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Shelley Balanko of Hartman Group at Fancy Food Show NYC 2017.

It was music to my ears.

[Lynn Milos](#)

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Founder at Food Crafters Alliance, LLC

Shelley Balanko, SVP, Business Development, at [The Hartman Group](#) gave a great presentation at the Fancy Food Show in NYC recently on the topic of *the Specialty Food Marketplace*. The presentation was full of impressive data on trends and growth and the category overall, but what really made my ears perk up was **this list of common practices of Successful Specialty Food Companies:**

1. Packaging in multiple units;
2. Keeping ACV low;
3. **Doing demos and community events to create stickiness;**
4. Saying no to Walmart/EDLP until Mid-Stage (\$100K+ in annual sales), or keep pricing relatively high (use 50-200% above cat. avg. unit pricing, depending on what premium competition is doing).

Brava! Thank you Shelley!

This is exactly what my experience has shown and that is why [Food Crafters Alliance](#) was founded!

Not so long ago, I was the co-founder (and do-it-all) at a gourmet food company, with a very, very, tight budget. I know how much creativity and effort it takes to make a sale- be it to a retailer or to the

consumer. For us, once we had established shelf space at Whole Foods and other specialty retailers, **the most successful technique to move the sales graph**, thereby securing our spots on the shelves, **was through sampling and meet-the-maker type events: reaching out and connecting directly with the foodie consumer.** *We learned that once they tasted, they would buy!*

Today it is even harder! The grocery retail landscape is changing at record breaking speed, resulting in a shrinking CPG section and fewer feet actually stepping into the grocery store - due primarily to the surge in online grocery shopping and an abundance of boxed meal delivery kits (i.e. Blue Apron). As a result, many crafters are attempting to sell on Amazon, via social media, or through their own website. Competition is competition. And **it's no surprise that you will still beat your competition by having them taste your product, loving it, and then incentivizing them to your online store.**

Food Crafters Alliance: We help artisanal/gourmet/specialty food producers build their brand through events and networking. Using shared-space, plug-n-play concepts, we keep the costs low, and our members find extreme value in networking within our group.

There is nothing more encouraging when you are launching a new business, than hearing an industry expert discuss the specific need in the industry, that you are fulfilling. It truly was music to my ears!

I'm sure I am not alone in this experience. Have you had a similar situation> Feel free to share!

#food #foodie #specialtyfood #gastronomy #gourmet #artisanalfood #foodtrends #foodresearch #grocery