

Dutch importer-exporter [HillFresh International](#) is making a strategic shift in its business model to offer increased retail category management services. As it celebrates its 10-year anniversary, the company is strengthening its supply with innovative promotions, packaging concepts and preparation tools at the point of sale.

“Supplying good quality fresh produce is not enough anymore,” explains Stephan Schneider, who heads up marketing and communications at HillFresh.



“You need to offer something extra for retailers. By bringing new and creative ideas to the table we will help them to boost their sales of produce.”

Schneider says in only a short period of time HillFresh has shifted its focus from the supply side of the produce business to consumer demand.

“The future of HillFresh is set on offering the consumer not only a good product but also the right assortment with the right promotions,” he says.

“We want to surprise our customers and their consumers with something special. That can be in regards to taste, packaging or promotions. Our concepts should be inspirational and ideally affordable.”

Already in the last year-and-a-half this retail category management approach has resulted in the development of innovative ideas that are rolling out across Europe.

They include a promotional tie-up with media company Nickelodeon, as well as the introduction of a new HillFresh fruit brand that will be supported by a raft of user-friendly packaging concepts and preparation tools for consumers.

Nickelodeon range

Just this month (October) Nickelodeon Viacom Consumer Products (NVCP) and HillFresh

International signed a multi-year programme in Europe to offer a range of Nickelodeon-branded snacking produce for children that will hit the market at the beginning of 2018.

“We are offering fruit and vegetable snacks with branding from popular Nickelodeon children’s television shows such as Blaze and the Monster Machines, PAW Patrol, Dora the Explorer, Shimmer & Shine, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles and SpongeBob SquarePants,” reveals Schneider.

With the food industry being increasingly encouraged to steer away from promoting products containing high levels of sugar or salt, HillFresh’s Nickelodeon-branded range is designed to promote healthy eating among children in a fun and playful manner.

Any products within the range will include collectible playing cards and packaging that inspires children’s creativity. The snacks will also feature fun shapes such as SpongeBob pineapples or PAW Patrol tangerines.

The goal is develop a solid promotion of fresh fruits and vegetables that instills healthy eating habits in children for years to come.

“Both HillFresh and Nickelodeon feel this is the right way to go,” Schneider says. “It’s not easy to market fresh produce to kids but we feel this might be a good way to do it.

“The goal of the fresh produce industry as a whole is to get kids to eat more fresh fruit and vegetables because raising consumption among kids will have a big impact not only on fruit sales today, but in the years to come as well.

“It will create a snowball effect where this generation will pass on to their children the healthy vibe that is going around at the moment.

“Should we make this a success that would be the ultimate achievement for HillFresh.”

New branding

Meanwhile, as of this season Juicy will become the official label for HillFresh’s fruit

assortment distributed among the firm's retailer pa



From October/November, citrus, kiwifruit, kaki (persimmons) and melons from HillFresh will be marketed as Juisy, and complemented by the roll-out of new promotions and/or packaging concepts and preparation tools.

“This new label is all about emphasising the taste of our produce,” says Schneider, adding that HillFresh’s strapline is ‘The expert in taste’.

“We’re looking to surprise consumers with not only good-tasting products but also attractive promotions and some surprising packaging solutions.”

Schneider says any Juisy-branded product must be surprising in a certain way, whether that’s flavour, packaging or promotions.

The Juisy brand will also focus more on social media interaction.

“We aim to inspire consumers with recipes and food education, and, in time, we will offer many inspiring recipes, not only in stores but also online,” reveals Schneider.

Kaki slicer

To complement the new Juisy brand, HillFresh is offering a unique kaki tool to help promote

the fruit at the point of sale the upcoming kaki season.



The slicer has been developed together with Dutch firm International Innovation Company (IIC), which develops a range of innovative barware, kitchenware and tableware.

“With our new kaki slicer consumers can prepare a kaki within seconds; making it easy to prepare a healthy snack for children to take to school or for adults to enjoy at work,” points out Schneider.

“We feel that to promote an unknown product to consumers you need to trigger their interest by telling them how easy it is to prepare. Many people do not know what to do with a fruit like kaki.”

The slicer will be offered throughout Europe during the kaki season to retailers working together with HillFresh to promote the fruit.

Kiweek tray

In addition, Hillfresh plans to launch a multi-kiwifruit tray - a new packaging concept that allows consumers to bring a week’s worth of kiwifruit to work.



“The health trend is moving faster than anyone could have imagined,” Schneider points out. “Consumers are buying more fruit and are also bringing more fruit to work.

“Our kiweek tray is an attractive packaging idea that enables consumers to enjoy a kiwi every day.”

Pineapple slicer

To support its extensive pineapple range, Hillfresh is also offering a promotional package featuring a free slicer (provided by IIC) to European retailers involved in its pineapple programme.

“Besides the fact that this promotion is a real head-turner in stores, it is a proven fact that retailers offering this slicer will increase their pineapple sales even in the months after the promotional period,” claims Schneider.

More to come

Since a group of enthusiastic entrepreneurs established Hillfresh a decade ago, the company has already made its mark on the fresh fruit and vegetable business with its vision to bring closer together retailers and their suppliers under the motto ‘The source is yours’.

Looking at the current strategy, Schneider says the trade can expect to see much more not only in the near future but also in the decades to come.

“HillFresh has always been a company that has been at the vanguard of new development in the market,” he concludes by telling PBUK.

HillFresh is exhibiting at [The Amsterdam Produce Show and Conference 2017](#).

The event takes place on 15-17 November at the Westergasfabriek.

Register online [here](#). Or contact us [here](#) to book a booth.