

BREW DR. PRESCRIBES THE FUTURE OF WELLNESS DRINKS



By Michael Perman, C'EST WHAT? LLC

The future of the beneficial drink market is promising and companies such as Portland-based Brew Dr. Kombucha are leading the way with innovative concepts. It all begins with increasing consumer attention to what they drink and eat as well as a thirst for variety.

According to research conducted by the Hartman Group, published in Food Business News, 62 percent of all consumers agree "beverages play a very important role in my health and wellness" and 44 percent agree with the statement, "I like my beverages to do something for me, such as provide energy, nutrients or other benefits."

Byron Elder, Vice President of Strategy and Planning for Brew Dr. concurs: "What we've seen over the last couple of years and what we're continuing to see is just more and more people realizing what's actually in their beverages. So people take a different approach to their general health and wellness. People used to think that diet soda was actually good for you cause it had the word diet in it. And obviously with all the research and the communication out there now, people are realizing that those beverages aren't actually as healthy as I thought they were."



Brew Dr.'s success has been helped by developing sensory profiles that provide adjacent transitions from traditional consumer behavior. "A lot of those customers are gravitating towards naturally carbonated wellness drinks such as Kombucha because they are getting that effervescent carbonation that they expected in the diet Coke, or they're getting that more fruit-forward juice flavor that they were getting from an Oddwalla or Naked. With kombucha, you're getting very approachable taste profiles with the added benefit of probiotics, lower sugar, natural and organic ingredients."



OPPORTUNITY FORECAST: WHAT'S NEXT?

We think there's a "next kombucha coming in the next few years and we're exploring what that might be." That requires a lot of research and taking a more holistic approach to all of our ingredients of making sure we're looking for the most sustainable, healthy versions of everything we're using.

Probiotics are great, but we're starting to experiment with ingredients that provide unique benefits for people such as collagen for protein or mood boosters that give you a better experience.

Probiotic and prebiotic sodas have been a big increase in the category, what we consider to be kombucha adjacent. They're both healthier alternatives to a traditional carbonated soda. From there, we're also seeing just innovations specifically with higher alcohol kombucha is definitely a trend we're starting to see as well. That popped up probably about two to three years ago, kind of on a bigger scale. And then there's the other side of it, which are more beer or spirit companies who are creating a beverage that is a high alcohol kombucha.

How we expand and where we look for innovation will evolve. But at the heart, we are a tea company. That's unique to us and will help guide our future innovation.

OPPORTUNITY FORECAST: CBD DRINKING

Brew Dr. launched its CBD kombucha called tranquil in three flavors—essentially the brand's top three kombucha flavors: Clear Mind, Super Berry and Ginger Lemon. The inspiration behind the launch was passion: "We see the value in it. The struggle in the next couple of years is going to be the federal regulations around it. It's extremely hard to launch an actual CBD brand or really to be very successful outside of your home state."

Been to the wellness drink section at the grocery store lately? There are dozens of fascinating wellness drink brands competing for our attention, searching for the optimal positioning. Some convey an ultra-premium persona, some are more earthy, others exude a mystical quality. Brew Dr. seems to be on solid footing to enter the future with a solid base and the imagination to bring us what's coming next.



C'EST WHAT? LLC is an innovation strategy and new product development firm that forecasts emerging opportunities and aligns teams on the best path forward. Our holistic approach is based on the concept of regeneration for people, organizations and communities. C'EST WHAT expertise includes ethnographic insights, foresights, strategy and concept creation.

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