

Monthly Musings



courtesy of Fletcher Consulting

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SMART TIME OF THE SEASON:

PSL and PFC Return

How trendy a flavor is Pumpkin Spice? Just ask national and local brands. [Foodnetwork.com](https://www.foodnetwork.com) lists 82 different must-have pumpkin spice products available for this year. Perhaps we'll even see a pumpkin-infused salsa from [Mrs. Renfro Foods](#) next year.

We already have known for years that one of the most popular "flavor of the month" offerings at [Curly's Frozen Custard](#) on Camp Bowie in Fort Worth is Pumpkin Spice – featured in both October and November.

You may be surprised to notice how products from hot (coffee, espresso, etc.) to cold (frozen custard and gelato), and everything in between (cookies, cereal, pancake syrup, malted milk balls and even peanut butter!) are leveraging the popularity of pumpkin for the October-November season.

The website [Champagnenutrition.com](https://www.champagnenutrition.com) shares four reasons:

- The warming spices of pumpkin remind us of coziness, holiday baking and Thanksgiving – it's a comfort food
- Pumpkin represents an affordable luxury that feels like an indulgence, which may explain why the flavoring was released early in this year of COVID
- Pumpkin spiced flavors embody American nostalgia and make us happy
- The blending of ground cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger and cloves is delicious, and the aroma tantalizes our sense of smell

Check out these "best of the best" pumpkin offerings and visit the Food Network website for the full list:

- **Starbucks** Pumpkin Spice Latte Espresso
- **Pepperidge Farm** Pumpkin Cheesecake Cookies
- **Baileys** Pumpkin Spice

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- **Williams Sonoma** Spiced Pumpkin Braising Sauce
- **Godiva** Pumpkin Patch Flight Truffles
- **Nestle'** Toll House Pumpkin Spice Baking Truffles

- **Saratoga** Peanut Butter Company Pumpkin Pandemonium
- **Nothing Bundt Cakes** Pumpkin Spice Cake



What are you offering to energize and super-charge your product or service offerings with a fun seasonal attraction?

SMART FUTURE: Grow Relationships During COVID

I had the honor of presenting a seminar for the Cleburne Chamber of Commerce this past Tuesday with the topic, "How to Grow your Relationships During the Time of COVID."

Friends and clients have continued to say that they are experiencing a difficult time staying in touch with their prospects and existing clients (used generically because some businesses refer to customers while others have clients).

Even when reaching out, we often find the other person is frustrated either by the loss of business or being in a business category that is experienced unprecedented growth.

Particularly for those who work in fields driven by relationships, the isolation created by the pandemic has left them grasping at how to stay in touch with prospects and clients.

I have found success with the following tactics:

- **Do the first favor** – Now is the ideal time to be seen as someone of value rather than strictly someone in sales. Sure, you still want to grow your business, but show personal interest in the other person by asking, "Is there something I can do or someone I can connect you with that could benefit you?"

• **Look for positivity** – not in COVID testing (you definitely want NEGATIVE there!), but focus on reading or listening to things that uplift you – such as how Rodney Smith, Jr., is mowing yards across America – all for free to help those who need him.

• **Leverage your social media in a thoughtful, timely manner** – I use

LinkedIn because I'm focusing on business relationships. Visit www.buzzpro.com for the **free download** of Terry Sullivan's "LinkedIn Tips" eBook. Terry is an absolute authority on LinkedIn.

• **Use animation whenever possible.** I have discovered gifs from tenor.com that provide fun clips that reinforce most of my posts. The site also has fun gif choices for birthdays and anniversaries. **The more clever your photos and gifs, the more your posts stand out.**

• **Use your social media to reconnect with lost relationships** – Once you locate a lost contact, start commenting favorably on their posts.

• **80-20 Rule** – At least 80% of your posts should be non-sales, with only 20% selling.

• **Handwritten notes** – When is the last time that you received a handwritten note? Stand out when you send a brief handwritten note card. If you have terrible handwriting like mine, then print your message.

Oh yes... and do even MORE favors!



SMART DECISIONS:

Coca-Cola Drops 200 Brands

If you wake up each morning longing for Odwalla, Tab diet soda, ZICO coconut water, Coca-Cola Life or Diet Coke Feisty Cherry, I have some bad news for you.

Coke is responding to the pandemic by **shedding approximately half the total brands that it carries to streamline its operations.** The category leader is slashing expenses **because 50% of its gross sales** originate in such special event venues as stadiums, movie theaters and concert venues, where people gather in large numbers.

Massive numbers of those venues remain closed or at dramatically reduced attendance levels.

[Fox Business](#) reports that Coca-Cola will shift its focus onto



brands that can be scaled to drive profits for the long term.

The remaining 200 "master brands" will survive and be marketed aggressively. The reductions will be primarily in the "hydration space" rather than sparkling, coffee, tea, juice, dairy and plant categories.

Just as Coca-Cola has responded to the pandemic, so is every company across the United States. The questions to ask are:

- **What products/services are you adding to your portfolio?**
- **What products/services are you dropping due to diminished demand?**
- **What products/services SHOULD you be considering – even if they involve a higher degree of a calculated risk?**

At the same time that Coca-Cola is dropping half its product portfolio, the company is also launching [Coca-Cola with Coffee](#), with three flavors: Dark Blend, Vanilla and Caramel.

Throughout the years, a great number of companies have engaged my services to help clients brainstorm how to take advantage of their opportunities in turbulent times. **Please call me at 817-205-2334 to visit.**

THE Tiebreaker

Kindness is Key

This past Thursday, I brought energy into my co-sponsorship of the Southlake Chamber of Commerce luncheon.

Everyone was puzzled why each table setting featured a carton of milk (half were whole milk and the other half were chocolate milk) and a loopy plastic straw.

The reason became apparent when I had **110 boxes of Girl Scouts Thin Mints** hauled into the room and each attendee received their Thin Mints to complete the **"Milk and Cookies"** theme.

The audience made a giant gasp as I announced that everyone would receive a box of Thin Mints and most broke into their box to enjoy the decadent dessert immediately.

The luncheon speakers were Andrew Szabo and Michael Hoffman, who delivered an appropriately timed presentation about Positively Outrageous Service. They used the surprise cookie delivery (Girl Scout Thin Mints are unavailable now and they return on sale in January) as an example of P.O.S.

I asked everyone to do something Positively Outrageous – Open one of the two tubes of cookies and eat for themselves, and then give the second tube of Thin Mints away.

What are you doing that creates positive word of mouth with your company? Call me for how to energize your company



Andrew Szabo and Michael Hoffman



with Positively Outrageous Service!

