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Press Release

QSR Users Say Healthful Offerings Needed

Sharing nutritional information and adding healthful items could spur QSR visits

SAN CLEMENTE, CALIF. — A recent research study, *Consumer Attitudes Toward Health and Nutrition at Fast-Food Restaurants*, indicates consumer interest in the availability of healthful food items on menus remains strong and suggests chains that add healthful menu items might positively influence visitation.

Nearly one-third of all quick-service restaurant users remain very concerned about the nutritional content of fast food. More than one in three QSR users say they would visit one of their regular chains more often if that chain offered a greater number of healthful items on its menu.

Importantly, 68 percent would visit a chain they don't typically patronize if it offered a greater selection of healthful items. These findings are based on the *Consumer Attitudes Toward Health and Nutrition at Fast-Food Restaurants* supplement to the quarterly syndicated Quick-Track® research program conducted by Sandelman & Associates from July to September 2005, among a nationally representative sample of 600 fast-food users.

“News reports on obesity and fast food’s role have to some extent influenced consumer awareness of health and nutrition and fueled interest in healthful items,” says Bob Sandelman, CEO of Sandelman & Associates. Fully 78 percent of users report they buy healthful menu items, such as salads, fruits or vegetables, on at least some of their visits. Remarkably, more than two-

thirds of young males buy healthful menu items on at least some occasions. “Because most QSR chains offer only a few healthful items, there is a fair amount of untapped potential to generate increased visitation and trial, even among young males, by offering more of these types of items,” Sandelman adds.

While the majority of QSR users purchase oversized menu items—including extra-large hamburgers and overstuffed omelets—on at least some of their visits, only 13 percent buy these products on all or most visits. Nonetheless, a third of users are very concerned about the quantity of food they consume when they purchase items from fast-food restaurants and a third are very concerned about the nutritional value of fast-food menu items. Females and older customers express greater concern over nutritional value.

For QSR chains, adding new healthful menu items might not be enough. While 59 percent of fast-food users say there are not enough healthful offerings on QSR menus in general, over half of all users say fast-food restaurants do not provide customers with enough nutritional information. Nearly three quarters of young users complain of scant information. Interestingly, these same users don’t express above-average concern regarding quantity.

When it comes to assigning blame for Americans’ weight and health problems, 62 percent of users agree that the quantity and nutritional value of food offered by many fast-food restaurants contributes to the problem. Heightened media coverage might have had an impact on perceptions, too, because the percentage of users who view fast food as a factor in the country’s health problems has grown since fall 2003. Still, 65 percent of QSR users believe individuals have primary responsibility for controlling the quantity and nutritional value of food a person eats and 28 percent believe the responsibility should be shared between individuals and restaurants. Only 4 percent say restaurants take primary responsibility.

Additional findings, plus trend data for January-March ’03 and October-December ’03, are included in Sandelman & Associates’ *Consumer Attitudes Toward Health and Nutrition at Fast-Food Restaurants*, a supplement to its Quick-Track® research program. To order a copy for \$500, log onto www.sandelman.com/reports.

Sandelman & Associates' Quick-Track® is an ongoing syndicated research study that tracks consumer awareness, usage and attitudinal measures of all major quick-service restaurants. Chain-specific information is provided at the DMA level and nationally. Trend data can be provided for over 100 markets across the U.S.

Quick-Track subscribers also have access to SandelmanEdge.com, an interactive Web portal where they are able to develop multidimensional analyses and custom reports using the Cognos PowerPlay analysis tool as well as download standard reports. SandelmanEdge.com provides subscribers with the tools they need to secure a competitive edge in developing business strategies and plans.

Sandelman & Associates is a San Clemente, Calif.-based independent research company that provides the restaurant industry with reliable and easy-to-use consumer feedback.

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