



2022 Top Trends to Watch

MIDAN MARKETING

The past two years have changed consumers in ways the meat industry could not have imagined, and some of these changes are likely to be long-lasting. Consumers have realigned their priorities and are expecting more than ever from the brands they purchase and the retailers they purchase from. As we begin a new year, it is the perfect time to look forward to 10 trends we expect to shape 2022 and beyond.

1.

Consumers Crave Convenience

One of the biggest shifts among consumers during the pandemic has been a rise in Convenience Chasers. From the [Midan Marketing Meat Consumer Segmentation 2.0 research](#), Convenience Chasers are meat consumers who are strapped for time and money – and they seek out products that align with these needs. During the pandemic, nearly 40% of meat consumers were part of this segment.¹ Meet these consumers' expectations with convenience-centric options that fall within their budgets.

Takeaway: For packers, understand that in addition to varied product offerings, convenience-minded consumers are also looking for case ready packaging that is easy to identify, easy to open, mess-free and easy to freeze. Perform an inventory of your offerings to assess if other packaging or product sizes would help you reach convenience consumers. Retailers, you can help these consumers by solving the home cooking burnout. Keep their dollars in retail by offering in-store meal kits or other meal solutions that meet their needs for inspiration and convenience.

2.

E-Commerce is Going Omnichannel

The pandemic accelerated e-commerce across industries, but now simple e-commerce offerings are not enough – consumers expect an omnichannel experience. These sales and marketing strategies are defined by their ability to hit consumers with the same products and messaging integrated across sales platforms – from your website to in-store to social and beyond. Social commerce (buying directly within social platforms) is on the rise and is where the meat industry needs to focus next. Insider Intelligence predicted that in 2021, there would be \$36 billion in social sales in the U.S.² This comes after 2020 when TikTok partnered with Shopify, Snapchat expanded its Native Store for brands and Facebook introduced Facebook Shops.

Takeaway: If you have D2C offerings, consider selling your products on a range of different platforms where your consumers are shopping. Even if you don't have D2C offerings, align your marketing efforts so that consumers get a consistent brand message through all your advertising channels. For you retailers, the move toward omnichannel can be extra intimidating. Understand that for many shoppers, the weekly grocery trip starts in the digital space looking at your ads, emails and recipes. Having a strong digital presence can help you attract consumers' attention and generate sales no matter which platform they're interacting on.

3.

New Retail Technologies

Retailers are starting to change the game to meet consumer demand for convenience. New technologies are coming in from all angles to make shopping easier. Amazon Fresh continues to roll out new test stores that don't require any checkout. These stores are also Alexa-enabled, letting the customer ask anything from "which aisle is cereal on" to "which wine should I pair with beef stroganoff." We are also seeing more voice purchasing through Alexa or Google Home devices. Nearly 90 million adults in the U.S. own a smart speaker³ and around 20% of them use their speakers for shopping activities, such as ordering products, researching products or tracking deliveries.⁴

Takeaway: Packers – consider working with your technologically advanced retail partners to make sure your products can be found using your brand name in their AI-based shopping systems. You don't want them purchasing just any meat when they're looking for your brand name. And retailers – consumers are excited about technology and how it makes their lives easier. If you haven't already, begin looking into how your store can bring convenience technologies to your customers.

4.

Leverage Social for Human Connection

After months of quarantine and solitude, consumers crave connection now more than ever – and they're turning to social media to find it. Ninety-one percent of people believe in social media's power to connect people and 79% of consumers want brands to use social to help people connect with each other.

These relationships with consumers strengthen customer loyalty and impact business revenue, with more than half of consumers saying they will increase their spending with a brand they connect with and three-quarters saying they'd buy their product over a competitor's.⁵

Takeaway: For both packers and retailers, social media offers an increasingly powerful opportunity to build relationships with your targets. If you have a consumer-facing brand, consider taking the next step to engage your buyers on social platforms. Share your promotions, engage with young consumers and tell your brand's story and the stories of the brands you sell. Young consumers find these connections more authentic and are more agreeable to receiving brand messaging on these platforms.

5.

The Lost Consumer

Don't concentrate your marketing efforts solely on younger consumers. For the past couple of years, marketing insights and efforts have focused squarely on Millennials and Gen Z consumers. This has led to a phenomenon where Baby Boomers are the target of only 5% of advertisements despite still controlling 75% of the country's wealth.⁶ Messaging to these consumers means advertising online but targeting computers as well as mobile. They are also the generation that still spends the most time with traditional television and print media.

Takeaway: Baby Boomers are more loyal to brands than their younger counterparts, but in an era of out-of-stocks and brand swapping, it is important for your brand to meet their expectations if you want to gain or retain their loyalty. But they also have to know your brand – message to them in your newer promotional outlets like social media and apps, but don't forget about the trusted methods that the older consumers know and love. While it's important to get the younger cohort's attention, the money and loyalty still remain with older generations.

6.

