



Keeping it real



“I am looking for products and brands that have real, authentic and honest origins”



Real products, made from real ingredients, by real people are increasingly important anchors for consumers in our ever more digitalised, intangible and shifting world. Both the increasingly globalised market place and the rapid pace of technological change are leaving consumers swimming in a sea of overwhelming choice and change. Simple and traditional ingredients and production processes are playing an increasingly important role in reassuring and 'grounding' consumers, connecting them to the tangible and unchanging aspects of life.

At the same time, trust in food and drink brands continues to be compromised by product safety scandals; the 2013 horse meat scandal is still in the headlines, as courts deliver their verdict on who was to blame. Searching for products with total transparency about origins and ingredients has become an ever more important consumer coping strategy – no longer just a desire, but a necessity.

'Keeping it Real' remains an absolutely central trend for food and drink categories. However, brand activity in this space has become crowded, and in order to succeed, brands must have clear values and stick to them 100%. But to really stand out, brands need to do more than just talk about origins and tell stories about provenance; they need to find ways of allowing consumers to experience the joy and simplicity of products for themselves.



Key takeaways



As much of life becomes intangible in the digital era, simple and authentic products that you can hold and understand are playing an increasingly important and reassuring role for consumers.



Knowing who has made what you are consuming, and where it has been made, are ever more important markers of product quality and safety.



Leading brands are not just telling product stories; they are helping consumers to experience the simplicity and origins of 'real' products for themselves.



Overview of sub-trends



Naturally authentic

Desire for products that are 'as nature intended'

Do it yourself

Learning new skills and relying on yourself to achieve satisfaction and save money

Remixing tradition

Taking the best of tradition and heritage to meet modern tastes

Craftsmanship

Rising interest in the people and artisan skills behind the product

Genuine provenance

Provenance becoming the ultimate marker of quality



Naturally authentic

No longer content with products incorporating some 'natural' and 'authentic' elements, consumers want products that are holistically natural and authentic. This means having nothing added (no chemicals, additives or preservatives) and being as far as possible in its natural state (e.g. seasonal ingredients and products)





From

A focus on specific elements of natural and authentic, e.g. seasonality



Seasonal fruit and veg home delivery from companies such as Abel and Cole.

To

A hunger for products and experiences that are holistically natural and authentic



Tom Hunt's bestselling cookbook 'The Natural Cook' uses exclusively seasonal produce that can be grown and produced in the UK.



In-market examples from around the world



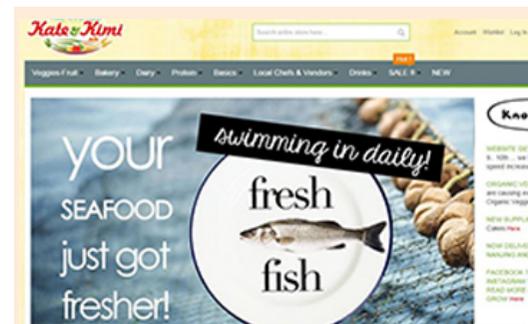
What: SAF restaurant in Turkey offers locally sourced food scratch-cooked at low temperatures.

Why: The raw food movement is growing globally, as excess industrial processing and additives are blamed for damaging health. SAF provides an exciting non-processed option for increasingly health-conscious consumers.



What: German organic supermarket chain Alnatura is experiencing something of a renaissance. For the last two years, it has surpassed the EUR 500 million turnover mark.

Why: Alnatura's mantra of "Sinnvoll für Mensch und Erde" ("makes sense for people and the earth") is striking a chord with food shoppers across Germany, who value high quality produce that hasn't been shipped or flown for miles.



What: Kate & Kimi is a local Shanghainese company that sources organic produce from farms in China.

Why: Appalled by the many Chinese food scandals in recent years, Kate & Kimi's consumers are willing to pay extra for produce from farms that are local, organic and strictly regulated.



