

#ConsciousCapitalism - the new imperative for food and beverage manufacturers

By [Roy Henderson](#)

28 Apr 2020

To feed the world in a new era of awareness and to sustain their own future, manufacturers need to change their mindsets, adopt next generation processing equipment and methods that will enhance nutrition, boost health - for all - be kinder to the planet, and be consciously capitalistic.



Image source: www.pixabay.com

The world has an opportunity to reboot itself into a healthier, more sustainable and equitable position post-Covid-19. Whether we take advantage of this valuable reprieve from our pre-virus path remains to be seen.

Every facet of our human existence is affected, perhaps not directly by this particular coronavirus, but certainly by the resultant lockdown of the global economy. While I cannot comment on other industries, I can say beyond a shadow of a doubt that the food and beverage manufacturing sectors have to change.

The current way in which the majority of our food and beverage is produced is detrimental to humans, to our animal kingdom and to the planet as a whole. Many of our processes in play today were designed at the advent of the industrial revolution. They use only a fraction of the available nutrition we essentially need to function optimally, are expensive to operate and generate vast amounts of waste.



#Covid19: Global food crises report reveals impact on vulnerable countries

22 Apr 2020



Health and productivity

Good nutrition has always been the key to good health and productivity, and it is needed today more than ever. In fact, almost 2,500 years ago, Hippocrates said: "Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food." Two thousand five hundred years later, some are beginning to rediscover the benefits of what we eat.

Before the onset of Covid-19, we had already seen the beginning of a shift to more whole food-based diets. I predict there will now be an exponential increase in that transition, particularly in light of the extensive evidence on how whole foods help in the management of metabolic syndromes such as diabetes, heart disease and obesity (lifestyle diseases). These are largely preventable conditions, which we knowingly and often willingly fuel with poor nutrition, and whose presence in humans also increases the mortality rate of Covid-19.

Manufacturing whole foods in bulk for everyone to take advantage of the health benefits is, therefore, now the mission.



AU Summit: African leaders focus on eradicating malnutrition by 2025

10 Feb 2020



Wholesale behavioural change

Indeed, the rapid spread of Covid-19 has truly highlighted the importance for good quality “healthy” foods and influenced behaviour in a matter of days in a way that long-term marketing campaigns would have spent months and millions on doing.

Reported by many a news broadcast all over the world is the requirement for frontline responders, for example, to have optimal nutrition to keep them going through the relentless hours of saving lives. Not discounting the incredible work, they are doing, nor their needs, optimal nutrition should be available to everyone. This is why there is an obligation for the food and beverage manufacturing sector - which is the key to our long-term health - to change how it processes foods and beverages. We should not wait for the next crisis. It is already on the horizon.

In fact, the mass availability of affordable, nutritionally balanced food is going to become ever critical for governments as well as businesses, which to date have been content with focusing on profit.



South Africa wastes 10m tonnes of food annually

9 Sep 2019



Perspective

Already 9 million people die from starvation a year, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). That didn't spur anyone to action. Neither did the fact that in 2015, more than half the world's then population lived on [less than \\$2.50 per day](#).

The lockdowns as a result of Covid-19 will, however, exacerbate this situation, with many who had lifted themselves out of

extreme poverty (defined as living on less than \$1,90 by the World Bank), falling below the line again. And, because Covid-19 is non-discriminatory, it means that for the first time, the haves are understanding the fragility of our ecosystem and the interconnectivity and interdependence of our markets.

This state is also propelling global consciousness, which I hope will translate into conscious capitalism. Governments and businesses should be bothered about that.

As the lockdowns extend, economies - whether developed or developing - will come under increasing strain, snowballing the burden on governments, civil society and corporates (still generating revenue) to provide assistance, as well as the added load on already overstretched healthcare systems.

Commitment from manufacturers

What is needed, therefore, is the commitment from the manufacturers to be part of the solution. Not perpetuating the problem with foods and beverages that continue to negate nutrition because their current methods are too expensive to harvest all the available goodness from the source material.

If the threat of a progressively sick world population and continued economic declines are not enough to provoke this change, consider that consumers themselves are becoming more and more savvy about labels and what goes into the products they ingest. Parallel to discovering the benefits of whole foods, they are asking for their foods to be made so they can access as much health-boosting nutrition as possible. Notwithstanding their own health requirements, they are also desirous of their foods and beverages to be made in a way that takes the health of the planet into account. It is no use that they are healthy when their environment may kill them.

Factor in that enforced lockdowns have also provoked a change in retail behavior, which is likely to influence how foods are made, too. There is a good prospect of less lengthy supply and distribution chains, a resurgence of support for local growers, and a requirement for more natural ways of preserving food products, whether they are in supermarkets or delivered by drone due to the continued uptake of online shopping and progression in technology.



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Venessa Moodley 8 Aug 2019



Conscious capitalism needed in food manufacturing

New processing methods, already in existence, have proven that it is possible to process the whole plant - fruit, vegetable, organic matter – (and even meat and fish). They are able to harvest almost all of the available plant actives - the molecules that give the plant its specific benefits - therefore boosting available nutrition while vastly reducing waste to landfill, and energy consumption in the manufacturing process.

These systems are also highly cost effective, making it entirely possible for manufacturers and processors to still be commercially profitable. However, with better price points at a manufacturing level, more people would be able to access what is required to keep them healthy, better able to fight surprise attacks like coronaviruses, moving to a preventative health state rather than a reactive one, and all the while keeping people working and economies growing. It really could be that simple.

In this new paradigm, there is scope for everyone to benefit. What is necessary, then, is the individual, political and capitalist will, along with a shift to stakeholder benefit and value - not shareholder profit - to implement on scale these new but existing technologies. These technologies can easily process most whole food and beverage matter with little to no waste and allow us to generate new products, as well as mimic some old ones with good returns - the byproduct of which is

saving the planet and humanity.

Inefficient technologies

At present, inefficient technologies are used to peel, skin, discard, overcook and often destroy much of the nutrients in the foodstuffs we eat. Not to mention the inordinate amount of waste that is generated, which tends to contain the seeds and skins that house the majority of the nutrients we need. This includes the processing of convenience foods, canned and/or dried goods etc.

The entire manufacturing system is antiquated and hugely expensive to build, install and maintain. This is all adding to the cost of the end product, which will become increasingly out of reach the more we enter into an economic recession, and even depression.

So, rather than facing a future where the poor have nothing left to eat but the rich do, why don't we consider producing nourishing foods and beverages in a manner where they can be afforded by all, but not at the expense of taste and flavour that are already enjoyed? Sounds utopian and naïve? Maybe, but then so was abolishing slavery once. Maybe all it takes is the capitalist will to drive a more altruistic agenda where everyone benefits, including them: conscious capitalism.

Catalyst for rapid change

Covid-19 has changed social behaviour globally in a matter of days. It is now the catalyst for the rapid change required to force new ways of manufacturing and processing our sustenance. New systems and technology that put planetary and people-centric value at the core of their businesses will be the way forward.

Advanced processing techniques that do not use chemicals or harmful heat to produce foods or beverages, and that can extract the nutrients and fibre out of what is currently left behind from traditional methods, which can then be added back into food and beverage, will therefore be instrumental in determining the health of our post Covid-19 world. This is something I have written about many times before, but it has largely fallen on the deaf ears. I sincerely hope everyone is listening now.

We may never have a second opportunity to redress how the world functions, so we should not squander this currency we have been given. To remain commercially sustainable and relevant and avoid becoming dinosaurs in their own lifetime, it is time for manufacturers and processors to understand that they too are the product of what they eat because of how they make it. So make it count.

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