Stand Out:** create a powerful point of difference
- Create Crave:** trial is easy; repeat is what drives success
- Solve a Need:** nutritional, sensory, emotional, or otherwise
- Build for Scale:** formulate with a clear line-of-sight to scale