

As seen in



Growing Your Specialty and Natural Foods Program

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We see, year in and out, that the retailers, that have established strong specialty and natural food sales program can drive both sales and profits.

For our Chex Customers, the top three categories are crackers, pasta and pasta sauces, and snacks. Of our top 15 selling items, 4 were snacks, 3 were vegetables and 2 each were stocks, cookies and pasta sauce.

The highest growing categories are Candy and Confection, Cookies, Pasta Sauce and Beverages. Candy was the highest growing category that was fueled by the growth of infused flavor profiles such as sea salt, bacon, spicy, caramel and the combinations thereof.



New items include trends in healthy snacking, healthy eating and gluten free. Healthy snacking include an explosion in low fat popcorn, chickpea snacks inspired by the growth of the hummus category and coconut chips that builds on the success of coconut water. Healthy eating encompasses the evolution of the raw foods category to include sprouted nuts, trail mixes and cereals and more ancient grains including Freekah and lentils. Gluten free continues to grow more and more across all categories.

The line between specialty and mainstream foods continues to blur due to the escalating "foodie" movement and as consumers health consciousness increases. According to the National Association for the Specialty Food Trade, 76 percent of U.S. adults enjoy talking about new or interesting foods and two-thirds of adults purchase specialty foods for everyday home meals.¹

The largest gains will be seen by retailers who feature specialty and natural food as a program. They consistently advertise and promote. They push their top selling items. They educate their customers, demo their products and cross merchandise throughout the store. They work with their vendors and distributors to establish points of differentiation from competing stores. They are willing to try something and have a consistent flow of on-trend and new products.

¹ <http://www.specialtyfood.com/news-trends/featured-articles/article/foodie-movement-gains-momentum/>