

FLAVOR NEWS

FONA INTERNATIONAL'S QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

FOLLOW US

Stay connected to the latest FONA news and flavor trends.



1900 Averill Road
Geneva, IL 60134 USA

IN THIS ISSUE

Tips to Prepare for 2020 Growth
Chairman's Corner
3 Workplace Awards
Save the Children Partnership

STAY IN THE LOOP

Keep up-to-date on our latest flavor events and news. Send your email address to feedback@fona.com.

FLAVOR NEWS

Volume 70, November 2019
Published by FONA International Inc.
630.578.8600
www.fona.com

Flavor News is printed on 30% post-consumer recycled paper.

FLAVOR NEWS

CONFECTION / GRAIN / BEVERAGE / MARKET DEVELOPMENT

VOLUME 70 NOVEMBER 2019



IT'S OPEN!

FONA'S CALIFORNIA LOCATION is ready for you!

FONA's facility and laboratory space in Irvine, California is ready for you and your team. Let's talk about how we can help you grow.

SCHEDULE A VISIT:

www.fona.com/chat | beverage@fona.com
630-578-8600



A NEW YEAR IS COMING. ARE YOU READY?

3 Tips to Prepare for Growth in 2020



Preparing for the next year involves so much more than checking out the competition. Here's our advice on starting the year (and decade) primed for growth.

YOUR PRIORITIES ARE OUR PRIORITIES. LET'S TALK.

FEEDBACK@FONA.COM

GET READY. 2020 IS COMING.

3 Tips To Prepare Your Business



1 EXAMINE THE GAPS AND CUT THROUGH THE NOISE

When finding your whitespace, competitive analysis is just the beginning. Start by examining and analyzing where the competition is playing – or more importantly, not playing. But it's also key to take a gauge of consumer response. Where are consumers being under-served?

Where can your unique strengths solve a challenge for them? Checking the online reviews of competitive products or using product research databases can help you dig deeper into potential opportunity.

Consider today's world of Instagram-friendly startup brands. Many of those rapidly growing start-ups (such as beverage brand Dirty Lemon)

are finding a niche because they both examined the opportunity, and took a pulse on consumer frustrations, goals – and paid special attention to the new ways in which today's consumer might purchase. Consumers are buying into their authenticity & believe in the brands' mission – how can you capture the same sentiment?

*Where are consumers being underserved?
Where can your unique strengths solve a challenge for them?*

Be malleable when opportunity (or even criticism) arise – that flexibility will help secure your future growth.



2 OPEN YOUR MIND TO BLURRED LINES

Prepare for even more line-blurring in food and beverage. Today's consumers prioritize individuality and personalization – and they see no need for their food & beverage to be constricted by category or occasion.

Healthy is blending with indulgent; functional needs to also be fun; breakfast is for dinner – and literally anything can be considered a snack. Consider plant-based food and beverage as a prime example of the blurring in food and beverage. The positioning was once an area of interest only for

vegetarians and vegans. Today, we at FONA have called plant-based a permanent consumer shift. Even the most carnivorous among the population see the appeal in including more plant-based food and beverage into their diet.

To prepare for 2020 is to prepare to flex. Be malleable when opportunity (or even criticism) arise – that flexibility will help secure your future growth.

(continues on next page...)



(continued from previous page...)

Seek help from your flavor partners, ingredient suppliers, co-manufacturers and co-packers. They, too, want your products to succeed, and have a vested interest in helping you grow.



