

New research has revealed the underdeveloped state of branding within the fresh produce industry and how commodity growers can make a larger profit by leveraging their authentic stories.

The study, conducted by Foodmix Marketing Communications, surveyed more than 1,000 regular produce shoppers among Boomers, Gen X, Millennial and Gen Z generations.

Key findings include the revelation that more than half of consumers find it important to shop specific brands in the produce department vs. non-branded products.

Of particular interest to produce marketers will be the insights related to the industry's most coveted potential consumer target households that spend at least \$25 on fresh produce each week.

The popular perception that younger generations are less brand engaged is proven wrong according to the study's results.

In reality, brand affinity is growing generationally with almost half of Gen X and Boomers considering it important that the fresh produce they buy is branded, while two-thirds of Millennials and Gen Z generations are likely to purchase branded fresh produce.

With store brands and private labels currently in the forefront of the produce space, research shows that there is a significant opportunity for branded produce companies to generate considerably more share within the industry.

Foodmix's study reveals that brands with an established story generate trust and engagement among consumers by having the ability to share their "truths." With sustainability as a table stake for many Brand Lovers, it's more about key attributes that will drive advocacy and Brand Love than broad statements.

"We did our homework to make sure we brought the industry a fresh perspective. This is a landmark study that will end the debate to brand or not to brand," says Dan O'Connell, CEO at Foodmix Marketing Communications.

"Through our research, we have identified that customers will indeed buy more at higher margins from brands who embark on sharing a true, sustainable story. Consumers have made it clear that there are not enough brands to love, and they want more."

When it comes to generating Brand Love, there is room for growth among produce brands that have successfully achieved customer loyalty. Almost 60 percent of

consumers admit to “loving” a fresh produce brand; however, they struggle to name a second brand that they have an emotional connection with.

The findings suggest that there is plenty of room left for produce brands to achieve advocacy and Brand Love status.