

A large, stylized sunburst graphic with numerous thin rays radiating from the center, set against a solid orange background. The rays are light orange and create a starburst effect behind the text.

SPARKS OF GREATNESS

Retailers can boost profits by
keeping shelves stocked with the
most innovative new products
along with old favorites.

BY REBEKAH MARCARELLI



A retailer's job of stocking shelves with new products can be tough. Grocers must ask themselves whether a product will be a hit with their customer base and if it will exist for more than a few months. They also must ensure that they are offering shoppers enough new, eye-catching items to keep them engaged and eager to explore the center store. This is where Toronto-based BrandSpark International's Best New Products and Most Trusted Brands awards programs can come in handy.

Based on an independent survey of more than 10,000 shoppers, BrandSpark's leaderboard contenders are 100 percent consumer-voted in an effort to recognize the most innovative and promising new products on the market, as well as the brands that are most trusted among Americans.

For nearly a decade, the Best New Product Awards and the companion American Shopper Study have helped consumers find their voice in the market, and retailers can profit from listening. Robert Levy, president and CEO of BrandSpark International and founder of the Best New Product Awards, says the program helps consumers seek out and purchase the top rated new products that can be trusted to be effective and deliver good value for the money. While the American Shopper Study

provides manufacturers with important insight into the minds of American consumers and their purchasing patterns, helping them deliver the meaningful innovation and value that can be a great advantage to retailers. Retailers themselves have also made an appearance on the list, with private label heavy-hitter Aldi snagging eight mentions on the Best New Products list.

Insights from BrandSpark show that 74 percent of shoppers like trying new products and 63 percent say they will pay a little more for a new product that appears to be better than what was previously available. According to BrandSpark, product innovation is as important as ever to capture shoppers' attention, as 45 percent say they are less brand loyal than they were a few years previously.

Deals continue to be a major driver among consumers, with 48 percent reporting they use coupons from coupon circulars "most weeks," and 31 percent now using a coupon-app on their smartphone (up 5 percent versus 2016), often in addition to print coupons. The research also indicates word-of-mouth recommendations still have a significant impact on the market, with 68 percent of shoppers trusting consumer-voted awards. Further, 58 percent of shoppers say products named to the list of the BNPAs positively influences their opinion of a product.

Without further ado, GHQ is proud to present BrandSpark's Best New Products of 2017:



BEST NEW PRODUCTS OF 2017

BEAUTY & PERSONAL CARE

- **Conditioner:** Pantene Expert Intense Hydration Conditioner
- **Facial Mask:** L'Oréal Paris Pure Clay Mask
- **Lip Color:** Burt's Bees Lipstick
- **Shampoo:** Pantene Expert Intense Hydration Shampoo
- **Men's Body Wash:** Old Spice Hardest Working Collection Body Wash Dirt Destroyer Steel Courage
- **Men's Deodorant/Antiperspirant:** Old Spice Hardest Working Collection Invisible Solid Odor Blocker Lasting Legend
- **Mascara/Primer:** L'Oréal Paris Voluminous Primer
- **Women's Deodorant/Antiperspirant:** Secret Fresh Antiperspirant and Deodorant Invisible Solid, Cool Waterlily

FOOD & BEVERAGE

- **Bread:** ALDI Specially Selected Brioche Buns
- **Coconut Water:** ALDI Nature's Nectar Coconut Water
- **Cooking Oil/Spray:** Thrive Culinary Algae Oil
- **Eggs:** ALDI SimplyNature Organic Cage Free Brown Eggs
- **Flavored Sparkling Water:** La Croix Sparkling Water Tangerine
- **Frozen Treat:** Breyers Chocolate Hazelnut Gelato Indulgences
- **Mexican Sauce/Seasoning:** Ortega Skillet Sauces
- **Rice:** ALDI SimplyNature Organic Rice

- **Savory Snacks:** ALDI SimplyNature Organic White Cheddar Puffs
- **Soup:** Idahoan Premium Steakhouse Potato Soups
- **Specialty Pasta:** ALDI liveGfree Organic Gluten Free Brown Rice Quinoa Pasta
- **Specialty Vodka:** Smirnoff Sourced
- **Vegetarian Food:** Yves Veggie Cuisine Appetizers – Falafel Balls and Kale & Quinoa Bites