Do it yourself

The frugal and self-reliant mind-set of the recession still prevails amongst consumers, who increasingly seek ways to create from scratch and combine products that meet their own needs - acquiring new skills and knowledge along the way





From

Paring back to manage financially, including learning skills from the older generation



In the UK Waitrose has added offal to its 'Forgotten Cuts' range of meats as a flavourful and affordable staple from the past.

To

Creativity in finding your own solutions to problems – both a strategy for economising and a leisure pursuit



Manhattan-based Natural Gourmet Institute are offering DIY butchery courses, for busy urban-dwellers who want to fully engage with and learn about meat in all its forms.

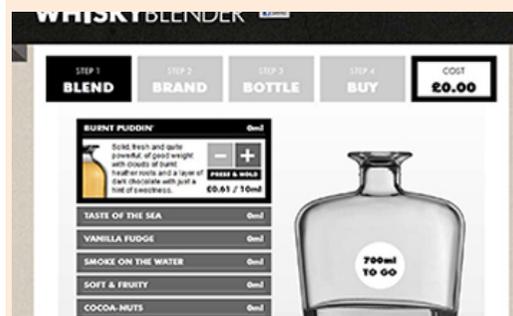


In-market examples from around the world



What: The Skip Garden is a portable vegetable garden made up of interlocking skips and beds that can be removed and reconfigured. It is currently based at King's Cross, a busy central London location.

Why: In the middle of a hectic urban space, The Skip Garden is an oasis where visitors can plant, prune and get right back to nature. A small café even sells produce grown there.



What: 'The Whisky Blender' is a UK website that allows customers to create, personalise and bottle their own liquor.

Why: Upon entering the site, the customer is invited to build her/his blend in The Lab. The customer can then choose their packaging and name their bottle with a personalised label.



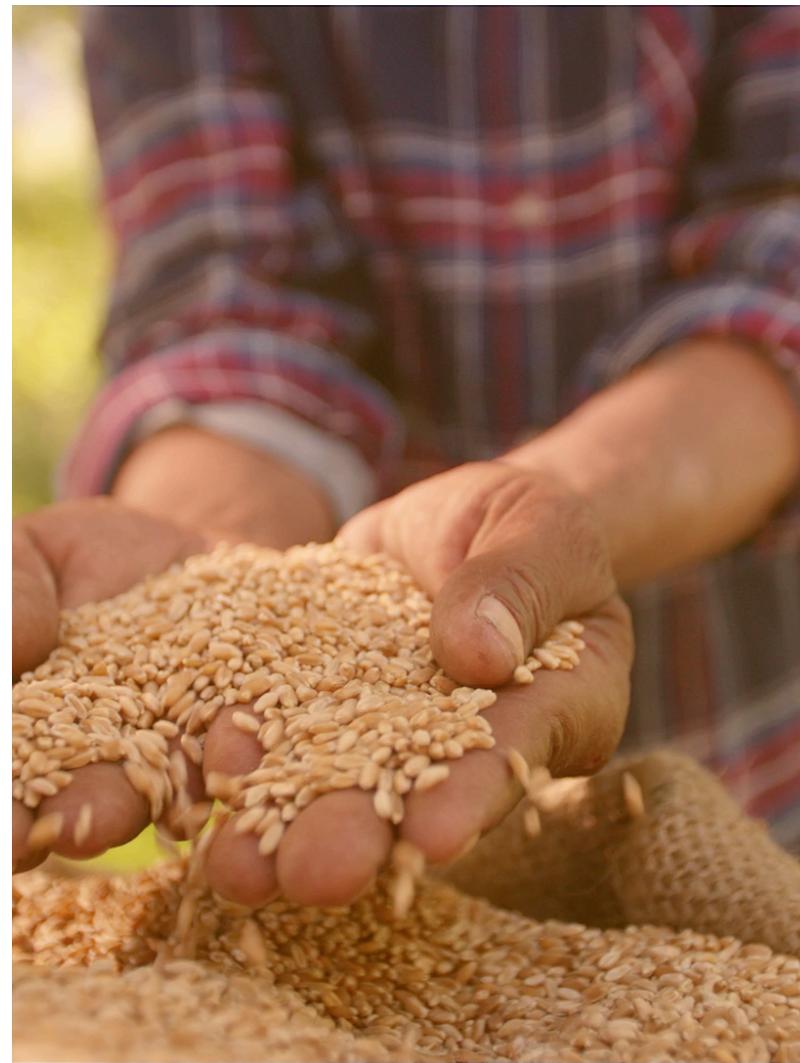
What: Family Beer is Barcelona's first 100% DIY beer brewer's supply shop, selling equipment for brewing beer at home.

