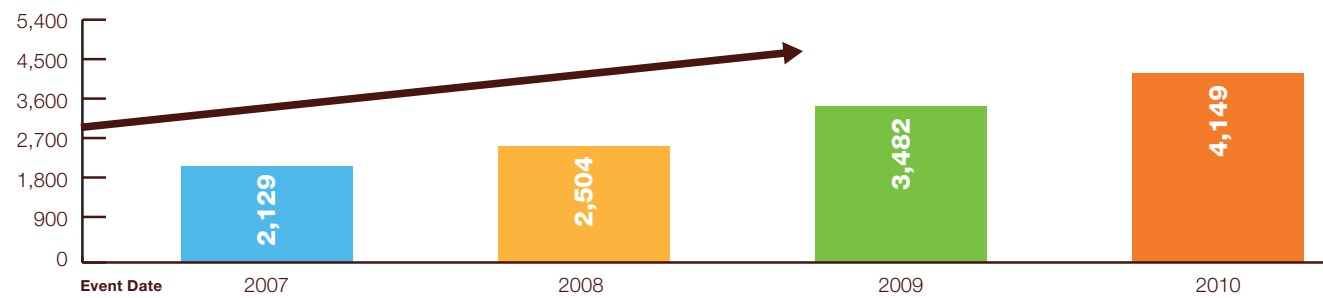




Almonds offer something no other nut does—the most highly rated crunch factor for consumers.¹ Whether whole, crushed, slivered or sliced, the texture and versatility of almonds offers endless opportunities to provide consumers with a superior crunch experience. This crunchy quality also is being promoted more on product packaging to differentiate products with almonds from product without almonds, proven by product launch activity growth for texture demonstrated from 2007 to 2010.

CRUNCH CLAIMS GROWTH

Global Product Launches With A Crunch Claim 2007-2010



Texture descriptions also have become more elaborate, with the increasing use of superlatives to convey the ultimate texture experience. “Crunchy” for example, has to be “extra crunchy” or “super crunchy” or provide the “ultimate crunch”. Texture descriptions are also receiving more prominence on packaging with visuals and increased size of texture-evoking words. In regard to almonds, various texture cues are being employed, including:

- 1 Elaborate crunchy/crispy claims
- 2 The use of almond visuals (whole almonds, slivers, crushed) on product packaging
- 3 “Almond crunch” is being used as a flavor name in its own right
- 4 Almonds are an integral ingredient for many clusters
- 5 The increased use of whole almonds for more mouth feel
- 6 Products are claiming to contain specified percentages of almonds

Consider California Almonds

In summary, almonds are used in so many market categories that have an indulgent and premium positioning. In addition to their premium image, almonds offer versatility, unique flavor, interesting texture and nutritional value. They are a multi-faceted, multi-talented ingredient, ideal for use across countless applications and categories, highlighting the ever-increasing opportunity for incorporation into many more products.



CRUNCH ON THIS



Unique Texture and Visual Appeal of California Almonds Can Help Boost the Bottom Line

[A White Paper for Food Industry Professionals and Manufacturers](#)

¹ Sterling Rice Group, Consumer AAU 2011



New CPG products across all channels appear on the market every day, but creating innovative, distinguishing characteristics for those products is among the challenges a manufacturer faces. Tapping into food trends and great taste is a good start, but not enough on their own; a perfect food cost percentage and engaging advertising also doesn't guarantee success. A successful product launch needs a full suite of attributes working together in unison. Research from Innova Market Insights shows that a single ingredient can help tie these needs together—the ever-versatile, multi-functional California Almond.

According to Lu Ann Williams, Head of Research, Innova Market Insights, almonds are an ingredient that consumers value in their food products – not only for their flavor and texture, but also for their nutrition benefits. “Manufacturers can also benefit from the versatility and premium image of almonds,” she said.

From premium positioning, to added value in flavor and texture, almonds in almost any new product provide manufacturers a creative, flexible and value-oriented solution.

The Premium Package

Premium, gourmet, indulgent: these words consistently speak to consumers' eyes and stomachs in nearly every aisle of the grocery store, and likewise to their wallets when they reach the checkout counter. Products positioned with a premium quality continue to resonate with consumers and new products are being launched every year to meet the needs of educated shoppers' palates and mindsets.

