

Opinion: Quality or Variety: Brands thriving with a Health Kick

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By [Sheenu Jain](#)

Samaira, a 29-year-old digital marketing professional has revised her list of 'must-have' since past few years and ensures it has all the 'health'-based products she needs. Samaira is one of the growing number of health-conscious consumers in this country embracing health-based products and products talking about health to their lifestyle. Today, brands have dedicated segments for consumers like Samiara and their rising interest in health – they prefer brands that align with their thoughts and make them feel healthy and fit.

A look into the social media will tell Haldi is the flavor of the moment. Instagram photos or other social media mentions are filled with health-tubers who are not tired of going gaga over its near-magical properties. Health is the buzzword in this pandemic time than ever before, and brands are displaying their 'healthy' efforts to entice consumers with a series of new campaigns displaying renewed interest in a trend that talks about boosting immunity and nutrients, killing germs to increase safety against disease and improving health. The threat of infection, disease, immunity, and death is a frightening syndrome for human being and any brand that is able to tap that apprehension can entice them with a booster to improve their health, immunity, or stop the spread of diseases. It is a sure way to secure a place in the heart of the consumers. In this time of uncertainty, when people do not know how much they will be impacted, it makes it easy to catastrophise and create panic.

Fathoming the Choice of Consumers today

Any product that promises to safekeep the health of the consumer or that of their people is well accepted today. This seems to be a clear trend and will continue to rise in this pandemic time. According to an EY study on COVID-19 and the emergence of new product landscape in India, there is a 350 per cent increase in hygiene products, an 80 per cent increase in demand for chyawanprash, 40 per cent rise in demand for turmeric, and 100 per cent increase in demand for packaged food. In the marketer's language, these sets of people are called healthy believers, and they are willing to try, experiment, pay a premium, and ultimately prepared, to buy the products. According to the Global Wellness Institute, mental and physical health is becoming a top priority for people, and they are making an informed and conscious choice before connecting and engaging with brands. The Deloitte Global Healthcare outlook survey 2020 emphasized that there is an increasing trend by brands towards introducing products that supports healthier diets and lifestyle. COVID-19 has made people rediscover the importance of immunity and resulted in increased demand for immunity boosters and multivitamin supplements in the market. With the speed of Kale, previously unheard of new products are appearing in our newsfeed.

Variety is the Mantra

To take on COVID-19 or to keep it at bay, marketer's are pushing new products right from multivitamins to traditional concoctions from kitchen added with herbs and spices. One of those unconventional immunity boosters that we are seeing on shelves today is Modern's 400 gram Immuno bread loaf priced at Rs 45. The package headline reads, "Ayush Ministry recommended immunity ingredients now in bread." The ingredients include ginger, turmeric, clove, cinnamon, cumin, black pepper, and jaggery as immunity boosters. During the pandemic, milk no longer needs to be plain. Amul, always known for its innovative products, has launched Ginger Doodh, Haldi Doodh, and Tulsi Doodh variants. The brand has doubled its range of immunity booster variants that saw a multifold surge in demand, buoying the company to announce the launch of a Turmeric ice cream.

It is not just the FMCG brands that are innovating during the pandemic: Linc pen has launched the gizmo of the future – the Pentatonic COVID-19 killer. It is a finger-free touch device that keeps people safe when physical contact is unavoidable. This pocket-sized sterilizing marker can be used on the surface while on the move. It functions as an extension of the index finger, and one can press the doorbell, touch ATM, swipe machines, touch switches using this – it is incredibly easy to carry and helps the user completely avoid physical contact with any possibly-contaminated surface.

Going forward, to get the slice of wellness, brands have to leverage all the tools – right from social media to data science, and digitize fast, improve customer experience, enrich products with healthy ingredients and try to remain relevant to customers. But at the same time, to expand their footprint amidst the growing wave of health consciousness, they also need to act responsible.

The author is an associate professor and chair marketing and communication at IIHMR University, Jaipur.