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The Times They Are a-Changin'

Baked goods markets in Europe are changing, and the industry in some places has difficulty coming to terms with that fact. What's it all about? Consumers change their lifestyles and their purchasing and consumption habits, which also affects the demand for baked goods.

The first factor is the economic situation, which compels a sector of society, mainly in southern Europe, to think very carefully about how they are going to spend what little money they still have, and how they can extract the best price-performance ratio for their personal standards. In addition there is a smaller but non-negligible part of the population with the financial means to afford high standards, whether of quality, service, sustainability or whatever.

Family portraits and role models change. Classical housewives who spend the whole day doing nothing else but ensuring that the other family members don't need to lift a finger in the home are a dying species. The trend and urge towards equal rights are increasing, and the growing proportion of women who are employed ensures the necessary pressure behind them.

Out-of-synch appointments diaries for the various family members, and the growing number of singles who can decide theirs freely, are causing family mealtimes to disappear, and relegate many mealtimes to nothing more than an intake of food, during which people simultaneously phone, move around and check emails. In return, appointments with friends, birthday parties etc. are being celebrated ever more lavishly in terms of eating and drinking, which people prefer to buy in rather than preparing it themselves.

The various demands imposed on food in general and baked goods in particular are all in a big melting pot. Health-conscious, organic, regional, free from various things, sustainably manufactured and much more, together with every possible combination of these demands, which splits up the totality of consumers into many small groups that become increasingly difficult to target precisely.

Shortage of time, indifference and a lack of knowledge about the preparation of mealtimes, together with the frustration caused by poor advice, unfriendly service and long queues, make people search for the most convenient goods and ways to shop. This is giving rise to new product ranges, new players in the market and new channels of distribution.

One must grapple with all these changes, and look for opportunities to find one's place in this new coordinate system of consumer demands. Neither perseverance nor anxiety and pessimism are any help in this. But the word entrepreneur is ultimately derived from enterprise, not from failure to act.

Yours sincerely,



++ Hildegard Keil, Editor-in-Chief
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