HOUSEHOLD

- **Dish Soap:** Palmolive Ultra Fusion Clean
- **Fabric Care:** Snuggle PLUS SuperFresh – Fabric Softener
- **In-Wash Scent Booster or Laundry Scent Booster:** Downy Fresh Protect with Febreze Odor Defense – April Fresh
- **Liquid Laundry Detergent:** Purex plus Clorox2 Stain Fighting Enzymes Liquid Laundry Detergent
- **Single Dose Laundry Detergent:** TIDE PODS Plus Febreze Odor Defense

KIDS

- **Baby Food:** ALDI Little Journey Baby Purees
- **Baby Wash/Shampoo:** Johnson's Head-to-Toe Extra Moisturizing Baby Wash
- **Baby Wipes:** Johnson's Head-to-Toe Baby Cleansing Cloths
- **Diapers/Training Pants:** Pampers Easy Ups
- **Kids Snacks:** ALDI Little Journey Yogurt Bites





TRIED AND TRUSTED

While a retailer's ability to keep influx of exciting new products is important, today's shoppers also expect to find their tried and true brands on grocery shelves.

For the fourth consecutive year, American shoppers stepped up and determined the Most Trusted Brand winners in the following categories: Food & Beverage; Health & Beauty; Household & Pets; and Kids & Babies.

According to BrandSpark, Americans increasingly trust brands they perceive as more values-based or fair and ethical. These values can include accessible prices and honest support of social causes. Levy urges one of the most valuable instances of cause-marketing occurs when a brand takes a position that entails some risk, which like-minded consumers tend to view as a mark of authenticity.

Another important way for brands to gain trust is to respond to problems that may arise quickly and transparently. Seventy-percent of shoppers say brands that "respond quickly to serious product issues" greatly increase their trust, more than any other brand action. Levy affirms that while major product issues can be downfalls, Americans are often willing to give brands a second chance if the company address the problem responsibly and reminds shoppers of the trust they have gained with them over the years.

Here are the winners that have gained a rapport with American shoppers and come out on top in BrandSpark's Most Trusted Product research:

HOUSEHOLD & PETS PRODUCTS 2017 WINNING BRANDS

- ♦**Air Freshener:** Glade
- ♦**Battery:** Duracell
- ♦**Cat Food:** Purina
- ♦**Cat Litter:** Purina
- ♦**Dish Soap:** Dawn
- ♦**Dishwasher Detergent:** Cascade
- ♦**Dog Food:** Purina
- ♦**Dog Treats:** Milk Bone
- ♦**Eco-Friendly Cleaning Products:** Seventh Generation
- ♦**Fabric Softener:** Downy
- ♦**Flea & Tick Control:** Frontline
- ♦**Floor Cleaner:** Mr. Clean / Pine-Sol (tie)
- ♦**Household Cleaning:** Clorox / Lysol (tie)
- ♦**Laundry Detergent:** Tide
- ♦**Laundry Stain Remover:** Shout
- ♦**Paper Towels:** Bounty

KIDS & BABIES PRODUCTS 2017 WINNING BRAND

- ♦**Baby Food:** Gerber
- ♦**Baby Formula:** Enfamil
- ♦**Baby Wash/Shampoo:** Johnson & Johnson
- ♦**Baby Wipes:** Huggies
- ♦**Children's Allergy Medication:** Benadryl / Claritin (tie)
- ♦**Children's Sunscreen:** Coppertone
- ♦**Children's Toothpaste:** Crest
- ♦**Children's Toy:** Fisher Price
- ♦**Children's Vitamin:** Flintstones
- ♦**Diapers:** Pampers
- ♦**Infant/Children's Pain & Fever Medication:** Tylenol
- ♦**Infant/Children's Tooth Pain Relief:** Orajel

