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The Next Idea Eating Out Forecast 2014 and forward

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It's that time again – when we review the past year and predict how food and hospitality trends will appear in 2014 and beyond.

Forecasting future directions relies on a careful balance of correctly interpreting history and foundation, along with an analysis of the current consumer frame of mind.

Robert Ancill One thing we know for certain--the traditional research methods are less relevant in our modern dynamic consumer landscape. Therefore, we continue to employ non-traditional, innovative research techniques in order to successfully forecast trends. One method that The Next Idea researchers have found increasingly important when compiling forecasts, is to take into events and global trends. Our theory is that by understanding the consumer mentality, (which is impacted by its surrounding world and events), we can more effectively forecast evolving expectations.

The Next Idea's report is based on findings from leading market-research firms, augmented by our own consultants' grassroots and global experience this past year working with our national and international clients. It is also based on our experience observing and forecasting trends for the past 11 years.

We are, after all, what we eat!

As we look forward, where is the link between the sphere of global change and the microcosm of

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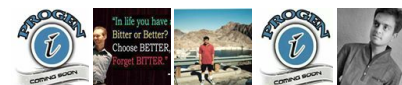
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emerging food trends? Simplistically, the connection is derived through transparency and honesty. As world events and advocacy pump through traditional and modern media platforms, consumers can't help but take notice of grass roots messages and connect with other consumers who are exposed to the same. They are forming new opinions and their needs modify. This has led to a demand wave shift and an overwhelming mandate for honesty and truth at large as well as in the human fuel we call 'food'.

Forecast For 2014 and beyond

While 2013 has been a unique and exciting year, we now explore how this impacts the future. At The Next Idea, we are passionate about trends and about focusing our concept development work to address future trends before they become part of the mainstream market. We welcome your thoughts and feedback, and we invite you to email us with your comments, whether you believe we nailed it – or not!

In America, we have become obsessed with food. On TV we have Hell's Kitchen, Bar Rescue, Top Chef and America's Test Kitchen, to name only a few. Online, Pinterest and Food spotting are two of the most widely used applications. Across the nation, farmer's markets have virtually taken over in every neighborhood. In turn, we have become nations of discerning eaters, posting our menu wherever we can, where it was bought, how it tasted, and with whom it was consumed, yet despite this, we really can't cook!

That's of course good news for foodservice consultants and food retail industries that can offer convenience and provide the products to fill our cravings and curiosity for food. The consumer, however, is setting parameters as to what they will and will not buy. At a macro level, there are six key areas where consumers are making big demands:

1. Labeling
2. Health
3. Brave flavors and uncontaminated ingredients
4. Nostalgia
5. Environmental Impact
6. Fair-trade

Summary: The Food and Restaurant Forecast

As we reflect on 2013, we cannot help but wonder about the future.

At The Next Idea, we believe considerable good will be generated by history. Moreover, this good will be driven by the people who were affected most. Globalization is changing our world faster than we know it. Facebook may have changed the world, but new technologies will eventually challenge its presently enviable position. Yet despite the fascinating, ever-evolving changes in how and what we eat, two things that never change are our need to eat and that social behavior is a human instinct. And so, one final absolutely certain prediction: the humble restaurant will survive another year.

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