

ROUND TABLE NOTES

July 26, 2022

Table Topic A: YESTERDAY

Thinking back to our four presentations:

- E-com and data
- The new virtual reality
- Food safety
- Inflation

What ideas, comments, and/or resources would you add?

E-COM and DATA

- Offer an e-com feature that shows meals with cost per person and enables customers to “click” for a list of ingredients
- Highlight nutritional benefits: “this is a way to stay well...” “this is a way to be less stressed...” “this is a way to sleep better...”
- Push nutrition resources into space - make it easy to see
- Use e-commerce platform for something other than shopping (i.e. education, inspiration)
- Link e-commerce with social media platforms and recipes
- MAKE SURE INFORMATION IS CORRECT!
 - Harmons assigns teams to verify e-comm info, makes sure labels are correct, and checks labels on sales floor
- Possible sources to check for validity of data: vendor? third party? retailer?
- “Dietitian’s Choice” items available by category on website, i.e. heart-healthy, keto, high blood pressure, etc.
- Consider offering “Starter Guides” including private brands. (Note: sometimes vendors pay to support)
- # of search items on website - takes a LOT of work and is particularly challenging for small companies
- Know who is making sure info is correct and is uploaded accurately, particularly for private brands. It is important to monitor for changes, particularly critical in relation to allergies, gluten, etc.
- DON’T DEPEND ON e-Comm data; when situations are critical; go straight to manufacturer

- Third party verification may not work in all cases.
- Integrate e-comm into recipes
- Meet the customer where they are.
 - If they truly want to do keto, make sure they are getting healthy fats and the right carbs.
 - Don't judge; use the opportunity to help direct them regardless of what "diet" they want to follow.
 - Focus on the nutritional goals regardless of "diet". For example: the customer/client may not really want "keto" as much as they want to cut out processed carbs and eat lean meats
 - Focus on RAINBOW: replace colorful veggies for fruits if someone want to eliminate or reduce fruits due to sugar content
- Work with purchasing/procurement to make sure items are truly healthy and/or actually do what they claim.

THE NEW VIRTUAL REALITY

- Work with social media to be creative with what you have available... games, challenges, etc. Make it FUN!
- Change up ways to record virtual messages; use overhead angles and different platforms
- It is important to balance messaging to appeal to various cultures and family sizes.

INFLATION

- There is a perception that healthy food is ALWAYS more expensive.
- Consider time *and* money when budgeting; for example, pre-chopped vs whole or fresh.
- Eating out vs. prepared foods; consumer should consider \$ cost *and* nutrition.
- Make ahead and freeze if time is an issue.
- Work with store directors/managers who set prices to encourage purchases of healthy items; focus on ad items.
- Emphasize consideration of **quality** if **price** is what is driving customers to lower-cost retailers (like Walmart and/or Aldi).
- Show how to stretch meals that are plant-based vs. processed.
- Customize recipes in order to use what you already have or to buy what you can afford.
- Provide substitution suggestions.
- Use CPI not just to get stats but to drive ads, recipes, etc.
- Look at shortages, too... use buying team as resource.
- Suggest private label over national brand.

FOOD SAFETY

- Use red font for food safety messages in recipes to emphasize importance.
- Build food safety/risk management teams to focus on food safety.

Table Topic B: POWERFUL PARTNERSHIPS

What tips do you have for creating positive and productive working relationships within your company?

- What do SRDs need?
 - We need to know what is wanted.
 - We need to know what is available from sponsors, vendors, and the industries in general. We don't always know what's out there.
 - A prospectus from potential partners would be helpful.
 - Giant has an RD liaison for marketing and vendors.
 - Shopping for Health website.
 - We need timely information in a timely fashion.
 - One-liners!
 - US Probiotic Guide
 - CONTENT for videos, in-store monitors, etc.
- What can SRDs bring to their companies?
 - Value beyond science, especially to category managers.
 - Specific information to help individual customers rather than just the "general" public.
- Critical to make sure all materials are consistent with company policy and meet legal standards.
- Finding measurements to determine success is very important.
 - All partners need a solid return on investments
 - Less science, more numbers
 - Track metrics such as: email opens, viewers on TV segments, blog readership, amount of product sold during promotional timeframe.
 - In-store monitors (track eyeballs!)
- Sampling is always good
- Vendor coupons are always appreciated
- Each specific company has unique needs
- Tool kits are helpful, especially on a quarterly basis with new information reminders sent regularly
- Themed events (e.g. Heart Month, Diabetes Month, Seafood Month) and partnership with organizations such as GOED are very effective
- Consider the costs of partnerships so that all vendors can participate
 - Hy-Vee has pricing set to encourage smaller vendors
 - Create "pools" or bundles - this could include classes, sampling, RD promo, events, FaceBookLive, media segments, etc.
 - When \$ are not available, offer small prizes for events live FBLive promos
- Timing is an issue
 - Synch up between vendors
 - Consider the lead time needed by retailers

- Educate companies (especially those with large teams of SRDs) on the value of working with internal RD teams vs spending lots of money on ads; this can definitely impact ROI in a positive way.
- Consider using vendor dollars to EDUCATE (with long-term results) as well as reduce price point (which have shorter-term results, i.e, sales).
- Partner with ONE ANOTHER! Bring in RDs to guest-speak to other RDs!
- Explore the possibility of flexibility within brand marketing packages and menus
- Seek vendor support of RD programs to include inviting guest speakers to talk to RD teams

How do you successfully “market” the knowledge and skills you can bring to the table?

- Know the powerful language that can be used within a company to sell RD value

Table Topic C: ROI ROCK STARS

What are some initiatives, programs, and/or strategies that have provided you with the greatest returns on your investments of time, labor, product, and/or budget dollars?

