



3 TYPES: Weaving Innovation into Your Product Creation

By: Molly Zimmerman, Scientist

As a Scientist here at FONA I get to use a lot of fun flavors and help companies innovate. But what is innovation, really? Is it something new and shiny? Is it something that gets you a lot of press?

Only *you* can define innovation, because what it looks like is unique for each company and each segment of food and beverage. The way I tend to look at innovation is quite simple: Innovation is doing something different that generates revenue.

If break innovation out into categories, it can be easier to identify what type of innovation will have the most impact for your business. I think of innovation in three parts:



MAINTENANCE INNOVATION

The minimum amount of innovation needed to keep a product commercially desirable. This could mean converting N&A flavors to natural or making other improvements to a current product line to prevent obsolescence.

existing or creating a new product that is complementary to a product you already sell.



TRANSFORMATIONAL INNOVATION

This kind of innovation is disruptive, in the best way. This is the innovation that disrupts your product line or industry. It's different than what you've done before. This is normally what people think of when they think of innovation. While transformational innovation is important it is only one piece of the pie.



CONTINUOUS INNOVATION

Doing more iterations of something you already do well, like adding new flavors to your line up. This could mean adding more exotic flavors or different functionality to a product that is already

INNOVATION AS A PIE



If you think of innovation as a pie, maintenance innovation and continuous innovation can cut your pie into smaller pieces and can provide slow, steady growth while

transformational innovation has the potential to make your pie bigger, faster.

What innovation comes down to is knowing when to use each type of innovation to create a strategy that works for you. Innovation is a lot like flavors — there is no one flavor that will taste great in every application. Similarly, there is no one innovation strategy that will win every time. Leverage the

knowledge of your consumers as well as the tools and resources from your suppliers. This communication and partnership will lead you to the best innovation strategy for your business. As a product developer and general food & beverage nerd I love to see and try all of the new innovative products that are out on the market. But even when I do try something new — I can't help but wonder, what's next?

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At FONA, we're always looking to help you create what's next. No matter what stage of innovation you find yourself, we're ready. Let's talk and help you move forward.

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ABOUT MOLLY

With 10 years of experience in food and beverage, Molly brings a diverse skillset in beverage development, the culinary arts and consumer expertise. She serves as Scientist on FONA's technical team with an eye toward creating impact and growth for valued partners.