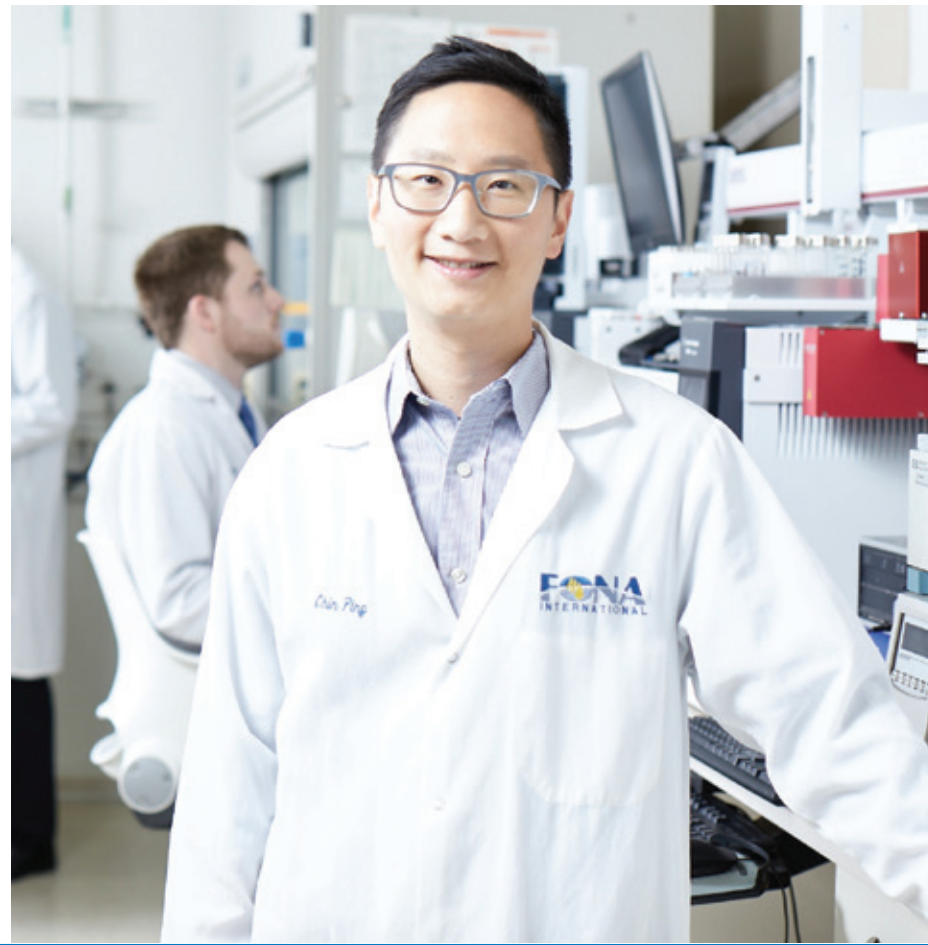
3 TAP INTO THE CREATIVITY OF YOUR PARTNERS

The year 2020 is a blank canvas – the thought can be exciting (and possibly overwhelming.) According to Harvard Business Review, less than 3% of new CPG products exceed \$50 million in their first year. HBR cites lack of preparation as the reason so many products fail. The product lifecycle has shrunk dramatically. At the same time, our research shows that both taste and excitement are critical drivers for consumer purchase. How do you prepare for 2020 with those odds? How do you develop exciting, tasty products that can inspire confidence?

Our advice is to tap into the creativity and drive of your

vendors and partners. You may have more options than you realize. Whether it's ideation, facilitation, concept development or technical guidance – true partners help their valued customer succeed.

Communicate and seek help from your flavor partners, ingredient suppliers, co-manufacturers and co-packers. They, too, want your products to succeed, and have a vested interest in helping you grow in 2020. ■



WHETHER YOU'RE LOOKING TOWARDS THE NEXT YEAR WITH EXCITEMENT OR ANXIETY, FONA IS READY TO HELP.

www.fona.com/chat | call 630-578-8600 | feedback@fona.com

CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

Many Reasons to Be Grateful



As we at FONA look forward to the end of another year, we are filled with gratitude. One of my favorite reasons to come together as the FONA Family is to hold our Thanksgiving celebration. For us, there is nothing quite like giving thanks together.

It's my favorite holiday and my favorite event – a time for us to take stock and reflect on our blessings. This year – and in fact, this decade – there are many reasons to be grateful.

We are thankful to you, FONA's customers and partners, for your trust, your confidence and your support. It's our honor and privilege to serve you. The work that you do each and every day is so very important – to deliver to consumers and their families, and to do it safely. We're grateful to be a part of your mission to serve your values.

Family-wise... it's so rewarding to watch my children Luke, Kirk and Joy find their own professional paths and grow into their callings. I'm thankful and honored to be husband to Mary; father to the three of them; and "Papa" to a growing number of grandchildren. There is nothing better.

I owe great thanks to the wonderful FONA family. They truly make each day a wonder. Their hard work, integrity and kindness are unparalleled. I'm grateful and indebted to each of them.

Above all, I give thanks to God for another year of grace, protection and mercy. I know that through Him all things are possible. I thank God for the blessings we've received and those that are yet to come.