HEALTH & BEAUTY PRODUCTS 2017 WINNING BRANDS

- ♦**Adult Incontinence:** Poise
- ♦**Adult Sunscreen:** Coppertone
- ♦**Adult Tooth Pain Relief:** Orajel
- ♦**Adult Vitamin:** Centrum
- ♦**Allergy Relief:** Benadryl
- ♦**Antacid:** Tums
- ♦**Arthritis Pain Relief:** Tylenol
- ♦**Body Moisturizer:** Aveeno
- ♦**Body Wash:** Dove
- ♦**Condom:** Trojan
- ♦**Contact Lens Solution:** Bausch & Lomb
- ♦**Cough & Cold Remedy:** Vicks
- ♦**Facial Cleanser:** Olay
- ♦**Feminine Sanitary Products:** Always
- ♦**Foundation:** CoverGirl
- ♦**Hair Color:** L'Oréal
- ♦**Hair Removal:** Nair
- ♦**Hand Soap:** Dial
- ♦**Headache Pain Relief:** Tylenol
- ♦**Lip Balm:** Chapstick
- ♦**Lip Color:** Revlon
- ♦**Mascara:** Maybelline
- ♦**Men's Body Wash:** Dove
- ♦**Men's Deodorant/Antiperspirant:** Old Spice
- ♦**Men's Hair Styling:** Axe
- ♦**Men's Shaving:** Gillette
- ♦**Mouthwash:** Listerine
- ♦**Sensitive Toothpaste:** Sensodyne
- ♦**Shampoo & Conditioner (Men):** Head & Shoulders
- ♦**Shampoo & Conditioner (Women):** Pantene
- ♦**Smoke Cessation:** Nicorette
- ♦**Teeth Whitening:** Crest
- ♦**Toothbrush:** Colgate
- ♦**Toothpaste:** Crest

- ♦**Topical Pain Relief:** Icy Hot
- ♦**Weight Loss Program:** Weight Watchers
- ♦**Women's Deodorant/Antiperspirant:** Secret
- ♦**Women's Hair Styling:** Pantene / TRESemmé (tie)
- ♦**Women's Shaving:** Gillette

FOOD & BEVERAGE PRODUCTS 2017 WINNING BRANDS

- ♦**Beer:** Budweiser
- ♦**Butter:** Land O' Lakes
- ♦**Candy:** Hershey's
- ♦**Chocolate:** Hershey's
- ♦**Coffee:** Folgers
- ♦**Eggs:** Eggland's Best
- ♦**Energy Drink:** Red Bull
- ♦**Ice Cream:** Breyers
- ♦**Pasta:** Barilla
- ♦**Vodka:** Smirnoff
- ♦**Yogurt:** Yoplait



THE KEY TO NEW PRODUCTS SUCCESS? CONSUMERS MUST WANT TO BUY IT AGAIN

To gain a deeper understanding of what today's shoppers are looking for and how retailers can capitalize on the Best New Products and Most Trusted Brands, *GHQ* spoke with BrandSpark International President/CEO Robert Levy.

Grocery Headquarters: What's the significance of your program? What motivated BrandSpark to launch the Best New Products awards and what does it mean for the winners?

Robert Levy: Through our experience assisting brands with new products development, we were aware of how difficult it is even for great new products to stand out in store: even a year after a national launch only one in three category shoppers are aware of the average new product.

Meanwhile, consumers would tell us that it's hard to keep up with all the new products on store shelves, even as eight in 10 agree that they like trying them. With these issues in mind, we conceived of the Best New Product Awards as a way to help marketers ensure their brand's best new products stand out, and to guide consumers toward innovations that are truly worth spending their money on. BrandSpark launched the Best New Product Awards 15 years ago in Canada and 10 years ago in the United States.

GHQ: Given the high rate of product failures, what in your opinion has the makings of built-to-last new product.

