



TOP TRENDS IN BEVERAGE FORMULATION

BY VIRGINIA DARE

The beverage market has long been incredibly dynamic and innovative, characterized by a high degree of new product development and strong competition for consumer attention. Recent years have seen a particularly intense flurry of new product development, with whole new sub-segments (e.g., kombucha, kefir) emerging, new claims and ingredients developing, and beverage categories overlapping one another.

To compete in this increasingly saturated marketplace, brands must develop new, on-trend applications.

Consumers—especially Millennials—are quite willing to sample new products and appreciate variety in their beverage options. Understanding the consumer

landscape and what trends are upcoming is essential.

Read on for insights from Virginia Dare on three emerging trends and new applications in beverage formulation to identify opportunities for innovation in the beverage market.

TREND: PLANT-BASED PROTEIN

Plant-based eating is a major trend across the food industry. While this does not reflect abandonment of meat proteins, it does indicate a pursuit of “clean eating.” For many, that implies a greater reliance on vegetables over animal products and processed carbohydrates.

In the beverage and nutrition segments, plant-based proteins are particularly

appealing, as they displace whey (a dairy byproduct) and other less desirable ingredients. As we covered in a [previous white paper](#) and [blog post](#), proteins like pea, brown rice, and hemp have boomed in recent years as a component of shakes and dry mix beverages. We expect continued development in the plant-based protein space, as consumer interest in this area shows no sign of abating.



24% of performance drink/mix buyers indicate interest in drinks and/or bars **made with plant protein** such as pea

27% of nutritional drink/mix buyers indicate interest in drinks and/or bars **made with plant protein** such as pea

US sales of plant-based proteins were **\$553 million** in 2012, according to Mintel

The **global plant-based protein market** is projected to reach **\$5 billion by 2020**, according to Markets and Markets

Sources: Mintel, Plant Based Foods Association

TREND IN ACTION

NutraProtein Power Blend: a dry mix beverage containing protein from pea, sacha inchi, brown rice, and hemp as well as other energy-boosting ingredients. Rather than the conventional stevia, this natural beverage is sweetened with monkfruit.

Good Karma Flaxmilk Omega-3 + Protein: a plant-based milk fortified with omega-3s, vitamins, and protein, available in a variety of flavors and formats.

TREND: FORTIFIED COFFEE BEVERAGES

Coffee beverages fortified to deliver nutritional claims are a growing category. Consumers have grown familiar with coffee as a functional beverage through wellness brands like Bulletproof Coffee, which adds butter and MCT oil to the beverage to produce a ketogenic effect supporting weight loss. Other consumers are seeking less processed, less sugary energy options, and coffee-based drinks fit the bill well.

These beverages add nutrients like protein or herbal ingredients traditionally

associated with energy brands, like guarana or ginseng. New brands add highly specialized botanicals like acacia fiber, maca root, and quillaja extract, which can pose taste challenges due to inherent bitterness or off notes that they contribute.

With vast experience in masking capabilities for a wide range of active ingredients, Virginia Dare can help achieve a better tasting end product for fortified coffee and other clean energy drinks as they grow in popularity.



76% of consumers agree that nutritional drinks made from **natural ingredients** are as effective as those using manufactured ingredients

27% of consumers see **coffee as healthier** than other caffeinated beverages

Sources: Mintel

TREND IN ACTION

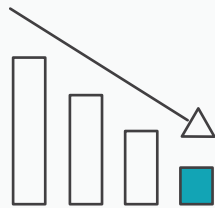
Espresso Monster: new products from Monster Energy contain three shots of espresso blended with European milk and Monster's proprietary energy blend. The product comes in two flavors: Espresso and Cream and Vanilla Espresso.

Starbucks Doubleshot Energy: a new line of coffee-based energy from the leading coffee brand, combining cold brew coffee with guarana, vitamins, and ginseng.

TREND: SUGAR REDUCTION

The **new nutrition label** places additional scrutiny on the quantity of sugar in foods and beverages. Diet trends are shifting away from minimizing fat or carbohydrates and toward limiting sugar, and soda taxes have placed special emphasis on the sugar content of beverages in particular. Beverage manufacturers thus need to consider ways to reduce sugar without affecting taste.

Many brands are addressing this challenge using flavor modulation technology, which uses flavors to enhance the perception of sweetness even in the absence of additional sugar. Virginia Dare's **Taste Collaborations platform** operates in this manner, helping brands reach targeted sugar levels while retaining excellent sensory quality in soft drinks, energy drinks, smoothies, and more.



49% of US consumers are trying to eat **less sugar**

In a global survey, **more than 60%** of respondents said they **monitor their sugar intake**

25% of consumers globally actively seek **low sugar food products**

Sources: Leatherhead Food Research, Sensus

TREND IN ACTION

Capri Sun: the familiar children's beverage brand reformulated in late 2017 to reduce sugar in three of its existing product lines: Capri Sun Organic, 100% Juice, and Fruit and Veggie Blends. It also launched a new three-SKU line called Fruit Refreshers, made with a 50/50 blend of juice and water.

Genesis Today Superfruit Juices: the premium superfood juice brand launched three new flavors with less sugar, including Açai Berry, Greens + Flaxseed, and Pomegranate & Berries + Resveratrol. The new flavors contain as much as 72% less sugar than competitors and deliver a variety of vitamins and minerals.



BEVERAGE FORMULATION WITH VIRGINIA DARE

Whether you're developing new plant-based protein beverages, increasing your coffee's nutritional profile, or reducing your application's sugar content, the talented team of flavorists and industry experts at Virginia Dare can help.

*For over 90 years, we have collaborated with our partners to build products that deliver preferred taste. Combining formulation expertise with our **Taste Foundations** and **Taste Collaborations** platforms, we create business advantages for our partners. We align our market insights with our broad portfolio of natural extracts and flavors to keep our partners on top of consumer trends.*

*To get formulation assistance or a sample of one of our natural flavors, **get in touch.***