As we close one decade and look forward to the next, I find myself reflecting on the last 10 years of joy, growth and fun the FONA Family has shared. We've seen new partnerships established and existing partnerships flourish in deep and beneficial ways. This decade brought us to full capacity at our Geneva facility, leading us to invest in a large expansion just last year. I'm filled with gratitude for how far we've come – and hopeful and excited to see what the next decade will bring. I believe the coming decade will bring us many new members of the FONA Family... new opportunities to serve, and new opportunities to win. It will bring exciting milestones for the growing families of our employees, including babies, graduations and weddings...and even more chances to celebrate and come together.

There are so many reasons to give thanks. I'd love to hear yours. Drop us a line at feedback@fona.com.

Happy Thanksgiving. Wishing you and yours a safe and prosperous 2020!

JOSEPH JAMES SLAWEK,
Chairman & CEO





3 Workplace Awards in 1 Week

COMPANY RECEIVES A NATIONAL FORTUNE / GREAT PLACE TO WORK AWARD + TWO BEST & BRIGHTEST AWARDS IN THE SAME WEEK

This September, FONA received three prestigious awards in one week alone, including recognition in Fortune magazine as the #2 medium-sized workplace in the nation for manufacturing & production.

The independent review by Great Place to Work reveals themes about FONA's stated culture of growth and openness: 97% of employees say FONA is a great place to work. "Organizations like FONA stand out from the crowd, overcoming competitive conditions through intentionally growing their businesses by creating great places to work for all," said Michael C. Bush, CEO of Great Place to Work.

Earlier that same week, the company also received a Best & Brightest Elite Award for Compensation, Benefits & Employee Solutions. This is the 14th year that FONA was recognized with an Elite award. FONA also was named a Best & Brightest "Icon" – recognizing the company's longevity and continual presence among elite workplaces.

It's an incredible time at FONA." said Jeremy Thompson, Chief Operating Officer, "How rewarding, to receive national recognition from Fortune, and right on the heels of an Elite Best & Brightest award. Wow! What a testament to our wonderful people and the incredible, growth-focused culture we create together every day."

In addition to this recognition, FONA just received the results of its biannual Employee Engagement survey. Conducted by Management Resources Association (MRA), the survey showed that 99% of employees are "engaged" with 70% of employees being fully engaged in the company. (The national norm for full engagement is 36%.)

"FONA is among the highest engagement scores we see," said Kristie Haase SPHR, Employee Engagement Survey Manager from MRA. "I have never seen such a unified sentiment from employees inside an organization regarding the strength, clarity and transparency of communication. This is their secret sauce." ■

"I have never seen such a unified sentiment from employees inside an organization regarding the strength, clarity and transparency of communication. This is their secret sauce."

-Kristie Haase, Management Resources Association



Building Impactful Partnerships

FONA PARTNERS WITH *SAVE THE CHILDREN* TO SUPPORT VANILLA FARMERS AND CHILD PROTECTION ACTIVITIES IN MADAGASCAR



Save the Children



FONA is partnering with international children's charity, *Save the Children* to support vanilla farmers and their families in Madagascar.

Approximately 80% of the world's vanilla comes from Madagascar, yet the residents are some of the world's poorest. The length and complexity of the crop's cycle and the vulnerability to weather and other forces leaves the farmers susceptible to market volatility. FONA's commitment will support Save the Children's work aimed at reducing the challenges facing families and youth in vanilla farming communities.

With 3 out of 4 people within these communities living below

the poverty line, the support will go towards breaking this cycle and promoting a better future for the next generation.

"We are so thrilled to join this partnership with Save the Children and are looking forward to the opportunity to make an impact on the communities in Madagascar. We're looking to improve sustainability, not only for the crop – but for the lives and livelihoods of children and farmers within the community.", said Business Director Becky Wagner. "FONA's corporate responsibility vision is around empowering what we call the least, last and lost – meaning the people who often get the least amount of attention; are the last

to receive aid; and are the most at risk of getting lost in the shuffle.

FONA's support will enable Save the Children to implement Child Protection activities in 12 villages. This includes empowering youth with training and knowledge about their rights, and working with adults in the community to ensure children are given the best opportunity to thrive. FONA is invested in serving those in need both within and outside of its local community and looks forward to supporting these activities. FONA's involvement will serve as a way to break the poverty lifecycle and create a lasting change in the vanilla industry in Madagascar. ■