Levy: An innovation must provide a



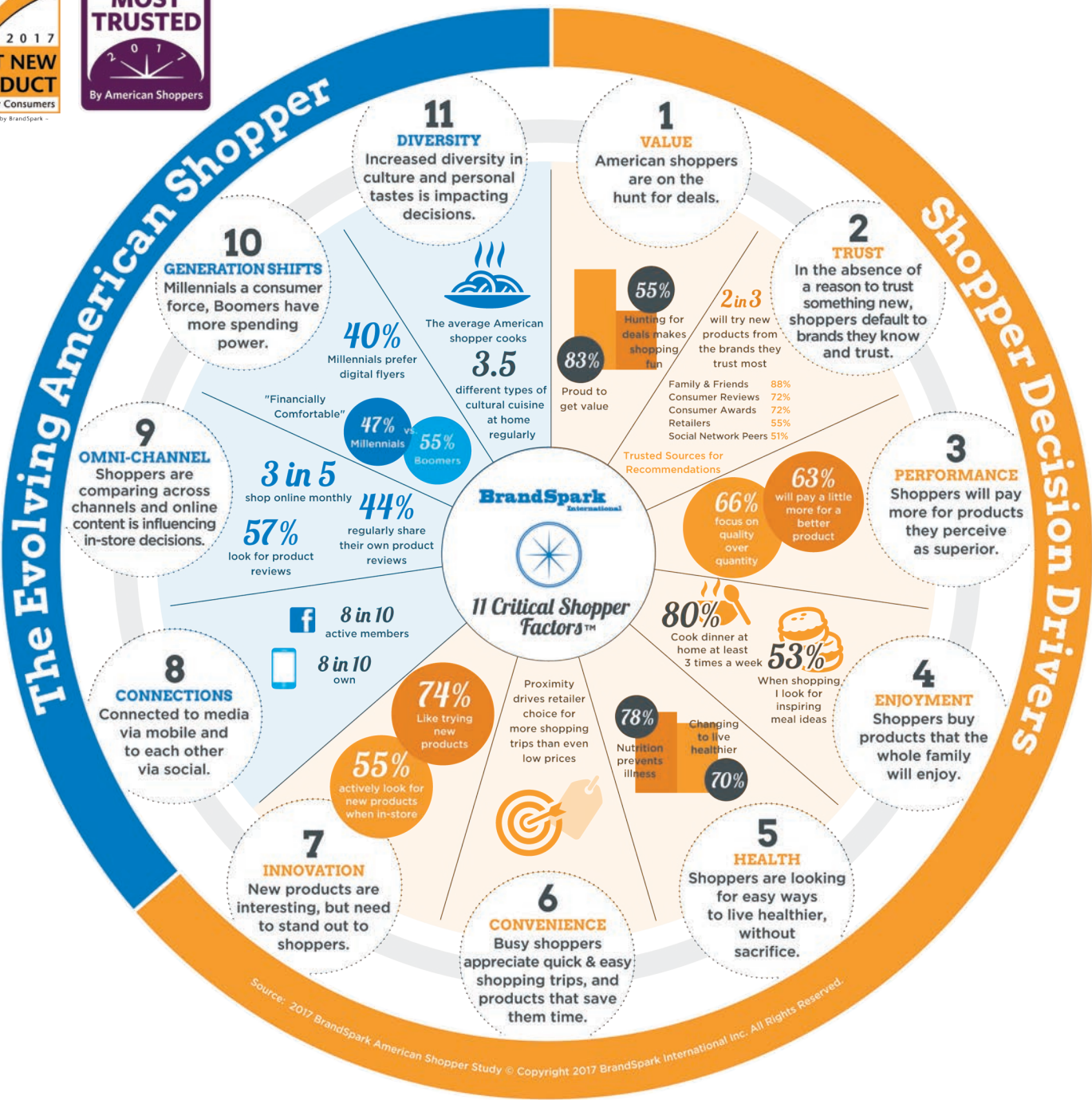
meaningful and noticeable incremental benefit compared to other options available to the consumer; must be communicated such that the consumer benefit is properly understood; and be delivered at a fair price. A successful new product needs to truly deliver the unique experience that it promises and be perceived as great value. Consumers must want to buy the product again. That is why the Best New Product Awards focuses on the products that real purchasers are most likely to plan to buy again with their own money.

More specifically, we can look to our Critical Shopper Factors wheel (see Page 46), which was informed by the successful innovations we've tracked in the Best New Product Awards: the foundation of any product purchase is value perception and brand trust, against which the specific benefits are weighed: superior performance, enjoyment factors like taste, health benefits

and convenience are the primary categories for product innovation that resonates with American shoppers.

GHQ: Beyond the obvious trends such as better-for-you, what do you anticipate will be important factors for the next generation of new products?

Levy: American shoppers appreciate eco-friendly and sustainable products, though most do not want to pay more. These benefits create positive brand associations and prepare brands for the continuing shift to healthier ingredients. In household care, consumers are increasingly looking to avoid harsh ingredients and continue to prioritize convenient formats and extreme efficacy. In personal care and beauty, consumers want products to be effective but gentle on skin. Natural products and new 'natural' ingredients are resonating for beauty products.



Source: 2017 BrandSpark American Shopper Study © Copyright 2017 BrandSpark International Inc. All Rights Reserved.

