



THE CENTER FOR
FOOD INTEGRITYSM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Jana McGuire
jana.mcguire@foodintegrity.org
(816) 556-3167

NOTE: The CFI 2016 research summary, “*Inside the Minds of Influencers: The Truth About Trust,*” and infographic are available for download [here](#).

Research IDs Food Influencers Setting Trends

New CFI Approach Provides Insights for Food and Ag to Earn Trust

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Tues., Jan. 17, 2017 – A new research approach from The Center for Food Integrity (CFI) identifies influential consumer groups and the motivations that not only dictate food trends, but drive conversations that impact the decisions of others as they make choices at the grocery store or form opinions about the products, processes, people and brands that define today’s food system.

For the past 10 years, CFI has conducted annual consumer trust research to better understand public opinion and how to engage with consumers to earn trust. In the first-of-its-kind consumer research, the 2016 survey used an innovative research methodology called digital ethnography. It can help those in food and agriculture more effectively engage and balance the conversation as it provides much deeper insights into influencers including unspoken motivations, values, top-of-mind issues, emotional triggers, preferred social channels and sources, behaviors and trusted brands.

The research goes beyond surveying what people *say* they do to demonstrating what they are actually doing.

“We’re currently in the midst of a shift in the marketplace where the culture and conversation around conventional food, particularly online, is changing as consumers navigate which foods to adopt, moderate or abandon,” said Charlie Arnot, CFI CEO. “Digital ethnography identifies influencers who shape those trends.”

Digital ethnography pinpoints why consumers form beliefs and develop behaviors around food, and the why speaks to what they value, said Arnot.

“That’s important, because the CFI consumer trust model shows that communicating with values is three-to-five times more important to earning trust than simply communicating facts and science,” he said.

816-880-5360

2900 NE BROOKTREE LANE STE 200
GLADSTONE, MO 64119



THE CENTER FOR
FOOD INTEGRITYSM

“Better understanding why consumers make their food decisions and what they value in their food choices helps companies be more responsive to consumer needs. CFI’s latest research will help food companies do a better job of communicating what’s most important to consumers and the values we share,” said Leigh Horner, vice president, communications and CSR at The Hershey Company.

Of the five Consumer Types identified in the research, one of particular interest to the food system is ProvidersSM, the largest group representing a third of the U.S. population.

“ProvidersSM never feel quite good enough,” said Arnot. “And the last thing they want is to be seen as a neglectful parent or to be caught snoozing when something new is known about the foods they buy for their family. To ease the anxiety, they look to other Consumer Types for guidance.”

This influence is why more Americans are flocking toward various attributes of food that they consider evolved and that signify progress, Arnot said. “We see that in the demand for food less processed, simpler labels and labels that indicate the product is “free from” everything from gluten to GMOs.”

“Understanding consumer attitudes toward food and how those attitudes influence the conversation allows food companies to more effectively talk with consumers. Consumers want to feel good about the products they buy for themselves and their families and want easy access to balanced, useful information to know they are making the right choices,” said Horner. “These insights will help food companies build trust by meeting consumers’ expectations for transparency and engaging in a meaningful conversation about the food they buy.”

To download a summary of the research, “Inside the Minds of Influencers: The Truth About Trust,” and register for the Thu., Jan. 19, CFI 2016 research webinar, visit www.foodintegrity.org. Complete research results, which include in-depth insights, detailed audience segmentation and trust-building engagement strategies, are provided to CFI members. To learn more about accessing the full research report, contact CFI at learnmore@foodintegrity.org or (816) 556-3141.

###

The Center for Food Integrity is a not-for-profit organization that helps today’s food system earn consumer trust. Our members and project partners, who represent the diversity of the food system, are committed to providing accurate information and working together to address important issues in food and agriculture. The Center does not lobby or advocate for individual companies or brands. For more information, visit www.foodintegrity.org.

816-880-5360

2900 NE BROOKTREE LANE STE 200
GLADSTONE, MO 64119