

The evolution of performance nutrition

Emerging ingredients, products tap into mental and physical benefits for everyday consumers.

FoodBusinessNews.net, 10/6/2017

by Monica Watrous



A performance beverage may be chamomile tea consumed before bed to aid with relaxation.

This is the fourth in a four-part series covering the Hartman Group's "Driving Growth 2017" symposium. Read the [first](#), [second](#) and [third](#) parts.

SEATTLE — No longer limited to athletes or fitness buffs, food and beverage products geared toward performance target a broad range of consumers and occasions. The notion of performance today taps into areas such as mind, movement and sleep, said Drew Nichols, business analyst at the Hartman Group.



Drew Nichols, business analyst at the Hartman Group

"Performance is targeted functionality — it is using food and beverages for a specific purpose," Mr. Nichols said during the Hartman Group's "Driving Growth 2017" symposium on Sept. 27 at the Edgewater Hotel in Seattle. "It may be having your coffee in the morning to keep you more alert ... or a protein shake to help your muscles recover after a workout. It's even having chamomile tea before you go to bed to help relax you and get you a good night's rest."

From this evolution of performance emerges a number of new buzzwords, including probiotics, antioxidants and adaptogens, that shoppers seek in convenient food and beverage formats. Today's savvy consumer prefers products that contain inherently functional ingredients, such as chia seeds or tart cherries, rather than products that have been fortified or enhanced, Mr. Nichols said.



Dean & DeLuca's new "bio nutrition" bars are positioned to help consumers improve concentration and clarity or sustain the mind and body during activity.



"Whether you're a manufacturer, a retailer or food service, it's all about the ingredients," he said. "Consumers are seeking specific ingredients for the values they provide to their bodies."

The potential of performance nutrition has drawn new players to the space. Dean & DeLuca, the specialty retailer, is introducing a range of "bio nutrition" bars, which are positioned to help consumers improve concentration and clarity or sustain the mind and body during activity.

"It's interesting to see a retailer entering the performance space ... and they're not just going to be selling these at their retail locations but also look to get them into other retailers," Mr. Nichols said.



Hiball Energy is an organic energy drink brand that is significantly outpacing the total category.

Beer giant Anheuser-Busch InBev recently bought in to the performance market with the acquisition of Hiball Energy, an organic energy drink brand that is significantly outpacing the total category, Mr. Nichols said.

Beyond bars and beverages, opportunities exist to introduce performance into new product categories, Mr. Nichols said, citing as an example Mamma Chia Vitality Granola, a product line that captured \$1.4 million in mainstream grocery sales last year, according to the Hartman Group.

"Energy is no longer this quick fix that consumers need; it's really about balanced energy, long-term sustained energy," Mr. Nichols said. "Forty-nine per cent of people manage their diet to ensure they have sustained energy throughout the whole day."



Good Day Chocolate offers a range of candy-coated chocolates touting performance benefits.

Other products may promote sleep and relaxation benefits. Good Day Chocolate offers a range of candy-coated chocolates touting performance benefits, including a sleep variety with melatonin and chamomile. REBBL's lineup of bottled beverages features a calming ashwagandha chai variety with ayurvedic spices.

"Performance is all about feeling," Mr. Nichols said. "Make sure you're communicating to consumers this is how they're going to feel well."