



Hartman Retainer Services

2026 overview

Our mission is to translate consumer behavior and food culture into strategic growth opportunities for our clients.

In short, we act as the voice of the consumer.

Who we are

Hartman Group is a research and trends consultancy focused primarily on the food and beverage industry. We are proud to be a WBENC-Certified WBE: women-owned and women-led.

What we do

Consumer/shopper insights

Understand how and why consumers think about, shop for and consume food through trusted research techniques.

Trends and innovation

Discover opportunities that are on-trend, differentiated and aligned with your growth goals by pinpointing where and how trends start.

Strategy

Develop growth strategies that emanate from long-term structural changes in the food landscape and drivers of demand.

Why we're different

Creating marketplace advantage out of cultural change

At Hartman Group, we don't just study consumers, we also study the **cultural changes** that **drive shifts** in their behavior.

A disciplined analytical approach

Our analytical toolkit unpacks consumer culture from a perspective that illuminates **breakthrough insights** for your organization.



About Hartman Retainer Services

Hartman Retainer Services (HRS) is a customized subscription service that provides ongoing access to our consulting team and non-proprietary intellectual capital. From data mining to trend identification, innovation inspiration or strategic support, an HRS partnership connects you to a deep well of data, insights and strategy.

We act as an extension of your team, so you can expect service that is:

Collaborative and independent

We work well by working closely with you, but we can also take the initiative and lead your endeavors when you don't have the time or resources to do so.

Expert and consultative

We offer deep experience understanding how consumers engage with food, brands and channels, and can articulate these distinctive perspectives during strategic and tactical discussions.

Pragmatic and creative

We understand how insights and frameworks operate within organizations to guide decisions. We know how to make trade-offs and innovate solutions, optimizing against a whirlwind of disparate and evolving goals. In short, we are “scrappy.”

Think of Hartman Retainer Services as your food and beverage culture and strategy advisor, **and an extension of your team.**



HRS packages include...



Consulting hours:

- Access to our analytics team to answer your questions via customized reports and data mining
- Access to proprietary Compass Eating & Drinking Occasions Database via custom data cuts and reports



Reports and resources:

- Access to quarterly syndicated reports and accompanying data tables, plus all previously-published reports (2010-present)
- Unlimited access to custom Microsite portal
- Access to all non-proprietary reports and publications, including:
 - Annual *Ideas in Food* trend report
 - Annual eating and drinking occasions report and dashboards
 - Topical white papers and occasions reports



Additional benefits:

- Input into quarterly syndicated reports
- Private webinar presentations of syndicated reports and custom deliverables

Consulting hours

Team members can apply their consulting hours to the following types of activities:

Data mining and deep dive reports with qualitative and quantitative components

Innovation and strategy (brand, product, packaging, retail)

Trend identification and implications (cultural, product, brand and experience)

Occasion-based insights and strategies

Application of Hartman Group's proprietary cultural frameworks and World Model Segmentations

Consumer insights to inform portfolio management

Identify market opportunities (e.g., “white spaces”)

Concept evaluation

Global insights

HRS packages range from 50-400 consulting hours, with a dedicated account manager to oversee all consulting requests and activities. A private Microsite provides access to all available content and facilitates secure communication with your account manager.