Why: Home brewing has become more than a niche trend in Barcelona as consumers look for different, new and premium drink tastes and flavours that they make themselves.



Remixing tradition

Where 'traditional' once signalled nostalgia and stability, now consumers are wanting to see heritage and tradition weaved into modern products. Traditional processes have re-emerged as gritty and exciting, and consumers are seeking to weave this old-style 'cool' into contemporary living





From

Reviving traditional products and processes, including those that have fallen out of fashion



The knitting craft comeback of 2012 that helped revive the British wool industry.

To

Weaving traditional and contemporary products and processes together to create something new and exciting



The Blenheim Forge in Peckham, London, where Victorian metalwork is fused with contemporary hand-smithing techniques to make the finest quality knives.



In-market examples from around the world



What: MAHOU, Spain's biggest beer producer has relaunched "El botijo", its legendary small bottle that was around from the 1960s to the 1980s.

Why: The limited edition of El Botijo attempts to tap into the consumer's desire to reconnect with their own history, but also appeal to younger consumers who love the vintage look of the beer. The launch campaign includes a Spotify playlist that takes users through the different decades and music styles of 1960 to 2000.



What: During the summer of 2014, a group of culinary students from the Academy of Fine Arts in Łódź, debuted an offal-based meals mobile truck in the heart of Warsaw, to international acclaim.

Why: Having reached the point at which Warsaw is saturated with burger bars and steak joints, the students sought to prove that there are other meats out there, and that the traditional, Polish fare of offal and giblets can be reinvented with new, exciting flavors and presented in a beautiful way.



What: Vogue Italia paid homage to fashion houses Sindisa Khumalo and MaXhosa, for their 'cultural fusion' collections.

Why: MaXhosa and Khumalo have taken traditional prints and colours from their Xhosa and Zulu cultures respectively, and incorporated them into non-traditional, knitted garments; a celebration of heritage in contemporary form.



Craftsmanship

Consumers are moving from being interested in the artisans behind their products, to desiring active engagement with them. Brands are expected to be the facilitators of these deeper producer-consumer relationships





From

Bringing the craftsman
and their skill to life -
for the consumer



New Zealand's artisan honey company 'J Friend & Co' shares stories of its various beekeepers on the labels of its products and website.

To

Enabling consumers to
actively engage with
artisan producers



Michigan Cheese Makers run 'meet the makers' open days at their farm, when consumers can engage with the people and processes behind their favourite cheeses.



In-market examples from around the world



What: Iluliaq is a premium still water that comes from the Sermeq Kujalleg glacier on the west coast of Greenland.

Why: To say this is one of the rarest and purest waters on the planet is no exaggeration as it is extracted from a glacier that is 50,000 years old. Ice collection is dependent upon weather, making production very limited. Indeed bottles are only ordered on receipt of payment and shipped by air direct from the supplier.



What: Two Ontario foodies initially made their vinegar as a hobby and it has now become an ingredient coveted by some of Canada's premier chefs.

Why: The producers pick and press grapes for their ice wine vinegar at minus 8 degrees, before ageing and blending different pressed juices to craft the finest flavours. New innovations like this vinegar that blends hops with ice wine keep pushing the craft to the next level.



What: American-founded Edge Brewing Co is successfully bringing the craft beer revolution to Barcelona.

Why: Spanish consumers want more than factory-produced commercial cerveza, and Barcelona is just discovering alternatives to it. Edge beer is made using American equipment and know-how, but branded with iconic Spanish architecture and design.