In food and beverage, Americans want products that are more natural but offer rich taste, and innovations that offer convenience without sacrificing quality do well. Food horizons are also getting broader as more and more Americans are welcoming new flavors. Shoppers are increasingly looking for food products that are free of preservatives, free of artificial sweeteners, GMO-free and antibiotic free. On the side of positive ingredients, Americans are valuing protein content more than ever.

GHQ: Given that new products are the lifeblood of food retailing, do you feel that they will continue to retain their clout in grocery and will it spill into e-commerce?

Levy: The breadth of products that can be found online, including many not even available on store shelves, should serve to accelerate innovation even more. The ability of small and medium sized brands to innovate and reach a market online will pressure the major producers to continue to listen to American

consumers and innovate to keep up with their needs. As shoppers migrate to the low-cost discount channels for basic products, and start to sign up to subscribe and save models for household staples or make voice-assistant aided re-orders via devices like Amazon Alexa and Google Home, innovation will remain important to stand out and disrupt shoppers default buying habits.

GHQ: What are the most telling characteristics of retailers that



demonstrate superiority with new products?

Levy: Those retailers with a large selection of strong brands are the ones that are most recognized for new products. They make space at shelf and are willing to work with brands to offer them opportunities to promote their new products in-store. On the other side are retailers that rely heavily on private label, and we've seen these stores as well put an emphasis on new products and innovation. An example is Aldi, which is promoting innovation within its store brand offering as another lever to drive overall value as a retailer.

GHQ: In this era of SKU/category rationalization, what does a new product need to stand out?

Levy: Brands need to convince the retailer that there is a real consumer demand for the product. Innovation should continue to start at consumer needs. A thorough process of consumer research and product refinement, helps ensure that the right concepts are developed and go-to-market products are positioned to succeed. The consumer validation is also key to making the case to retailers that the product belongs on shelf.

A strong launch strategy is also necessary to show success quickly. Strategies including heavy price promotion, prominent placement in-store and support from consumer endorsements are among those that will drive consumer trial. As shoppers turn to e-commerce to research and purchase in addition to brick and mortar, brands also need to monitor presence online and ensure that their products are properly supported on each retailer's website with ratings and reviews, and look to the products with the strongest consumer feedback as candidates for promotion.

GHQ: During your time in consumer research, what have you learned about factors that drive brand loyalty?

Levy: Brand loyalty is driven by a consistent strong product experience, often across



multiple products, and products regularly offered at what the consumer views as a fair price. Innovation to keep up with emerging consumer trends, especially in health, builds loyalty for food brands. The greatest moments of truth for these brands is how they respond when quality issues do arise: responding directly to consumer issues, being transparent and taking responsibility allow brands to bounce back from problems faster. The most common way to lose trust is to react too slowly to remove or replace ingredients that have made their way on a majority of American 'watch-out' lists.

Emotional factors can also be important, especially family history using the brand – Olay is a particular example that resonates across generations. More practically, regular use is also important to developing trust and the habit of purchase that combine into real brand loyalty. A competitive price, promotions, and encouraging stocking-up are all ways to ensure a greater share of fridge or pantry space from the consumer and a way them to grab a greater share of mind.

GHQ: How can retailers boost brand loyalty or capitalize on brands that already have a strong following?

Levy: Foremost, the average American shopper wants great prices and convenient shopping, that means a store they can visit without hassle to get the majority of items on their last

as well as their favorite occasional 'impulse' buys. Strong promotions on consumers' favorite brands will drive trips for retailers, and these promotions can increase shoppers' satisfaction with their trip. Shoppers continue to read the print circulars most weeks to spot these high value promotions on a leading brand. Retailers can also help by pointing out the new products that meet specific consumer needs. This can reinforce the retailer as place for new products and the best innovation, as well as help highlight seasonal or other special initiatives and drive incremental purchases.

GHQ: If consumers had the choice between an award-winning product/product with strong brand loyalty or a product which a much cheaper price, which item would they be more likely to reach for?

Levy: While it depends on the category, overall just 15 percent of American shoppers say they look for the absolute lowest price. The rest want a good price on a great product. In the Best New Product Awards, we've seen that brand loyalty is the No. 1 driver of real in-market new product trial. Consumer endorsement also resonates and can even trump brand loyalty: one in two online shoppers told us that they would switch from their regular brand if another product has better reviews, and eight in 10 American shoppers said they have trust in consumer-voted awards. 