

Bord Iascaigh Mhara
Irish Sea Fisheries Board



SDC Product Innovation Whitefish Category

“Benefishal” – Healthy Fish &
Sweet Potato Chips



Project Objectives:

Due to the lack of added value products in the Irish whitefish sector this project was created to research the whitefish sector and develop a concept product based on the results of the research.

The idea for this product was generated from a review of the current ready meal market along with feedback from healthy minded individuals interested in maintaining a healthy lifestyle throughout their busy daily lives. Through extensive research in both the Irish and UK markets it was suggested that there was potential for developing a healthy fish and chip convenience meal.

The growing trends in retail are health, functionality and packaging that contain clear information such as nutritional info, cooking times, etc.

Introduction

While fish and chips are a traditional mainstay of both the Irish and the UK diet it is generally considered to be quite unhealthy, therefore opening the door to create an attractive, healthier alternative to this classic dish to compete against current supermarket chilled ready meal products.

- ✓ In 2012, the seafood sector in Ireland was worth €328 million and exports were valued at €493 million.
- ✓ Whitefish exports were worth €49.2 million for the same year
- ✓ Breaded fish was worth €44 million on the Irish retail market for the year ending July 13 (Source: Kantar Worldpanel)

Market Research

Extensive research was carried out both in Ireland and the UK to quantify if there was a viable market for a product of this specification. Many forms of research were used including desk research, field research through surveys, taste trials and general conversation with consumers. Retail store audits were carried out both in Ireland and the UK in order to establish if there were any similar products on the market. Desk research via Mintel covered Europe to back up the originality of the concept product. Other research included visits to fishmongers and markets, including Billingsgate market in London.

From the research carried out through a survey conducted, it was found that the potential consumer for this product would be Male/Female aged between 19-31 years. The target market would be educated, student/employed, health conscious & knowledgeable about their dietary intake. From the research conducted regarding consumers perceptions of what a chip shape should be, the respondents preferred chip shape was a "Chunky" vegetable chip.

Estimated Price point that the consumer was willing to pay based on these findings is € 4.50- € 4.99 for a single portion ready meal.



Age: 19-31

Educated, student/employed, health conscious

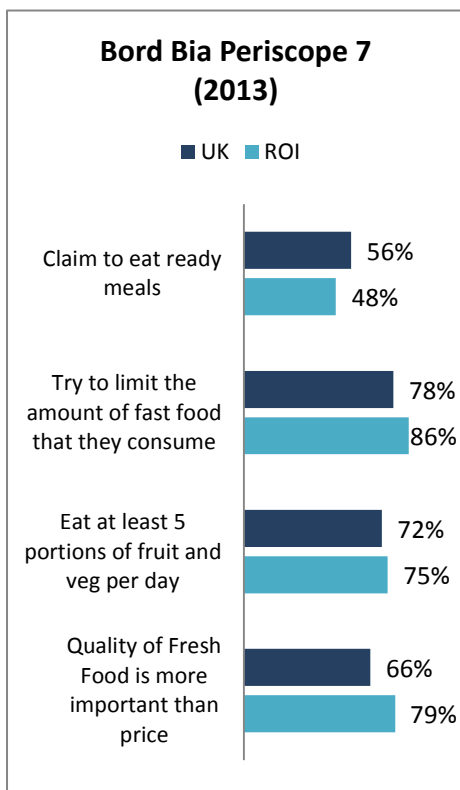
Price point: €4.50-4.99

92% of respondents said they eat fish with 39% saying they eat it once a week

While there is direct competition within the fish and chips convenience market for both Ireland and the UK, "Benefishal" offers a healthier and more substantial alternative to existing products.

Based on findings from Mintel the following are seeded whitefish products currently on the UK and Irish market:

- ✓ Marks & Spencers 4 x lightly dusted and seeded cod fillets
- ✓ Youngs Gastro 2 x Haddock fillets lightly dusted and seeded
- ✓ RR Spink & Sons Mustard seed on smoked fish selection
- ✓ Superquinn chilled seeded & breaded fish fillets



Product Development

Concept: An individual ready meal which portrays health, convenience and sustainability using whitefish.

A healthier approach to a standard convenience meal to consist of a whole white fish fillet, gluten free seeded crumb and sweet potato chips with flaked seaweed.

The name "Benefishal" is a play on words incorporating the word fish and also the beneficial nature of the product. The name is enticing and creates inquisitiveness in the consumer which would hopefully lead to consideration and then sales.

Ingredient Formulation: The Fish Fillet will be 100% Irish Natural Fillet

Different coatings on the fillet would be tested using one of the following ingredients or a unique mixture of these ingredients, depending on market research, testing & sensory results:



86% of respondents thought a healthy fish and chip ready meal with vegetable chips to be a good idea

All these ingredients contain functional benefits and are much healthier than current products on the marketplace. They also act as a marketing tool.

A number of different vegetables of various shapes and sizes were tested to partner the fish, such as:

- ✓ Potato
- ✓ Carrot
- ✓ Parsnip
- ✓ Sweet Potato

It was decided the fish would be accompanied by seasoned sweet potato chips. The chips were approximately 1cm thick before settling on the final product.

Final product: Sensory analysis was carried out regularly during each testing phase before settling on the final product.

Natural White Fish Fillet

Gluten Free Seeded Crumb (Chia Seeds, Flax Seeds and Linseeds)

Sweet Potato Chips (the chips were approximately 1cm thick and 5cm length)

Seaweed Flakes

Packaging: The product would be packaged true to the history of fish & chips "take away" in a stylish box, with black being the predominant colour to justify its premium price and a newspaper type paper inside.

MAP (Modified Atmosphere Packaging) packed oven ready tray with divider and cardboard sleeve was chosen

Conclusion

Further work needs to be carried out to include detailed costings on the product from ingredients right through to machinery.

A successful marketing strategy would need to be created to effectively launch this product.

"Benefishal" healthy fish & chips is the key product in what could potentially be a wider range of products under the "Benefishal" brand.

There are quite a few possible adaptations which may expand the brand in the form of other prepacked healthy meals, value added products and convenience meals. The health benefits are key along with clean label packaging, convenience and functionality.

82% of respondents said they would be willing to buy fish with functional seeds in the breadcrumbs



"Benefishal" healthy fish & chips prototype

Breaded fish is worth €44 million on the Irish retail market for the year ending July 13 (Source Kantar Worldpanel)



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