Genuine provenance

Provenance has evolved from being an area of interest to consumers, to one of the key markers of quality and trust. People expect brands to be totally transparent about where products are made; the place of production should then demonstrate its role in creating an excellent quality product. As with the Craftsmanship sub-trend, leading brands are also helping individuals to engage directly with the provenance of their products





From

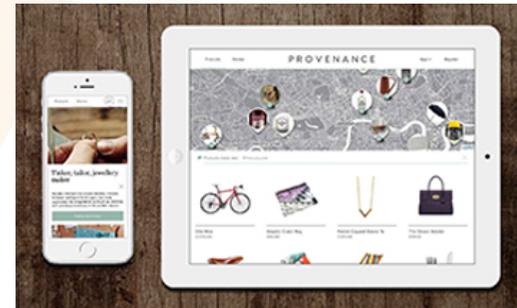
Curiosity about origins and provenance; provenance stories as a marker of premium



Gaucha only serve Argentinian beef that has been reared on the country's grasslands and then shipped over chilled, never frozen. Customers are educated with a descriptive overview about the different cuts prior to ordering.

To

Provenance a marker of trust as well as quality; desire to engage directly with places where products are made



Provenance.org, the US shopping site and app where you can find items by location, and follow your favourite makers. Click to buy and be transferred to the maker's website where you complete the sale.



In-market examples from around the world



What: McDonald's recent "Meat of our Regions" campaign put French flavours in the spotlight. Each week McDonald's unveiled a new burger made with meat from a famous French cow breed. The burgers were paired with local-inspired condiments, from onion sauce to béarnaise, and French Emmental cheese.

Why: This is a great example of a huge global brand reflecting local culture in an authentic way – something very appreciated by French consumers.



What: After the unprecedented success of their farm box subscription and delivery service, Riverford Farm in Devon, England, began running trips and tours to the farm.

Why: Not only does having an 'open farm' prove the honest origins of all of the Riverford produce, the tours and opportunities to get hands-on with the farmers also educate Riverford's largely city-dwelling consumer base, who might never have come into contact with any kind of farming before.



What: Nacional craft beer company in Sao Paulo, Brazil, runs tours and events in their small 'brewhouse' in the city, and sponsor local carnival events.

Why: Craft beer fever has swept Brazil over the last eighteen months, with smaller, more artisanal manufacturers posing a threat to the 'big 5' breweries, who are losing their 'Brazilianness' as they expand globally. Brazilian consumers appreciate how these smaller producers stay in touch with their heritage.



Trend summary



Keeping it real





How is this trend playing out in Ireland/Great Britain?



Relevance in Ireland

68% of consumers agree that in order to support an economy regaining strength after the recession, it is important to buy Irish products, even if they cost more.

Irish consumers' belief that becoming more self-reliant will increase the chances of succeeding in today's world is significantly higher than the global average. A 'do it yourself' approach has never been so popular as it is in the post-recession climate.

Relevance in GB

In Great Britain, the importance of provenance in the food and drink industry has never been stronger.

Riverford, the organic produce home delivery company based in Devon, enjoyed growth throughout the recession, attributing its success to consumers' refusal to compromise on quality and ethics.

Meanwhile, even the large supermarkets are answering the growing consumer desire to understand the people and places behind the products they buy.

Marks & Spencer's 'Meet the Farmers', Waitrose 'Meet the Waitrose Buyer' and Sainsbury's 'Supply Something New' campaigns are just a few examples of this, and Morrisons, M&S, Waitrose, Aldi and Co-operative are just a few of many retailers that have signed up to the 2015 Back British Farming campaign.



How dynamic are the sub-trends?



Heating up
Still warm
Cooling



Do it yourself

Remixing tradition

Heating up
Still warm
Cooling



Naturally authentic

Craftsmanship

Genuine provenance



Facilitate consumer engagement with the people and places behind your products? Could your consumer play a part in the creation of the product?



Emphasise the high quality craftsmanship and traditional aspects of your products?



Ensure your product is 'as nature intended', whether that means leaving the unnatural out, or incorporating the best aspects of the product's provenance or seasonality.

Thank you



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