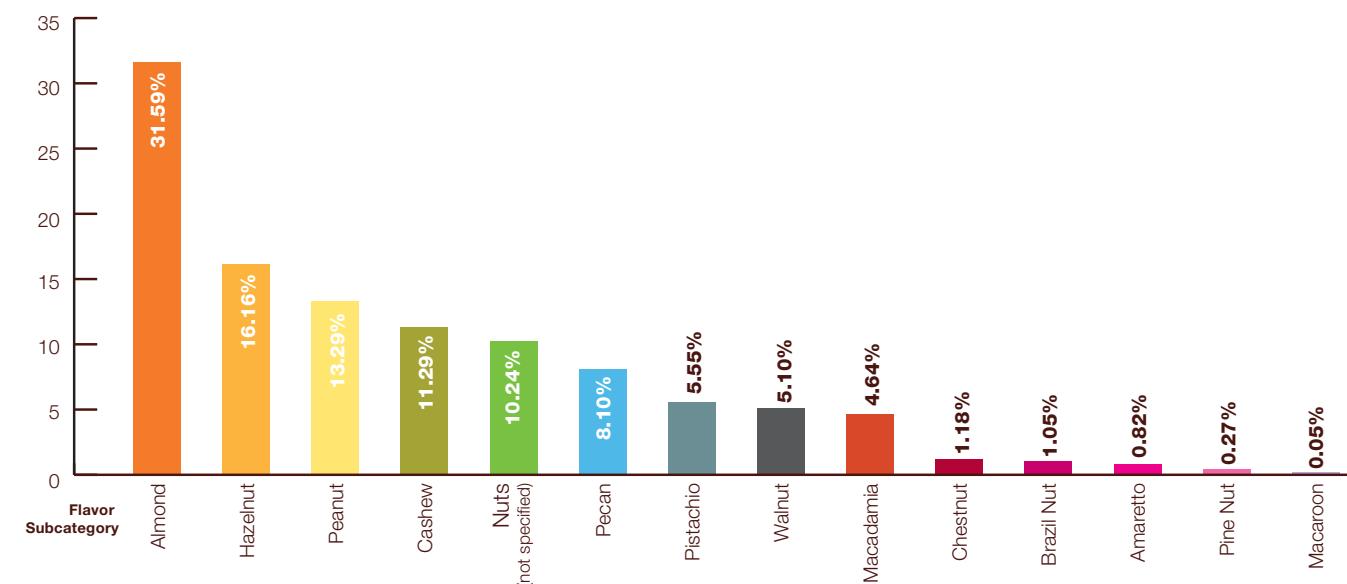
But to many manufacturers, the idea of developing and marketing a “premium” product may come with a price, such as investing in new equipment or sourcing exotic ingredients. Innova Market Insights' research shows that a solution already exists for creating a new product with gourmet positioning and a higher price point—just add almonds.

Almonds, in all their forms, are the top nut in new product launches with a premium positioning. In fact, in an analysis of products where almonds are a significant ingredient (compared to products without almonds), four of the five top market categories for global product launches revealed that products containing almonds had a substantial price premium over products that did not contain almonds, including:

- Chocolate
- Snack Nuts & Seeds
- Sweet Biscuits & Cookies
- Cakes, Pastries & Sweet Goods

INDULGENT & PREMIUM POSITIONING: TOP NUTS

Global Product Launches With Indulgent & Premium Positioning Top Nut Varieties Used 01/08-09/11



In particular, Chocolate products and Snacking products that include almonds convey a more premium, gourmet appeal and premium price point, typically through flavor and texture claims as well as almond visuals on the package. Descriptors such as indulgent, gourmet, specially selected, roasted and caramelized translate into premium appeal.

Numerous market categories continue to use almonds in new premium product formulations, from breakfast cereals and bars to candy and ice cream, and product launch activity for this positioning is expected to grow. And clearly, consumers demanding almonds as a premium, indulgent, gourmet ingredient are willing to pay for them.

But it's not all about flavor and appearance—this research also shows that one of almonds' most unique attributes – texture – is equally responsible for this nut's success as a premium value CPG ingredient, and taking advantage of it is essential.

Texture Trends

Consumers expect more from new food products in regard to textural sensations and trends. Over time, food manufacturers have continually been improving and perfecting textures and consumers have become accustomed to more interesting, varied and premium textural sensations. Any improvement on these sensations or advances in textural surprises for the consumer can result in increased sales.

The most significant changes for texture in recent years are:

- 1 BIGGER INCLUSIONS:** chunks, clusters, bites and nuggets
- 2 MORE SHAPE INNOVATION** to achieve extra crunch or improved taste
- 3 ACHIEVING MULTIPLE TEXTURES AT ONCE** such as chewy, smooth and crunchy

* Good news about good fat: U.S. Dietary Guidelines recommend that the majority of your fat intake be unsaturated. One serving of almonds (28g) has 13g of unsaturated fat and only 1g of saturated fat.