

## Beverage Aisle: Beverage Aisle

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What does the future hold for World Tea Expo and the tea category as a whole? Kim Jage, EVP of the Las Vegas-based show, provides some of the answers.

According to Jage, the industry-leading annual event, which first began as Take Me 2 Tea in 2003, "will continue to deliver the only business-to-business dedicated market for tea and an unparalleled educational program for the community. World Tea Expo will continue to challenge itself to create exciting, innovative content each year. Notable past events were the first-ever tea auction on U.S. soil, in 2006, and the Top Tea Cocktail competition for delegates to concoct their best alcohol-infused tea creations, in 2009."

Continues Jage: "In addition to World Tea Expo, World Tea News and the North American Tea Championship, the World Tea brand will be releasing proprietary research data for the specialty market and small tea business owners in 2010. In 2011, World Tea East, a regionally focused event, will return to the northeast U.S."

These changes are in response to the beverage's evolution, she explains. "Tea overall remains hot, but major shifts within the category are emerging," says Jage. "The U.S. tea market is projected to expand by more than \$7 billion by 2012, with nearly three-quarters of that growth from the specialty and premium markets (Packaged Facts, 2007). Despite the recent economic meltdown, the tea category has remained vibrant. A recent study showed ready-to-drink tea as one of only two liquid refreshment beverage categories that had positive growth in 2009 (Beverage Marketing Corp., U.S. Liquid Beverage Refreshment Market, March 2010)."

Further down the road, Jage believes that "specialty and premium tea will continue to show exponential sales growth in the U.S. for the next decade, and the World Tea brands will continue to meet the needs of the entrepreneurs and businesses capitalizing on this highly profitable category."

### Free Tea via Twitter

With the goal of engaging Twitter followers, New Leaf Brands last month launched a social media contest, "A Year of Free Tea," which offers fans of its tea-based beverages the chance to win free all-natural New Leaf teas for a whole year.

Any new follower of the beverages could end up receiving one case of 12 free New Leaf bottles each month for 12 months, for a total of 12 cases. Different flavors will be delivered each month. Although the contest is posted both on New Leaf's Facebook and Twitter pages, only individuals who follow New Leaf @drinknewleaf on Twitter will be entered to win.

Through the monthlong promotion, the Orangeburg, N.Y.-based company aims to reach 800 or more followers, with 10 randomly chosen winners to be revealed on May 17, 2010. New and current followers can stay updated with news, information, special offers and giveaways from New Leaf Brands on Twitter and Facebook.