



MARKETING UPDATE

MUSHROOM IN-STORE SAMPLING

WHEN IT COMES TO PLANNING DINNER, NEARLY HALF OF AUSTRALIAN COOKS ARE LAST MINUTE LARRYS, PROVIDING THE PERFECT OPPORTUNITY TO REMIND SHOPPERS OF THE WONDERS OF MUSHROOMS AS THEY DO THEIR DINNER SHOPPING.

By Paulette Baumgartl

With this key statistic in mind, the Hort Innovation marketing team developed the *Mushroom In-Store Sampling Program*.

Capitalising on the prevalence of impulse buyers in Australian supermarkets, mushroom ambassadors were at the ready to inspire eager shoppers with mouth-watering aromas, delicious tasting samples, and simple recipes to cook at home that night.

The in-store sampling, part of the levy-funded MU21503 project, was endorsed by the Mushroom SIAP to drive category growth with point of purchase conversion by inspiring shoppers with easy mushroom recipes to taste while in store.

The overall objective of the campaign is to contribute towards the FY22 Australian Mushrooms Brand vision to push long term domestic growth for the mushroom category.

The initiative is part of an effort to make Australian mushrooms a staple ingredient in the Australian home by driving increased consideration and frequency of purchase, and answer the underlying question:

“How do we inspire consumers to consider and use mushrooms more often?”

Emma Day, marketing manager at Hort innovation, explains that this initiative is part of a four pillar plan that underpins the mushroom marketing strategy (see *MushroomLink, Issue 1 Winter 2022, page 19* for the full marketing strategy).

“This project is part of our Pillar 3: Win in Retail, which aims to increase the visibility of mushrooms in retail settings,” she said.

“In addition to in-store sampling, other elements of Pillar 3 include in-store advertising, online shopping advertising and out of home (OoH) advertising panels on the path to purchase, i.e., close to, or inside, retail stores.

“As the project runs until the end of the year, we are still collecting data, but customer feedback has been very positive,” Emma added.

The in-store sampling program (10am-2pm) and (3pm-7pm) ran across the country (except Northern Territory) in Woolworths and Coles stores. Demonstration tables, branded with Australian mushrooms imagery, also contained additional marketing collateral including



A mushroom ambassador helping shoppers discover the delights of Australian mushrooms

business cards and a QR code linked to the Australian Mushrooms website for more mushroom recipes.

Australian Mushroom Brand Ambassadors prepared two recipes, namely vegetarian ‘meatballs’ and mushroom mini toast. Australian families love meatballs, and this vegetarian version taps into the growing trend for people to reduce the amount of meat in their diets.

The mushrooms on toast recipe aligns with the AMGA-run Café Culture foodservice campaign, #mymushroomtoast, recently won by the Guyala Café in Cairns.

A total of 276 in-store sampling sessions have been completed so far, with sessions ramping up toward Christmas to complete 600 in total by end of 2022.

The current results are as follows:

- Total samples: 23,736
- Total interactions: 32,568
- Average samples per session: 86 (Target: 80)
- Average interactions per session: 118 (Target: 115)

"I really love this recipe, very simple but tasty"

"The mushroom, garlic and herbs pair perfectly together"

"Yummy and healthy vegetarian option"

"Absolutely delicious, I'm going to get the ingredients now and make that at home"

"Delicious! I am always looking for other things to do with mushrooms"

"The best vegetarian meatballs I have tried, so healthy!"

Samplers love the idea of mushrooms being added as an alternative to meat and using them in recipes they wouldn't usually consider.

Brand Ambassadors report samplers typically only consider mushrooms if a recipe calls for them, but enjoyed the new alternative recipe samples presented, and commented positively.

Some examples of their positive responses:

Customer feedback suggests that they love the vegetarian options and the aroma of the garlic and mushrooms throughout the store, which encourages tasting. The business and stand-up cards have been very successful as many samplers are interested in the recipes for the meatballs and mini toasts.

Brand Ambassadors have also been encouraging samplers to look through the "recipes" tab to view these recipes and many others, which highlight the versatility of mushrooms. This has been a key talking point at all sessions.

Look out for the full results of this initiative in MushroomLink 2023.

Hort Innovation
Strategic Levy Investment

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