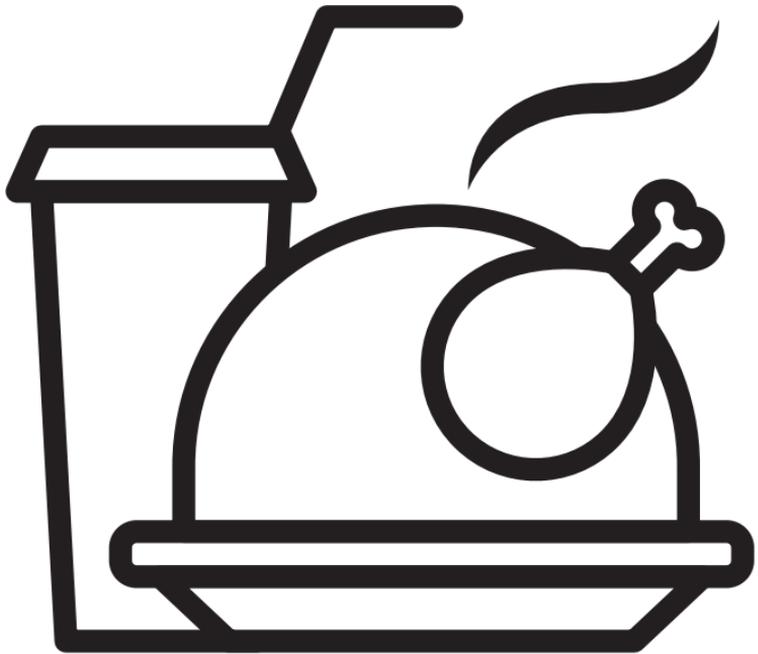


Food For

Rachid Lamrabat

All



The Connective Power of Food Retail

Lannoo
Campus

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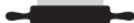
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Foreword

Saturday afternoon, half past one. We enter the local supermarket, face masks at the ready, our trolley properly disinfected. Shopping, anno 2020. What an ocean of choice! All different kinds of bread, all different kinds of vegetables, everything you need for your sandwiches, meats of every description, even a cooler with lots of vegan goodies ...

Also frozen and ready-made meals, because with both of us working we never have enough time. Of course, we don't really need to go to the supermarket any more. If we want, we can order everything online and have it delivered to our home. And that is probably the safest option in the age of corona, since it keeps physical contact with others to a minimum.

Lots of choice, but not for every consumer

Yes, a veritable ocean of choice, reflecting all the latest consumption trends. Something for every consumer? Something for many consumers, perhaps – but not all. In total, almost 28.5 million people live in Belgium and the Netherlands. A quarter of them have an immigrant background. In Belgium, this means first and foremost consumers with Moroccan roots, followed by those of Turkish origin. In the Netherlands, it is broadly the other way around. Taken together, the Low Countries are home to a total of some 1.5 million inhabitants with either a Moroccan or a Turkish background (source: PEW Research). Often, they are people who are strongly attached to their own cultural patterns.

For these consumers, the range on offer in the supermarket looks very different than it does for the majority. They do not see an ocean of choice. They cannot find frozen or ready-made meals based on traditional Moroccan or Turkish (or Iraqi or Syrian, etc.) recipes. They can't even find all the functional ingredients they need to make their own food the way they would like.

Okay, there are specialist butchers and grocery stores that can help them to find these products. And here and there ethnic supermarkets are starting to appear, in cities like Amsterdam and Antwerp. In other words, all the basic food-stuffs can be found. But there is too little variety. The assortment is not broad enough, so consumers with an immigrant



***Estimated growth of the
target group is strong***



GLOBAL

2010: 1.6 BILLION / PROGNOSIS 2050: 2.8 BILLION



EUROPE

2010: 19.5 MILLION / 2016: 25.8 MILLION /
PROGNOSIS 2050: 57.9 MILLION



BELGIUM

2010: 638,000 / PROGNOSIS 2050: 1.14 MILLION



FRANCE

2010: 4.7 MILLION / PROGNOSIS 2050: 5.4 MILLION



THE NETHERLANDS

2010: 1 MILLION / PROGNOSIS 2050: 1.3 MILLION

Source: PEW Research – World Muslim
population 2010 – 2030

background are denied the chance to try out all the latest modern consumption trends. Which, in turn, also means that retailers are missing out on a huge opportunity.

More and more Muslims

Between 2015 and 2060, the total Muslim population will grow twice as fast as the rest of the world population, according to the Pew Research Center, an American think-tank. During the second half of the 21st century, Islam also looks set to take over the role of the world's largest religion from Christianity. However, even in the shorter term the number of Muslims is destined to increase rapidly.

The same Pew Research Center estimates that the number of Muslims in Europe grew from 19.5 million in 2010 to 25.8 million in 2016. If average migration trends continue, by 2050 Europe will have a total of 57.9 million Muslims.