Branding for B2B

As important as it is to reach consumers, B2B branding is arguably more important – because without business to help distribute and sell your product, you may not make it in front of your target consumers. Your brand is more than marketing, it's every touchpoint you have as an organization. In 2021, B2B marketing often meant working on your online presence. According to one study, e-commerce was the most popular route to market for B2B companies with 41% of leaders saying it is their most effective sales route, marginally ahead of in-person.⁷

Takeaway: Packers, are the digital touchpoints you use for B2B sales working? Visit your website through the lens of the retailer and see what their experience is like, then use the opportunity to make changes as necessary to give your potential sales partners a seamless experience. Remember that retailers are looking for ways to differentiate their product offerings from their competitors, so helping them tell a unique brand story that is relevant to their customers will be a win for them.

7.

Sustained Support for Sustainability

When it comes to messaging and building your brand, one of the most important things consumers and customers today want to hear about is your commitment to sustainability. But this one idea has quickly gained many meanings. At the meat case, [Midan's research](#) shows that consumers hear sustainability and think first about animal welfare.⁹ Brands within the meat case are talking about sustainability from the angle of the environment and even regeneration. However you're looking at the topic, consumers see it as urgent. There has been a 32% shift toward action within Twitter conversations around sustainability this year – both in consumers taking action themselves and urging companies to do more.⁹

Takeaway: Meat brands must tell the production story of your offering – from farm to fork. Before consumers are going to be ready to hear about the environmental impacts of your product, they want to trust the animal welfare side of the story. Sustainability for the retailer, though, is environment-centric. Define authentic sustainability efforts and be transparent about your progress. Consider tackling an element of sustainability like food waste or energy or water savings to show your customers how you're working toward your goals – and theirs. Your consumers want authenticity, action and accountability.



8.

Wellness Remains Top of Mind

It's no surprise that the pandemic put a spotlight on health and wellness for the consumer. This has caused shifts for the meat case that we may not have expected. Package claims are moving away from "natural" meat and instead featuring labels that have more defined meanings like "organic."¹⁰ Flexitarianism and now "Reduceatarianism" are evolving as diet options that consumers take seriously – both focused on reducing animal products in the diet or choosing ones with lessened environmental impacts.

Takeaway: Understand the consumer you're trying to reach and the claims or nutrition attributes that are important to them. Meat companies, consider highlighting health claims like protein prominently on package or investing in a blended meat product to appeal to Flexitarian consumers. Grocery retailers, you can ensure animal protein remains in the diet of health-minded consumers by sharing the nutritional story of meat and how it is part of a healthy diet. Understand where Flexitarian shoppers are coming from (whether it's a place of environmental or health concerns) and guide them to meat products that meet their expectations.

9.

Premium Still in the Game

While consumers cooked more meals at home, retailers saw a definite trend toward premiumization across the store, but especially in the meat case. In 2020, volume sales of USDA Prime beef increased 55% year-over-year and 2021 added to these gains. Quality claims and breed claims (consumers associate these with quality) are both up with consumers of all income levels.¹¹ But how will post-pandemic inflation change this trajectory? IRI predicts that despite rising meat prices, premiumization will still be a factor for consumers who are celebrating at home or trying to impress friends and guests.

Takeaway: The meat industry should continue investing in improved product quality. Even if the premiumization trend takes a small dive in retail, we expect foodservice to pick up the slack and continue adding quality beef and pork to the menu. But retailers - having premium products in your store is still a must. When premium-seeking consumers are ready for a restaurant-quality meal at home, you want to have the products they're looking for.





10.

Chaos Continues

After a period of crisis comes chaos – the stage we are in now as we work toward rebuilding. The pandemic caused a shift in priorities for many people, which has led to the Great Resignation and almost every industry suffering from being understaffed. Supply chain breakdowns are just one way the meat and retail industries have been affected by this. Alongside inflation, this is likely to cause brand and product swapping at the meat case. So, while the pandemic may be nearing its end, the chaos it caused continues.

Takeaway: Use creative tactics to ensure your product stays in stock, including strengthening your packer–retailer relationships. Together, you can manage your supply chain challenges more effectively. Shoppers who discovered your product or store during the pandemic with the intention of being loyal won't be if it's subject to supply chain failures now.

Look for more insights from the Midan team throughout 2022.
To make sure you don't miss any of our content, subscribe to
our weekly meat industry email.

¹ Midan Marketing, [Meat Consumer Segmentation 2.1](#), September 2020

² Insider Intelligence, [Social Commerce 2021: Social media and ecommerce convergence trends bring growth opportunity for brands](#), July 2021.

³ VoiceBot.ai, [Nearly 90 Million U.S. Adults Have Smart Speakers, Adoption Now Exceeds One-Third of Consumers](#), April 2020.

⁴ Digital Commerce 360, [The state of voice shopping 2019](#), August 2019.

⁵ SproutSocial, [#BrandsGetReal: What consumers want from brands in a divided society](#).

⁶ Digital Commerce 360, [What retailers must know about consumers over age 50](#), July 2020.

⁷ McKinsey & Company, [Omnichannel in B2B sales: The new normal in a year that has been anything but](#) March 2021.

⁸ Midan Marketing, [Sustainably Raised Meat Survey](#), July 2021.

⁹ StratFest 2021, [From Billions of Tweets to Six Key Trends: Helping Brands to Connect with What Matters](#), September 2021.

¹⁰ Cryovac© Brand 2021 National Meat Case Study – A snapshot of the meat case today, August 2021.

¹¹ IRI, MULO POS data, 52 weeks ending 12/31/2020.