



GAMING & ESPORTS:

Innovation in the Food & Beverage Space

The evolution of gaming is quite an intriguing concept for brands these days. From the inception of consoles such as Atari to Nintendo Switch, to cloud-based gaming platforms, livestreaming and more, eSports has grown from a mostly individual experience to an interactive opportunity to play with and watch millions of gamers around the world. In fact, 89% of U.S. adults are dedicated gamers, playing video games at least weekly. Interest is opening a world of job opportunities as streamers and competitive eSports athletes become more well-known. And brands today are creating products to focus on this space as well as provide health benefits such as eye health, brain health and energy that will help players level up their game. Let's take a look at this space, and see where your brand can find victory. Ready to play?

Gaming Interest Loading...



Global video game markets have grown in the past 12 months. In fact, according to Mintel, the market has seen an 8.3% YoY growth in North America. Much of this interest could be traced to pandemic-related lockdowns endured in the past year as people spent more time at home and turned to gaming for enjoyment and as a hobby to pass the time along with social connection during social distancing.

And though they dominate the space, interest isn't only limited to younger male consumers as it may have been in the past. Interest spans across demographics from younger Gen Z consumers to older Millennials who may have developed their original love of gaming with consoles like GameCube and Game Boy as well as computer games and online gaming such as RuneScape.



71% OF AMERICANS
have played a video game in
the past three months.

"WHERE ARE WE LANDING, BOYS?"

Food and beverage developers can find opportunity or "land" success in offering products that will either benefit consumers' playing abilities or serve as functional offerings for health concerns like eye health, focus, brain health and more.

"The Global Gaming Market was valued at USD 173.70 billion in 2020 and is expected to reach a value of USD 314.40 billion by 2026...These platforms are attracting more than hundreds and thousands of new visitors in online traffic."

— MODOR INTELLIGENCE



CHOOSE YOUR PLAYER



87% OF U.S. WOMEN
who played video games at
least weekly in the past three
months consider themselves
a dedicated gamer.



47% OF TEENS
of teens list console
gaming as one of their
three favorite activities.



57% OF GEN Z MEN
say they opt for gaming to
relieve stress.

Game Paused: Snack Break

Though the eating while gaming combo could be a recipe for mindless eating, food and beverage brands are creating products that will provide gamers with functional benefits as well. And gamers are craving these products. In fact, a 2020 report from Newzoo, a game research company, states that 80% of gamers regularly eat or drink while playing.

SNACKING STATS

What do North American gamers eat the most while gaming?

49%

SALTY SNACKS

48%

SWEET SNACKS

39%

SOFT DRINKS

Source: Newzoo

Across the three regions, female gamers show a preference for salty snacks while gaming, while males' preferences differ more by region. Soft drinks and salty snacks are equally popular among male gamers in North America.



80% OF GAMERS REGULARLY EAT OR DRINK WHILE GAMING.

– Newzoo

OFFERINGS OF NOTE:



RUNTIME ESPORTS NUTRITION COMPANY

supports peak player performance and is focused on solutions for eSports players and influencers. Their products include high-performance ingredients, including isomaltulose, branched chain amino acids, proteins and nootropics selected to help athletes achieve optimal physical and mental performance. Products include a performance drink, Megabyte bar and Next Level Meal in various flavors.

Source: Trendhunter, Datassential

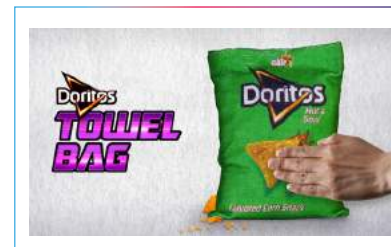


MTN DEW CHARGED RASPBERRY LEMONADE AMP GAME FUEL

was released as a collaboration product with Call of Duty World League and Team OpTic. The drink comes in flavor options including Charged Cherry Blast, Charged Cherry Burst, Charged Original DEW and Charged Tropical Strike.

28% of consumers responded that they likely or definitely would buy this product.

Source: Twitter



DORITOS TOWEL BAG

is a reusable snack bag made out of towel fabric, creating a convenient place for snackers to wipe their fingers to reduce "Doritos fingers." Released in Israel, the bag is made out of 100% terry towel cloth, making it a machine washable and sustainable snack bag for small snack portions.

Source: The Drum, Datassential

Vision Check



Brands can focus on gamers as key eye health targets whether they are casual gamers who play for entertainment or professional eSports athletes. Both casual gaming sessions and professional competitions can be hard on eyesight, and as screen impact on eye health has already been a general topic

of concern, food and beverage manufacturers can capitalize by developing products that will help alleviate this stress.

