



How brands can win on flavour



May 06 2025

How brands can win on flavour

“The days of: ‘This tastes bad. It must be doing me good,’ are long gone,” says Michael O’Neill, **Flavor Producers**. “You could have the coolest functional ingredient or the neatest product. But if something tastes off, getting people to buy it again is an issue.”

Flavour is well and truly king. Which is why Glanbia was excited to acquire Flavor Producers in 2024, a US company with 40 years’ expertise in new taste experiences. Together with Canada-based custom flavour designer **Foodarom** they’ve helped Glanbia greatly expand its flavour capabilities.

Flavor Producers brings with them a large organic and natural flavour library and tons of expertise, particularly in the growing clean label market. So, what does ‘clean label’ mean, exactly? And what else do brands need to think about when they’re working with flavour to win?

Clean label isn’t a trend, it’s here to stay

Clean label can mean different things to different customers, but it generally refers to food and drinks with short ingredients lists: familiar, often plant-based, ingredients and minimal or no artificial additives.

Some customers’ definition of clean label is to have no-no lists of things a product can’t contain. Others may want to say where an ingredient is from and know that it’s traceable and from a sustainable source. With a flavour library including extracts, essences and ISO certified products from trusted suppliers, Glanbia’s flavour solutions team has the capability to meet the evolving consumer need for greater transparency and innovative taste.

Is clean label the same as natural and organic?

It’s not – although customers may need ingredients to be natural and organic to fulfil their clean label criteria. Flavor Producers was a pioneer in natural and organic plant-based flavours. Its collection of thousands of organic certifiable flavours built over decades gives Glanbia the sound building blocks to meet growing demand for natural and organic.

Get flavour and function working together

“Being able to get the basics of taste and functionality right is really important,” says Michael. Flavour can elevate a good nutritional product into a great one. The skill in flavouring functional ingredients lies in understanding the flavour off notes they introduce, and then working to diminish them through flavour creation, flavour selection or flavour modification technology to ensure the final product achieves a delightful harmony between function and taste. Supplements and bases – whether they’re protein or a mix of protein and dairy – have gotten much better over recent years with fewer off notes. If any do remain, however, Glanbia’s flavour chemists can clean them up so customers can use whatever flavours they want to.

“The world’s your oyster,” says Michael. “It’s exciting because bringing flavour and function together is something that almost all brands, especially the new ones, are doing. Everything’s functional now. And everything has multiple functions at the same time. Glanbia can help customers develop products that deliver both function and flavour.”

Understand what flavour technology can do for food businesses

How do flavour chemists clean up a base? They work at a molecular level with maskers to resolve off notes and modulators to counterbalance flavours. You can also lean into something like a bitter flavour by accentuating it with a pleasantly bitter taste. Then there’s encapsulation technology that protects flavour from degradation during transit or on the shelf. Technology can also create what’s called multi-sensorial layering – an initial burst of one taste, which evolves into a mid-note followed by a third to finish, in a similar way to how a wine connoisseur might experience a fine wine.

Craft an experience and tap into the emotional power of flavour

Ever smelled something and it’s taken you right back to childhood? Smell and taste bypass the brain’s logical processing centre and go straight to the limbic system, which governs emotions and long-term memory. So, flavour creates a powerful emotional experience. Flavourists can fill out all the nuances of flavour so you don’t just get the apple and cinnamon of apple pie, you get the taste of the pastry crust as well. And even though a flavour may seem on the surface ‘simple’ there are infinite possibilities: Glanbia now has more than 700 variations on strawberry, for example.

There’s no limit to the potential or fun of flavour, which can range from the trend for swicy (a combo of sweet and spicy) to all-out fantasy taste experiences. In 2025, Foodarom launched its **Stellar collection** of Nektyr (pronounced nectar) based on what a flower on another planet would produce and Būlla (pronounced B-yoo-lah), inspired by the honey a bee might make from it. You can’t pin down what makes the flavours so intriguing, but intriguing you are. Both are delicious.

Build a relationship with your Glanbia flavour solutions team and stay ahead of the trends

“We work with customers in different ways – sometimes they come to us for flavour innovation. Or they ask for our flavours and do the formulation themselves. These are customer relationships that have developed over years,” Michael says. With this kind of customer collaboration, Glanbia can suggest products that may work for a brand, based on insights and proprietary regional and segmented trend reports.

“It’s a very tailored way of doing business. And it’s speedy. Flavour chemists work at the bench, bringing out prototypes for the customer to taste in real time. A lot of times winning in this business is who gets their products out fastest.

“We’ll ideate products for brands and the flavours associated with them. That’s my favourite part, the creativity,” he says.

REGISTER FOR EMAIL ALERTS >



Delivering better nutrition for every step of life’s journey.



Results & Reports

ALL DOWNLOADS

SUSTAINABILITY REPORT 2024

ANNUAL REPORT

FY24 PRESENTATION

FY24 RESULTS

Quick Links

PROCUREMENT

CAREERS

LOCATIONS

MEDIA

CONTACT

SHAREHOLDER ADVISORY

SITE SERVICES

Keep in touch

Stay up to date, register for our alerts service

SIGN UP TO ALERTS

