



Retailer Meal Solutions: A New and Growing Opportunity for Foodservice Manufacturers

Learn the “size of the prize” and gain a roadmap for success

Food retailers, including supermarkets, convenience stores, warehouse/club stores, supercenters and various specialty retailers have been intensifying their efforts to win back consumers’ dining-out dollars through new and appealing meal solutions. These innovative and expanded meal offerings place a much stronger emphasis on quality and variety, integrating many of the trends shaping restaurant menus, such as ethnic foods, premium ingredients, customization and updated preparation techniques.

This channel now represents an increasingly attractive growth segment for foodservice manufacturers. As retail operators strive to wow their customers and differentiate their ready-to-eat and ready-to-heat offerings from their competitors, they need help from suppliers, including culinary expertise, new products, and assistance with training and merchandising.

Technomic has previously conducted two landmark studies on supermarket foodservice and home-meal replacement, but recent channel developments warrant new consideration and focus. This study will help forward-thinking manufacturers better understand how to effectively capitalize upon growing opportunities with retail customers.

Study Objectives

This study identifies the “size of the prize” for the retailer meal solutions market and the critical success factors to effectively target the opportunity and focus efforts from a product standpoint. More specifically, this study:

- Determines the current size and composition of the retailer meal solutions market by category/product type in dollars and pounds and the projected growth rates.
- Assesses current retailer practices, attitudes and plans regarding retailer meal solutions as well as needs and gaps.
- Analyzes today’s trends related to food, culinary knowledge, formats and merchandising.
- Identifies current consumer preferences, behaviors and needs regarding retailer meal solutions.
- Provides detailed recommendations for each sponsor, including a product opportunity matrix regarding strategic emphasis and a “go to market” roadmap.

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Scope

For purposes of this study, and to mirror retailer practices, Technomic defines retailer meal solutions as frozen, refrigerated and shelf-stable products sold to consumers in a prepared state. Within these categories, our research covers food sold at the following types of retail venues:

Retailers to be Studied	
Venue	Examples
■ Traditional Supermarkets	■ Safeway, Albertsons, Publix
■ Upscale Supermarkets	■ Bristol Farms, Draeger's Markets
■ Natural/Organic Supermarkets	■ Whole Foods, Wild Oats
■ Other Specialty Food Stores	■ Trader Joe's, Dean & DeLuca
■ C-Stores	■ 7-Eleven, Sheetz, The Fresh Store
■ Warehouse/Club Stores	■ Costco, Sam's Club, BJ's
■ Takeaway Food Stores	■ Really Cool Foods, Trotters to Go

Methodology

To meet our study objectives and present an updated picture of retailer meal solutions, we utilized the following multi-step methodology:

Step One: Secondary Review

Review of all publicly-available information and Technomic's prior non-proprietary research in order to: 1) determine current and developing trends and issues in retailer meal solutions; 2) identify concepts for field visits; and, 3) define and refine consumer research components.

Step Two: Consumer Focus Groups

Eight consumer focus groups in four major cities were used to identify key consumer issues, attitudes and perceptions surrounding retailer meal solutions, as well as key success factors (from the consumer perspective).

Step Three: In-Depth Trade Interviews

Operators in supermarkets and other retail food formats were interviewed to gain primary knowledge of current trends and operating issues/economics, as well as to identify candidates for in-depth field evaluations. Key needs and requirements as they relate to product, packaging, service and support were also evaluated.

Step Four: Field Analysis

Winning retailer meal solutions programs identified as innovative, successful or representative of best practices were visited for on-site inspection and evaluation. Available menus and promotional literature were also collected for sponsors.

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Step Five: Report and Recommendations

A written report will document all study results and conclusions with sponsor-specific recommendations on leveraging the retailer meal solutions opportunity, including venues providing the best prospects and the volume potential represented by each. Sponsors also receive baseline industry/consumer data and projections regarding likely future developments and an extensive appendix of all related findings, data, photos, menus and detailed profiles of 20 retailers reflecting best practices and including:

- Program strengths and weaknesses
- Most popular offerings
- Approaches to preparation and sourcing
- Food cost/margin expectations
- Merchandising tactics
- Branding strategies

Each sponsor will receive three copies of the written report and one copy of the appendix. A personal presentation of the report will be made by senior Technomic staff to ensure complete communication of study findings. This presentation will take the form of a half- to one-day work session in Chicago or at your offices. (Travel costs for the work session will be billed to the participant.) The study team will be available for private meetings to discuss your proprietary issues, strategies and other relevant issues.

Next Steps

To participate in *Retailer Meal Solutions: A New & Growing Opportunity for Foodservice Manufacturers*, or to learn more about how this study can make a measurable impact on your organization's performance, please contact:

Ron Paul

President

312-506-3932

rpaul@technomic.com

Alan Hyatt

Vice President

312-506-3946

alanhyatt@technomic.com

TECHNOMIC

Food Industry. Facts. Insights. Consulting.

300 South Riverside Plaza

Suite 1200

Chicago, IL 60606

p. 312/876-0004

f. 312/876-1158

foodinfo@technomic.com

www.technomic.com