HRS BENEFIT

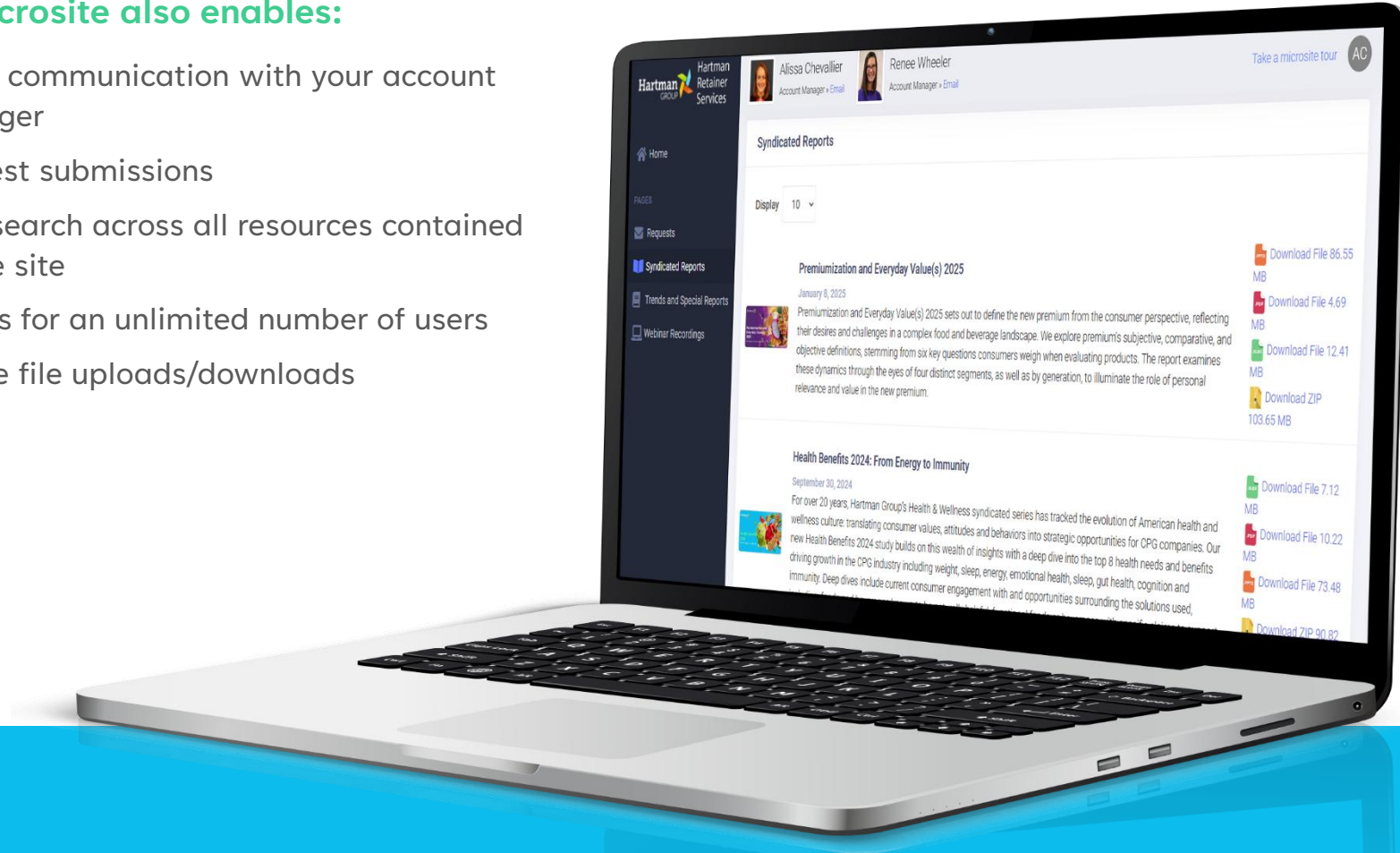
Secure Microsite portal to access all HRS services

The microsite provides access to:

- Hartman Group's full library of syndicated studies
- Your customized deliverables
- White papers and trends reports
- Eating occasions reports
- Announcements
- Webinar recordings

The microsite also enables:

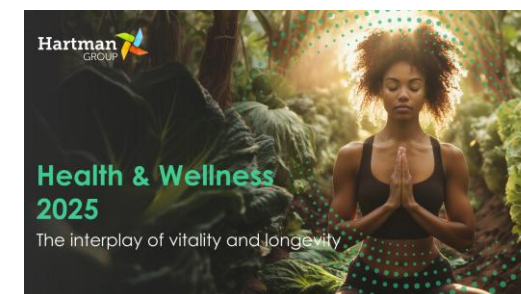
- Direct communication with your account manager
- Request submissions
- Easy search across all resources contained on the site
- Access for an unlimited number of users
- Secure file uploads/downloads



HRS BENEFIT

Access to all syndicated studies (2010-present)

Over 50 food- and beverage-focused research reports, along with accompanying data tables and webinar presentations, are accessible via the HRS Microsite.



Input into and access to quarterly syndicated reports

Q1 2026 | Signals of Quality 2026: Category and Attribute Playbook (publish date March 31, 2026)

Drawing on our deep expertise in consumer behavior, *Signals of Quality 2026* explores the evolving standards shaping consumer choice—revealing the attributes, claims and category cues that define quality in a value-driven marketplace.

Signals of Quality 2026 identifies where consumers are placing heightened scrutiny within specific categories and tracks shifts in relevance for key quality signals over time. It also examines the growing importance of sourcing and production attributes in shaping consumer trust and preference.

