



Innovations in the food industry: India Food Forum 2017

Mumbai, 1stst February 2017: The food industry today is going through transition as more and more customers are shifting to fresh food items with less preservatives and additives. If a retail store wants to increase the sale of food items, there is no better strategy than to appeal to the senses of customers.

Mohit Khattar, CEO, Graviss Goodad (Basking Robbins) and formerly MD, Godrej Nature's Basket, opined that more and more humanisation of supermarkets need to strike a chord with customers, appealing to their five senses. He was speaking at Knowledge Series 2 – ‘Say hello to the experimental supermarket’ on day two of **India Food Forum 2017 in Mumbai.**

Khattar said, "Any retail supermarket is highly concerned about the product getting noticed in the store leading to repeated sales. One has to brainstorm on providing superior experience to customers in the store. In case of food items, the retailer must appeal all the five senses at the same time to get the product registered in the minds of customers and attract them to store again and again," he said. "Customers are not a uniform or homogeneous group. Everyone has distinct requirements. Retailers must identify the customers to promote the products", Khattar added.

According to Khattar, sale of any product depends upon quality of the product, efficacy of the store, cost of the products, store being user friendly, good customer service and luxury in shopping. He believes that discounts and freebies can at the most increase the time spent at the shelf, knowing about the product. But not essentially convert into sale. "Music played at the store is also a vital aspect of promoting sale. It has been observed that high pace music can increase the sale four to five times as against some slow music playing in the store," Khattar said.

The sales staff at store also needs to be well trained in interacting with customers. "Mere guiding the customer to desired shelf will not help. The sales staff should take a cue and strike conversation with the customers to promote similar products," Khattar said. Apart from trained sales staff, an experimental store has to brainstorm on five vital aspects such as store layout and ambiance, range of products, shared experience, service and destination for anything else other than core products.

The session later in the day highlighted the kitchens of tomorrow, kitchens are all set undergo monumental change in years to come. Kitchens in India have been evolving over the ages. "Food has come a long way. The cooking has also changed a lot, shifted to high-tech kitchen ware from timber/charcoal as fuel and aluminium utensils to gas and state of the art equipment. Kitchens have become beautiful over the decades," said **Chef Harpal Singh Sokhi, Director, Tarban Tadka Hospitality.** He was speaking at the panel discussion on ‘The Kitchens of Tomorrow: Technology - Food - Cuisines Innovation’ on day two of India Food Forum 2017, underway at MMRDA Grounds, BKC. Chef Harpal said, "Food is rapidly changing as people are becoming more and more health conscious."

Chef Nilesh Limaye, Chef Culinary, All Bout Cooking said, "Kitchens would soon be transformed into laboratories with rapidly growing healthy food habits. Ever growing demand for traditional food, will force the food industry to look for innovation to meet the demand." **Chef Tushar Malkani, Executive Chef and General Manager, Kaitlyn's Hospitality, Food Stylist,** feels, "These days, consumers expect basics in a fancy manner. To meet the demands of today's consumers, chefs need to be innovative."



Mahendra Shinde, Purchase Manager, K Hospitality says, "This is the age of rapid innovations in kitchenware. With the innovations, the cooking experience is enhanced as compared to the past. Equipment like food processor, cutting and chopping gadgets have made cooking easy yet have enhanced experience."

Elaborating the change in the kitchen Chef Harpal said, "People understand technology and are ready to adopt innovations in the kitchen. Induction plates is one such equipment which people understood completely and are using widely." **Kapil Kohli, VP - Retail Head, Usha International** said, "Today kitchens have become colourful. Earlier everything right from the refrigerator to mixer used to be white. But now several colours have been added to them. The kitchens will soon get smart with technological innovations like connecting the refrigerator with grocer."

"Innovation in food has led equipment makers experiment more and more to meet the demand of consumers. The range of choices in kitchenware available today is a good sign that tomorrow's kitchen would be hi-tech yet healthy." According to Kapil Kohli, "Mere innovation is not sufficient. The kitchenware that allows one to watch the food being cooked is the greatest experience in cooking. At the same time, equipments should also ensure that exact nutrition value is maintained in the food."

About India Food Forum:

The India Food Forum was formed in the year 2008 under the chairmanship of the then Food Processing Minister with India's leading manufacturers, marketers and retailers of food, grocery and FMCG products joining in to take up a series of support initiatives for the Indian food retail business. The forum's sole purpose has been to connect all key stakeholders of food & grocery retail and HoReCa businesses with their respective potential partners to collaborate for profitable growth, collectively work towards new category development, boost consumption, share global best practices, benchmark new standards, and serve customers efficiently. Comprising a 360-degree format of conference, exhibition, networking and industry awards, India Food Forum is unarguably India's most exciting and forward looking knowledge sharing venue for food, grocery and FMCG brands, distributors, marketers, grocery retailers and foodservice companies.

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