

## Retailers diversify their offer in a bid to win more customers

It's been another busy summer for the UK retail industry. A further shake up looms following Amazon's take-over of Whole Foods in June, but the long-term impact remains to be seen. The UK Big 4 will be watching with interest if Amazon's move to reduce the cost of Whole Foods staple products will be implemented in the UK, triggering another price war. Given Amazon's usual low capital model, it looks unlikely they will open more stores across the UK and Whole Foods currently only has 9 stores in the UK, of which 7 are in London. However, the threat is not so much in terms of bricks and mortar business, but more on-line. Waitrose appears to be following in the footsteps of Whole Foods in another way – by announcing an appointment from a Hotel chain to head its food services. Developing 'dining in' branches has proved a successful route for Whole Foods and takes supermarket shopping to a new level. Waitrose is already following suit, with more than 50 Sushi counters in store, with plans for a further 25. The aim is to encourage consumers to buy more by being inspired and excited by food. Making stores a pleasant place to shop will help customers linger longer and trade up to something new and different. Waitrose have even considered a partnership with a start-up company Wefifo<sup>1</sup> which allows home cooks and professional chefs to turn their kitchens and living rooms into pop-up restaurants.

But what about what's on shelf? This month's product test selection reflects the polarisation that is happening in food NPD. Evolutions of existing formats from established brands and innovations from new start-ups and whacky new brands. Names like Great Food Affairs, Future Generation foods, Daniel's Delights, Street Foods, The Groupie Factory, to Freaks of Nature say it all and, for the average consumer, more besides, as none of their products achieved an above average rating. But, neither did some of the offerings from established brands, like McCain Sweet Potato Smiles and Pepsi Max Ginger – today's consumer is very picky... and we've got to keep an open mind on what might fit well with changing consumer tastes and perceptions of food.

Check out some of this month's exciting new products:

**SHOWCASE PRODUCT OF THE MONTH**



**Florette Yoghurt & Mint Slaw**, Scoring 46/50. A colourful, tasty combination of ready prepared ingredients to minimise preparation time. (Review 170814).



**Stilton Mini Cheddars**: a hit due to their authentic taste of Blue Stilton. (Review 170834)



Claimed to be the UK's first chilled fruit soup, this **Soupologie Apricot, Almond and Coffee** was simply a step too far for many consumers and set a new category minimum. (Review 170813)



Part of a range of four natural sparkling coconut waters, this "zingy", refreshing **Coco Fuzion 100** also benefited from a "funky", "modern" can (Review 170822)

**Pringles Street Food Edition** is bang on trend with its new **Mac and Cheese** flavour- ideal for all ages. (Review 170815)



**Wykes Farms Just Delicious Extra Mature Cheddar**, looked an artisan offering and tasted just as Delicious as the name implied (Review 170835)

<sup>1</sup> As reported in The Times 13/09/17