Q2 2026 | Snacking 2026: Balancing Purpose and Pleasure (publish date June 30, 2026)

Snacking now accounts for 49% of all eating and drinking occasions, making it one of the most significant food and beverage occasion behaviors. But what snacking means—and how it's done—is rapidly evolving. From on-the-go convenience to indulgence and wellness, consumers are snacking with diverse, personalized intent.

Snacking has evolved into a lifestyle, with American consumers exhibiting dynamic eating patterns that vary significantly between individuals and fluctuate from day to day. *Snacking 2026* reveals how shifting consumer behaviors and evolving priorities are reshaping snack culture, from health-forward choices to demand for personalization and the impact of macroeconomic forces. These strategic insights will help brands innovate for near- and long-term relevancy.

Input into and access to quarterly syndicated reports

Q3 2026 | Meals 2026: The Evolution of Prep to Plate (publish date September 30, 2026)

American mealtimes are continuing to undergo a profound transformation. Traditional rituals around shared meals are giving way to new behaviors shaped by busier lifestyles, shifting priorities and evolving household dynamics. Today's meals are just as likely to be eaten solo, on-the-go or sourced from multiple channels as they are to be cooked from scratch. And with macroeconomic pressures accelerating the move from foodservice to at-home solutions, American eating habits are more dynamic than ever.

Drawing on decades of expertise in food culture, proprietary insights from our database of over 215,000 adult eating and drinking occasions, and fresh qualitative and quantitative research, *Meals 2026* delivers a multidimensional view of how mealtime habits are evolving.

Q4 2026 | Brand Landscape 2026: Trust and Value (publish date early January 2027)

For over two decades, Hartman Group has been a leading source of insights into national and private label brands, charting the rise of store brands and their evolving role in the marketplace. *Brand Landscape 2026* explores how cultural shifts are reshaping the meaning of trust and value in consumers' relationships with brands. The report provides forward-looking guidance on pricing, product attributes, innovation and trust in today's digital and brick-and-mortar environment.

This study highlights the enduring—yet changing—relevance of CPG brands and how they earn consumer trust. As part of the contemporary brand landscape, we spotlight the strategic value private brands bring to retailers through deeper loyalty and shared brand equity.

Access to all white papers (2011-present; recent reports shown below)

We publish several white papers annually, focused on topics of key importance to Hartman Retainer Services clients.

In addition, we provide a variety of occasion-based reports on various topics of interest throughout the year. We appreciate input from our clients on potential coverage areas for these reports.



HRS BENEFIT

Access to annual trends report

Ideas in Food is our annual forecast of emergent and leading-edge ideas and trends. The report monitors at least a dozen trends across three persistent themes within consumer culture (shown below), providing a future-oriented point-of-view that will help you understand which specific trends are worth paying attention to, which ones may not serve your business, and where you can make the greatest impact. This report is published in Q4 of each calendar year.

Experience & Exploration

More than ever before, shopping and dining are interactive journeys that excite consumers' senses and spark curiosity

Food and beverages have long been catalysts for exploration and shared experiences, connecting cultures and people and sparking curiosity on store shelves and at the table. What's new today is how technology and innovation are transforming these moments into fully immersive, interactive journeys where shopping and dining go beyond the act of consumption. Consumers want it all: multisensory explorations that blend convenience, community, adventure and self-expression in every bite and visit. This evolving landscape invites us to rethink how we engage with food and drink as dynamic experiences that inspire, surprise and connect us in new ways.



What people eat & drink:

- Flavor innovation isn't just about novelty—it's going a step further with **Unexpected Flavors** and scroll-stopping mashups
- Turning to **Comfortcore** for a soothing escape from it all when everything feels overwhelming



Where & how people shop:

- Heads up, fine dining: **High End Grocerants** are coming for your lunch (and dinner) money
- When it comes to innovation, **Direct-to-Consumer (D2C)** Still Dominates
- We're in the age of **Better Shopping Through Technology**—including Gamification integrated into everyday experiences



How people live:

- The payoff of enjoying **(Not So) Secret** menus and establishments is worth the extra effort
- Cosmetrition**—cosmetics inspired by and/or containing nutrients from real food—is getting a glow up
- Foods and beverages are ascending from pantry staple to **Luxury Larder**

Supportive Wellbeing

What consumers believe about food—its risks, politics and societal impact—shapes choice as much as taste or nutrition

What subjectively feels good is now as—if not more—important as established dietary advice. Consumers' choices are also increasingly about optimization: going beyond generic recommendations to focus on personalization, precision and efficiency to fine-tune what and how much to consume for maximum benefit. At the same time, consumers are curating diets that reflect not only unique health goals but also ethical and cultural values. Brands and manufacturers must recognize this demand for authenticity and transparency and create options that enable consumers to express identities and beliefs—even if niche—through food and beverage choices.