A fantastic opportunity for growth

This large group of people is also a large group of consumers, but a group that is currently not finding (enough of) the food they really want. As a result, consumers with an immigrant background are forced to assess and re-assess their food every day. What is this? What does it contain? Can I eat it? Where there is any doubt, Muslims prefer to avoid the product. As a result, they end up having to be satisfied with alternatives that are not their first choice. That is a problem for the con-

sumer. But it is also a problem for the retailer. Because he is not selling the products that many of his customers want. But if he can provide those products, the opportunities for growth are huge.

Research and the extensive practical experience of the TIQAH research and strategy bureau suggest that these ‘unsatisfied’ consumers change brands almost as regularly as they change their socks. But if Western retailers and brands would make more of an effort to understand these consumers and cater to their needs, this could alter dramatically. If the hand of empathy is extended, it is almost certain to be grasped, releasing the increasing purchasing power that many Muslims now have at their disposal. Because the middle class is growing in the Muslim community, as is the number of two-income families. With women who are empowered but have very little time to go shopping ...

Food For All

Put simply, there is a fantastic opportunity for Western retailers and brands to significantly boost their turnover. But they need to seize this opportunity now, because it is already five to midnight. Foreign supermarkets and brands, which are already providing the kind of rich assortment that Belgian and Dutch Muslims want, are waiting in the wings to step into this potentially lucrative gap in the market. In fact, they are already doing it, albeit carefully. Local supermar-

kets and brands need to get their act together – before it is too late.

But how can Western retailers and brands make this transition? That is what I will explain in the following pages. I will show how you can occupy the middle ground between, on the one hand, the attachment of consumers with an immigrant background to their own culture and cuisine, and, on the other hand, the desire of other Dutch and Belgian consumers to try something new and exotic. You can do this by offering a broad assortment of what I call Food For All. A type of food, with halal as its quality label, in which every consumer can recognise himself or herself.

An assortment that not only satisfies the needs of ‘forgotten’ consumers and gives them access to the latest consumption trends, but also allows people of different cultures to meet and truly get to know each other through a shared passion for a shared range of foods – Food For All – which is the ideal breeding ground for real conversations during real communal meals.

So let us all work together to achieve this Food For All, so that we can all sit around the same communal table and nourish our society with some much needed connectedness – because it is now more necessary than ever before.

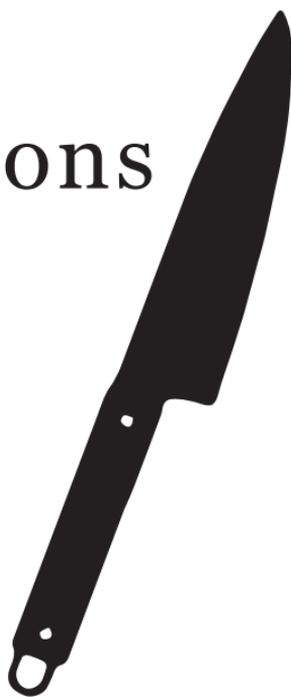
Rachid Lamrabat

CHAPTER

1



The *history*
of food:
a **revolution**
in *three*
generations





What we eat, how we eat it and where we get it: all these things seem self-evident. But if our great-grandparents could see us today, they would recognise almost nothing familiar in our eating habits and culture. And I don't just mean that the gas and wood-burning stoves of yesteryear have been replaced by microwaves and induction plates, although cooking technology has indeed evolved dramatically in recent times. No, I mean that they would be amazed at what we eat, how we eat, when we eat and how long we eat, all of which have evolved even more dramatically.

Let's turn the clock back a few generations. Until the 1950s, people's eating options and habits were limited to what they could find at the weekly market or at the local baker and butcher. Back then, food was something functional and rational. You ate whatever was available. In other words, no strawberries in winter and no sprouts in summer, no matter how much you craved them.

Of course, people who lived in the country had the opportunity to grow their own vegetables and rear their own livestock, but that was as far as 'food luxury' went. The offer in the shops was limited to a fairly basic range: a few different types of meat, a number of traditional vegetables, young or mature Dutch cheese – and that was about all! To modern ears, this almost sounds like a description of pre-historic times, but in reality it was less than 75 years ago.

What's more, in some parts of the world outside of Europe consumers are still restricted to this kind of basic choice of food products.

New way of living, new food, new purchasing behaviour

With new ways of living and new patterns of work, new habits of purchasing also began to emerge. As more and more women also started working in nine-to-five jobs, so the need grew for a place where it was possible to do your food and drink shopping in the evening and at weekends, after the working day was done. Moreover, a place where you could buy not just what you needed for the day, but also for the entire week, with perhaps even a small stock of standard items, if available.

Initially, this need was filled by local grocery stores, but the first superettes soon began to appear, followed shortly thereafter by the supermarkets. In addition to food and drink, they also offered a range of other useful household goods, like cleaning products, washing powder and washing-up liquid, toilet paper, etc.

As the years passed, the supermarkets became larger and more diversified. Consumers could now buy everything they needed at these mega-stores, and not just food. They were a one-stop address. In the past, you needed to visit three or four stores to buy the same range of goods: baker, butcher, greengrocer, etc.