"No energy drinks launched in the US in the past five years carried an eye health claim, making eye health perhaps the greatest whitespace functional claim in the energy drink market."

– MINTEL

ESPORTS & EYE STRAIN

The most common health complaint amongst eSports athletes was eye strain British Medical Journal as well as lack of sleep and poor nutrition.

36%

of U.S. adults are concerned about how screens are affecting their vision.

40%

of U.S. consumers are concerned about how screens affect their child's vision.

25%

of U.S. consumers aged 18-24 agree that eye health benefits would motivate them to purchase a performance or nutrition drink.

Source: Mintel

PRODUCTS OF NOTE:



COMMAND CANS BY TEAM COMMAND

(a MyProtein company) focuses its gaming energy drink on a nootropic blend that includes Lion's mane mushroom extract, taurine and caffeine with zinc and vitamin A to support eye health (UK).

Source: Stack3d



GLICO LIBERA EYE SUPPORT MILK

CHOCOLATES is an FFC-certified product is claimed to reduce feelings of eye fatigue with astaxanthin, which is claimed to help lens control, reducing computer screen eye fatigue. It retails in a 40g pack.

Brain Boost

Previously looked at mostly as a mindless activity by many parents, gaming has become a legitimate sport, even providing financial opportunities for highly skilled players. Not only this, research shows that gaming can actually improve essential skills such as decision making, reflexes, reaction time, hand-eye coordination, critical thinking and strategy.

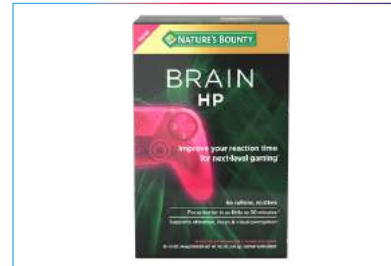
A healthy mind can improve gamers' abilities on the screen as well as in real life, leaving white space for manufacturers to marry the two benefits and distinguish their brand. Familiar nootropics that improve cognitive function could be opportunistic ingredients/supplements in this space to level up players' abilities and cognitive health. Offering hybrid products that include nootropics and energy boosting ingredients could be one way to persuade consumers to try these products.

“While only 15% of US sports/nutrition/performance drink consumers are interested in nootropics in nutrition or performance drinks, 31% are interested in products with a brain health benefit. Nootropics may still be an unfamiliar term to most consumers... In order to introduce consumers to the concept of nootropics, start with nootropic substances that people are familiar with, such as caffeine, L-theanine, or B vitamins.”

– MINTEL



PRODUCTS OF NOTE:



BRAIN HP

offers brain and vision benefits in a jellybean format. The product claims to contain L-theanine, an amino acid to help improve reaction time, citicholine to support attention and lutein to filter out blue light and support visual perception.

Source: Nature's Bounty



GHOST GAMER

claims to be the perfect combo of brain-boosting nootropics and natural energy that can be used to ensure you're dialed for an afternoon on the sticks or at the office

Source: Ghost

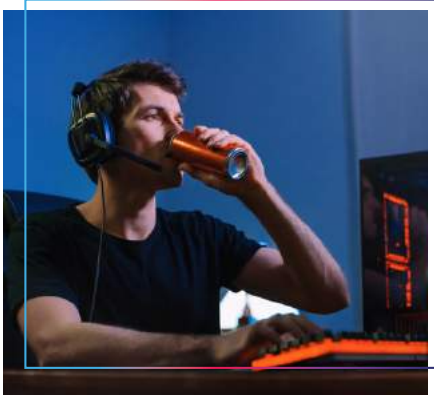


IQ BAR

contains nutrients for the brain; protein for the body; fiber for the gut; and 1g sugar for crash-free performance. It contains the following six brain nutrients: Lion's mane, MCTs, omega-3s, flavonoids, vitamin E and choline.

36% of consumers responded that they likely or definitely would buy this product.

Fueling Up



Mental focus and stamina are important as fatigue can set in during long periods of screen time. In fact, 17% of North American gamers reach for energy drinks while gaming according to Newzoo.

Functional products that feature energy benefits can help eSports players get through long sessions – either casually or competitively. And though there are an abundance of options in energy drinks and supplements, offerings with more-natural ingredients may be of interest to consumers to reduce an energy crash that could affect performance.

"It's safe to say that consuming caffeine within eSports is not only a part of the culture but a must when it comes to peak performance and staying on top of your game. Once again, this comes as no surprise given the multitude of cognitive benefits that caffeine provides and the emergence of various energy drinks and pills which have become so readily available."