What people eat & drink:

- Plants for Plants' Sake** celebrates the flavors, textures and nutrients of veggie-rich cuisine
- While non-alcoholic beverages are nothing new, **Mood-Focused Mixology** is evolving
- With protein everywhere and #fibermaxxing saturating social media, what's **The Next Big Ingredient**?



How people eat:

- Microdosing has evolved from biohacking staple to a tool in the personalized nutrition toolkit
- As awareness of microbiome health goes mainstream, innovations are **Simplifying Psychobiotics**
- Endocrine Empowerment** may be the next frontier in personal wellness for people of all genders



What people believe:

- Long before MAHA, food and government in America were intertwined, but now there's a new era of **Politicized Personal Health**
- Ultra Processed Foods:** Poison or permissible indulgence? It's complicated.

Intentional Consumption

Consumers want food and drink that aligns with their values—including the health and wellness of people and the planet

Intentional food and beverage consumption today is shaped by a mix of creativity, responsibility, and curiosity. Consumers are increasingly an audience and an engine for change, as foods and beverages at and away from home turn everyday choices into powerful demonstrations of values. Innovation and adaptation are also at the forefront of sustainability, with newfound opportunities for resilience and research being born of unprecedented challenges. The future of intentional consumption is about engaging with the deeper stories of how, where and why food and beverages exist, and how consumers' choices can shape a more sustainable future.



What people eat & drink:

- Food Rescue** isn't just about ugly produce—it's about excitement, discovery and access
- We're headed back to school to showcase **Sustainability on Campus**



How food is produced:

- Move over Katy Perry and friends...we're excited about **Crops in Space!**
- We're watching how brands adapt in the face of a **Crisis of Cocoa**
- Will climate change force us to look **Beyond the Bottle** at water as an overlooked ingredient?



What people believe:

- As some brands rethink their relationships with certifications, we're taking a closer look at **Trust & Transparency**

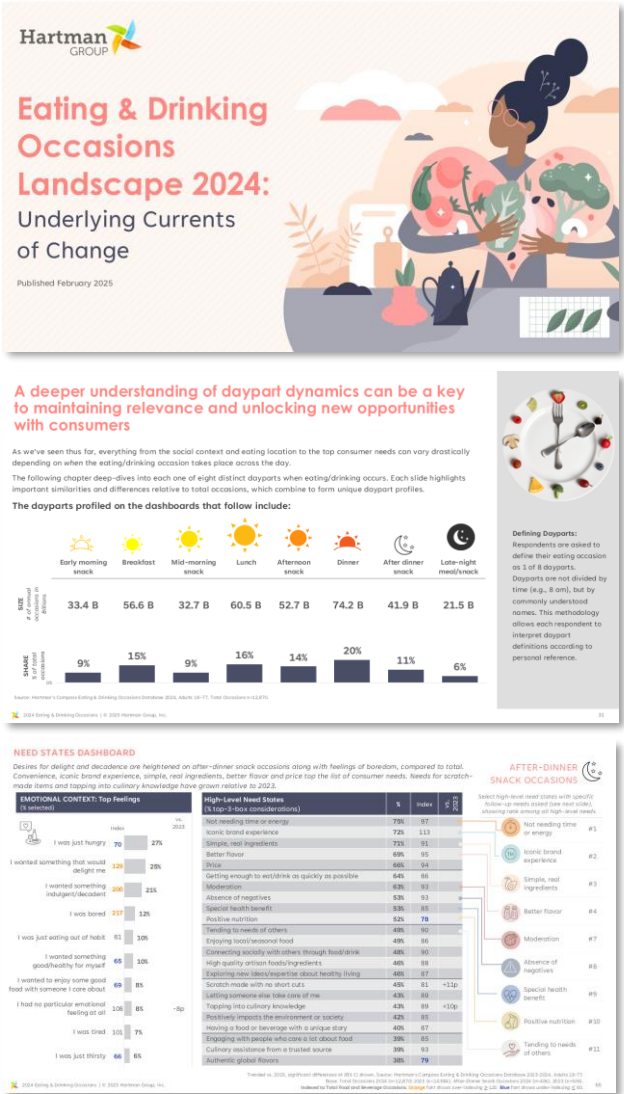
Access to Compass Eating & Drinking Occasions Database

