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Healthy eating: Food service industry will have to clean up its act to suit changing tastes

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Abstracts

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SUMMARY

Across the world the food industry has to change its production methods to meet up with new consumer demands. Customers are now more interested in healthy food, organic produce and veganism and the food service industry will have to find ways to change and meet this demand. Veganism in particular is growing dramatically all around the world and there will soon be a need for large scale chain restaurants to provide this kind of produce.

Further scandals in the food industry are actually a catalyst for these changes as scandals such as the sugar health scares revealed in 2017 and 2018 and consumers began to drop sugary drinks. There are big opportunities available in the food service industry to better hit these trends and restaurants have to find a better way to advertise their healthy produce.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

In 2018, the same as most other years previous, there has been a significant food scandal, with the abattoir standards scandal which has spread through the US and UK. Meat scandals are perhaps the most significant as they represent a major risk to public health.

Almost two thirds of audited meat cutting factories in England, Wales and Northern Ireland had at least one instance of major non-compliance with

hygiene or food safety regulations in 2017 and this problem is not limited to the UK with the problem stretching across the Atlantic too.

In many senses the food service industry can be separated from these problems, with consumers rarely punishing restaurants directly for these types of issues back in the supply chain. However, scandals increasingly hit individual restaurants and outlets too, with numerous food safety outbreaks recorded.

For the average consumer identifying restaurants that comply with organic, healthy eating, local, vegan or any of the emerging trends in the food industry is difficult. Disclosure from restaurants is usually obscure about where their food is from and consumers would need to expend significant energy researching various food establishments and their methods.

A further problem is that food advice is constantly changing and the food industry in some cases even deliberately obscures information to suit its producers. This is a source of significant irritation for consumers and for food service companies that are trying to implement many of these healthy food trends to attract customers, they could be making changes fruitlessly if no one knows they are doing it.

For instance in the UK many small independent restaurant businesses are perceived to be more healthy, but they can be selling much more unhealthy food than the big chains in some cases, but there is no good way for consumers to check themselves. The industry will have to find a uniform and clear way to display this information for consumers because it is now much more important to them.

SCOPE

Some ethical food branded business have been developing, such as the Veggie Pret a Manger or Hawksmoor restaurants, but the majority of the food movement has been restricted to smaller independent businesses that generally sit in fashionable inner-city areas.

Coupled with this there are a number of food movements have been developing such as the Slow Food movement in Europe which restaurants can get signed up to and is organization focused on local food grow ethically and responsibly.

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There also have a been a number of very big steps by major restaurant brands to clean up their image.

For instance, in the UK McDonalds launched a large national advertising campaign to combat the image that it's food is made using suspicious, unethical or unsavory processes taking it to the number one spot in advertising spend in the UK in 2017, as well as added a large new variety of healthier options to its menu.

However, apart from these changes that companies are implementing there has not as yet been a significant rise of any large franchise food service brands that specifically designed good food practices, vegetarianism or ethical operation into its business model.

There is a definite opportunity here in future to appeal to consumers with the right product. To do this transparency, supply chains and sustainability will be crucial issues to solve.

REASONS TO BUY

What are the major changes happening in the foodservice industry?

Who are the major players implementing those changes

What problems does the industry currently face?

What does the future of the industry look like?

Are there any major opportunities for players to capitalize on?

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Contents

Executive Summary
Summary
Food service industry will need to clean up its act to suit changing tastes
Food industry is constantly hit by food safety scandals
Number of vegans has grown dramatically, due to concern over industry practices
World is trending towards plant based eating and the major brands are aware
Restaurants need to better display their healthy eating credentials
Sugar scandal is due to change the industry significantly
There are big opportunities for ethical food businesses
Conclusion
Appendix
Further Reading
Ask the analyst
About MarketLine
Disclaimer

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List Of Tables

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Nestlé's announced goals for its food range

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List Of Figures

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Plant based diets UK 2006-2016
Figure 2: Veggie Pret, the vegetarian Pret a Manger
Figure 3: Google trends showing the global hotspots for vegan related google searches

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