

Innovation Topic Roundup from the CGT Growth & Innovation Forum

by Paul Beck, Mike Friedman and Laura Morey

Kalypso's [Mike Friedman](#) and [Paul Beck](#) recently attended the annual [CGT Growth & Innovation Forum](#) in Miami, Florida. The forum featured senior Consumer Goods industry executives sharing their insights around "incremental" and "disruptive" innovation.

Here are their key takeaways came from the various sessions:

- **Digital is not just another means to connect with the consumer; it reshapes the entire landscape of engagement.** Enjoy Life Foods, a company that grew its revenue 805% in three years selling gluten-free foods, takes a digital-first posture that has focused heavily on meeting the consumer where they live, online. By making a digital connection with its customers and capitalizing on the manner in which more and more shoppers make purchasing and new product selection decisions, Enjoy Life Foods has created a dedicated customer base.

Even though blogs, social graphs, consumer guides and the countless other channels evolving within the digital stream are not a magic bullet, when integrated into the fabric of a company's marketing plan, digital has the potential to unlock a valuable access point into consumers' lives. A meaningful message, in a format that is relevant and offered at a time of the consumer's choosing, creates a higher chance of market success and reinforces the messaging offered through more traditional channels. *(Check out this [Viewpoint on Your Consumer's Virtual World](#) about how successful companies and marketers blend social media and consumer immersion techniques to add a new dimension to traditional market research.)*

- **A business must be healthy if it's to drive successful innovation.** Yasso novelty Greek yogurt created a successful startup because they were uniquely focused on their new business and managed cash flow to support it. For start-ups, their ability to focus is to their benefit. Larger companies with multiple businesses don't have that luxury. They get distracted because their base business is not healthy and it drains cash and resources, which derails new business efforts. So it is critical for companies to innovate on their base business, focus on making it healthy and grow into new ventures, rather than starting a new business innovation while fixing the base at the same time.

The CGT Growth & Innovation Forum also reaffirmed for Mike and Paul the importance of personal connections.

- **Face-to-face interaction drives success.** In our digital age when so many of our interactions are through emails, phone calls and webinars, the time spent outside of the office environment with others in your industry is invaluable. Whether growing a small business or expanding the market footprint of a large, multi-brand corporation, the power found in face-to-face connections helps us build and maintain a base upon which to learn, inform and prosper. This forum offered a great opportunity to do just that.

What are your key takeaways from the CGT event?

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Mike brings over 35 years of consumer products management experience to Kalypso. As the Strategy & Operations practice lead, he focuses on leading development in the areas of sustainable organization capability, commercialization and innovation capability integration.



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Laura Morey, CPG Business Manager, is perpetually curious about the world around her, thinks chocolate should be a food group of its own, and is ever-hopeful that the Cleveland Browns will win a Super Bowl in her lifetime.