- Development of a Brand Marketing “Menu”
- Work with influencers and assign trackable word codes and PLUs in store
- Use e-commerce coupons
- Use media and measure the “reach”
- Track and count
 - Product movement
 - Post-promotion product “lift”
 - Discount codes
 - Appointments and consults
 - # of people who visit a portal
 - Post-class survey data
 - What new product(s) did you try?
 - What new product(s) do you now regularly buy?
 - What services are of most interest?
 - Keep it short and easy - no more than 10 questions and/or less than 2 minutes to complete
 - Impressions
 - Rewards Card data (if available)
 - Registrations
 - Incentives
 - Repeat purchases
- Track and share
 - Compliments
 - Positive emails
 - Testimonials and quotes

- Customer comments
- Chats from classes
- Offer free and paid services
- Follow a consistent marketing message for maximum reinforcing impact and pull in both internal and external partners
- USE PICTURES!!!!!!
- Incentives
 - Keep it interesting by offering a variety of incremental ways to increase chances to win
 - Special incentive prizes like Andrew's **CHEF-TITIAN** Private Party! (For those who don't know, Andrew Akhaphong of Mackenthun's Fine Foods recently graduated from culinary school so he paired his nutritional expertise with his culinary talents and provided an incredible prize incentive for a recent FaceBook Live event at his company!!!)
- Tips
 - Plan well in advance
 - Promote at least a month in advance
 - Provide fresh themes and new focuses at least every month
 - Be flexible and willing to transition. For example, one SRD shared that their Meal of the Week initiative (building meals with at least one item from every department every week) was proving to be burdensome for the stores but when they transitioned to a MONTHLY theme, they experienced better buy-in from store team partners and more robust participation.

What are some easy (and not-so easy) but effective “wins” that you would recommend to your colleagues?

- Wellness Wednesday (HyVee)
- FaceBook Live! Events with modest give-aways
- Special displays, sampling, and cooking demos to concentrate on slow-moving items while engaging vendors who have great knowledge of and passion for their products
- “Try Something New” Cook-alongs!
 - Recipe featuring a Guiding Star rated ingredient
 - Sign-ups through loyalty card which also provides data
 - Shopping list provided in advance so participants can cook along
 - Monthly themes
 - Click on recipe in the e-comm platform and items get added to the basket!
- Produce Prescription Partnerships (a “food as medicine” initiative)
 - Note that sometimes you have to flex policies to accommodate aspects of special programs; anticipating and advocating for them is an important part of the SRD's job
- Double Up Food Bucks - This is an AMAZING (though not “easy”) program. Check this link for more information. <https://doubleupamerica.org/> There are separate websites for specific state programs but this can give you an overview. Brenda Garcia (United Family of Stores) is a champion of this initiative and would be a great resource. She would agree with me that while

this is not an “easy” win as it involves systems, supply chains, and store operations, it is more than well worth the effort.

- Vendor funded Dletitian programs featuring 4-6 items every other week
- If your company uses a PR company, pitch your programs to be a subset so that your media pitches can be independently tracked and shared.

What is important to brands that fund promotions and programs?

Besides the obvious desire for increased sales and product movement, our partners also support in-store programs because they feel that **VISIBILITY** and product **AWARENESS** are also very important! Initiatives like *Aprons* at Publix provide customers with real-life, real-time meal solutions in a way that shows that they are convenient, quick, and delicious. The recipes are prepared in-store and offered for tastings. The recipes and all the ingredient components are readily available in the dedicated kiosk area as well, making for a compact and effective solution site.

How do you quantify the value you add to your company’s brand? See above examples

Table Topic D: KEEP IT FRESH!

What advice can you offer to your colleagues to help them find focus and balance when home becomes a primary place of business?

- Dress like you would in a professional setting (this helps quality of work)
- Schedule breaks (this helps cleanse the mind)
 - Refresh and take a step back
 - Go for a walk or a hike
 - Allow yourself a reset
- Focus on priorities
- Block off time on your calendar
- Designate a work area (keeps things from getting blurry)
- Make sure everyone around you knows that you are working
- Try to avoid pets (that would be nearly impossible for me! ;-)...)
- Keep good posture
- Ask company to reimburse you for home office improvements... (advocate for a successful workspace)
- Have a work cut-off time
- Be aware of and avoid burn-out
 - Be kind to yourself
 - Avoid applying too much pressure
- COMMUNICATE!
- Work on Team Bonding
 - Group Chats
 - “Question of the Day”
- Repurpose old work! (It can help to look at old work for new ideas!)

- Make lists
- Focus on something specific at times (for example, one specific brand or food)

How do you find fresh ideas for in-store services and/or virtual classes in order to keep your audiences interested and engaged?

- Create new themes for classes and initiatives particularly for kids (i.e., Disney, Star Wars, etc.)
- Use trivia!
- Incorporate games like Scattergories
- Community assessments (via email or social media)
- Have companies sponsor a prize package
- Offer goody bags to increase sign-ups
- Follow trends and link to items you are focusing on
- Check out other retailers and influencers
- Share product samples
- Organize a Farmer's Market outside of store
- Set up picnic tables and tent events
- Using the block party concept, create a festive atmosphere
- Invite vendors to demo their products
- Create in-store excitement
- Be aware of cultural differences and opportunities
- Invite local Scout troops to tour in small groups (with adult supervision)
- Work with the food safety team

How do you keep staff and/or store teams interested and engaged?

- Regularly communicate
- Hold contests and offer prizes
- Expose staff to positive store experiences
- Encourage leadership to be visible
- Look for new program/service opportunities throughout the store

What are your favorite resources for inspiration, motivation, and/or moderation?

- Google Trends (to see what is popular by region)
- Pinterest
- Instagram
- TikTok
- Food Celebration Days
- YOU! (Other SRDs!!!!)