Our proprietary Compass Eating & Drinking Occasions Database provides a comprehensive view of American eating patterns, grounded in a complete enumeration of past-24-hour eating occasions. This database was founded on the insight that consumers do not eat only according to demographics; what they eat and drink is driven by the *occasion*. The database now has 13 years of data consisting of over 215,000 adult eating occasions, plus an additional 55,000+ parent-reported child (ages 0-12) and self-reported teen (ages 13-17) occasions. Each occasion contains the following information:

- **Who:** what person(s) was involved
- **When:** circumstance or time period (e.g., routine snack, celebratory dinner)
- **Where:** the place of the consumption occasion (e.g., at home, office, on the go)
- **From where:** channel used for sourcing
- **What:** the key needs relevant to the occasion
- **Why:** the emotional stakes of the occasion

Access to this database is provided via Hartman Retainer Services consulting hours.

Additionally, Retainer clients receive our annual eating and drinking occasions report, including 8 daypart dashboards that provide rich information about the demographics, categories and needs during each daypart.



Consulting hour request types

Request component	Examples	Est. consulting hours required*
Data points or brief qualitative POV in email	“Do you have any data about scratch cooking as a long-term trend?” “Do you have a statistic on the percentage of consumers actively looking to manage their weight?”	1-3
Syndicated data mining – data tables only	"I'd like to see health and wellness attitudes and behaviors among supplement users" "Please send me data tables from your recent study on Modern Approaches to Eating with a banner for Millennial parents vs. Millennial non-parents"	2-3
Select syndicated slides profiling one specific demographic or category	“We’d like to see the data on conditions consumers are managing by ethnicity.” “We’d like to understand how purchasers of bottled water compare to total consumers on attitudes and behaviors related to sustainable packaging.”	4-6
Basic topic overview	Consumer perspectives on sugar and sweeteners Consumer attitudes and behaviors around non-GMO	8-12
Eating occasions data mining**	“What are the need states (functional and emotional) by daypart?” “What are the demographic differences in terms of occasion participation? (e.g., are Millennials driving the late-night meal occasion?)” “What is the size/opportunity for a specific category/occasion?”	12-15
In-depth POV on specific business questions	”Who does ‘local’ resonate with? What are consumers’ definitions of local? Are there certain categories in which it is more important to be local?” "Our prepared food sales have declined recently. Can you provide a point of view of why this is happening and how we can improve sales and increase consumer perceptions of the department?"	15-20
Marketplace audit	Trend identification & best in class in market examples for a given category or attribute (e.g., RTD coffee, gluten-free frozen pizza...), answering questions such as: “What are key trends in the [category X] marketplace today? What are some of the ‘emerging’ trends in more niche offerings that might affect the [category X] marketplace in 3-5 years? What are emerging trends in [category Y] that could apply to [category X] in the future?”	18-25
Comprehensive category or demographic overview**	“We are seeking an overview on the Hispanic consumer with information that analyzes: lifestyle, food culture, brand preferences, purchase decisions with coupons/deals, budgeting, and shopping trips.” (Includes customized quant and qual components)**	18-25
Trends overview tailored to specific needs	Trend requests can be customized to those most relevant to your specific business (e.g., a retailer will likely have different trends than a CPG manufacturer or restaurant). Example request: "Please provide an overview of key food culture trends most relevant to our category, along with Hartman's perspective on how each trend will evolve over the next 3-5 years."	25+
Strategic consulting on business initiatives	Possible topics and queries are highly variable and customizable. For example: • “What is the level of consumer demand for organic cheese (compared to other organic categories)? Are there unmet needs? (How can Company X position its products to better meet these needs?)” • Evaluation of product innovation pipeline • Competitive audits • Identification of white space opportunities for your category or brand	Varies – Contact account manager for estimate

*These are estimates only, actual hours required will vary depending on specific details of the request.

**Multiple categories or demos, or trended data will require additional hours





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We are proud to be a
WBENC-Certified WBE

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