— GSCIENCE



PRODUCTS OF NOTE:



G FUEL ENERGY FORMULA

claims to be the "Official Drink of Esports" and claims to provide energy, focus, endurance and hydration. The brand offers Collector's Boxes with flavors inspired by gamers and other influencers.

Photo Source: Amazon



GAME FUEL MTN DEW

was developed in partnership with pros and elite amateurs as the first beverage designed just for gamers. The brand offers core flavors of cherry burst and berry blast and features resealable tech to keep it fresh and your hardware dry and textured packaging for tactile grip.



RAGE READY-TO-MIX INSTANT COFFEE SHOTS

provide vitamins and coffee for energy and focus. The product is infused with natural vitamins to boost energy, enhance fitness and improve focus. It also contains L-theanine, L-glutamine, ginkgo biloba, Bacopa monnieri, Panax ginseng and Rhodiola rosea.

Playing Up The Trends - It's Go Time

Below are a few innovative offerings that are drumming up even more interest in the gaming space.



PIZZA HUT

made the first all-digital Madden stadium for eSports competitions. Then, in March of 2021, the pizza chain partnered with Pac-Man for a limited-edition “playable” Pac-Man box, featuring a QR code that will direct a player to the game on their phone, with the option to share scores via social media to qualify for a prize.

Source: Mintel



RED BULL UNDERGROUND ESPORTS BARS

combine drinking and friendly video gaming. The space features neon-lit ambiance with PCs, large TVs, head-sets and the latest models of Nintendo, Microsoft and Sony consoles. It is said to be a key hangout spot for video game enthusiasts looking to have a drink and play alongside friends. | Source: Mintel



KFCONSOLE

is a gaming console released by KFC said to be equipped with a “chicken chamber” to keep your chicken warm, cross-platform compatibility, true 4k and the ability to run games at 120 frames per second. The console aims to “power your hunger”.

Source: Thrillist



TACO BELL GAMING THEMED CANTINA

is located in San Ramone, California and allows you to enjoy your Taco Bell favorites between video game showdowns. They claim to be setting the stage for ‘fast-social’ restaurants that introduce dynamic dining rooms and social gatherings.

Source: Mintel

Influencer Effect & Sponsorship Showdown

In a digital world, brands are capitalizing on the gaming space through sponsorships and partnerships with gaming influencers, teams and professional eSports athletes to promote their products and offerings. From limited-edition packaging to innovative flavors and brand sponsorships, let's take a look at how influencers in the gaming space are having an effect on the market.



OFFERINGS OF NOTE:



MILLER LIGHT SPONSORSHIP & COMPLEXITY GAMING

Miller Lite is the official alcohol brand of Complexity Gaming, the competitive eSports team owned by Jerry Jones, owner of the Dallas Cowboys. This is the brand's first sponsorship outside of traditional sports sponsorships.

Source: Dextero



PEWDIEPIE G FUEL COLLECTION

The G Fuel PewDiePie Collection features an energy formula in tubs or cans featuring flavors including Lingonberry, Yuzu Slash and Cherry. It is said to provide energy, focus, endurance and fast reaction. PewDiePie (Felix Arvid Ulf Kjellberg) is currently the 6th most subscribed to Youtuber. He was the highest subscribed to Youtuber for 1,920 days. | Source: G Fuel



NINJA & RED BULL

Professional Gamer and YouTuber Tyler 'Ninja' Belvin is featured on Red Bull Energy Drink packaging and includes a competition to win a match against Ninja himself. He is known for being a professional Battle Royale Player and Streamer. He currently is playing Fortnite, Valorant, and Warzone.

Source: Packaging Digest

"Coupled with digital entertainment being the new go-to in times of boredom, eSports has already proven that it's expertly poised to be a huge entertainment venture that can handle large brand partnerships in exchange for mass exposure."

– MINTEL

THE TAKEAWAYS

The future of the eSports industry is bright, and that goes for food and beverage playing in this space as well. And as 80% of gamers say they eat and drink while gaming, developers can battle to distinguish their brand through fuel-filled snacks to energy beverages, supplements and more. The key – offering flavorful products that also provide functional benefits that will help gamers win on screen and in their everyday lives. Health concerns such as eye health, brain health and fatigue are prevalent in this space. And if you're not in this space yet, it's not quite game over for your brand. Whether you're targeting the everyday gamer or the eSports athlete, there's room for you to win in this space. Let us help you find your "what's

SOURCES

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- Nature's Bounty
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- GScience.io
- Amazon
- Thrillist
- Brandwatch.com
- Complexity.gg

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