

# 4 TIPS ON

## Choosing the Right Flavor for Your Product and Brand



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As part of the beverage marketing team at FONA, I spend much of my time happily focused on flavor. Beyond making a beverage or food item crave-worthy, choosing the right flavor is a strategic decision. The right flavor can work synergistically to support brand or product positioning, while complementing inherent notes from your product's base formulation and delighting your consumers. And as flavors appeal to consumers' senses and emotions, it's important to get creative and have a little fun with it to create something your consumer will truly enjoy. To get there, I recommend keeping these key considerations in mind. Let's take a look.

### TIP 1

#### CONSIDER ANY INHERENT NOTES

Do you have any inherent (or 'off') notes in your product's base formulation? Can those notes be masked or modified? A more neutral base lends itself to more flavor feasibility, while the lingering taste of many functional ingredients may narrow in the range of flavors that will please today's discerning consumer palates. Before getting started, determine the technical feasibility of your potential flavor options. Look for a flavor with a profile that is complementary to or covers the inherent notes. For example, if you have a carbonated beverage with high amounts of caffeine, an impactful citrus flavor may work more synergistically than a light, sweet berry would. However, if you're set on a strawberry flavor, pairing it with a citrus could be a great way to meet in the middle—featuring your preferred berry profile while incorporating some notes from citrus that may work better with the base.

### TIP 2

#### PLAY UP THE *FUNCTIONALITY*

Functionality is leading innovation within food and beverage. Does your product have functional ingredients that support a specific need state (i.e. energy, relaxation, digestive health)? Choosing a flavor that has similar associations may help further support "reason to believe." For example, watermelon and tropical fruits with juicy associations may shine in a hydration beverage, while dark berries and botanical flavors like lavender are the stars of beverages meant to be consumed for relaxation.



### TIP 3

#### ALIGN WITH BRAND AND PRODUCT POSITIONING

Picking the perfect flavor profile can help support brand and product positioning. Take into account the following:

- Your brand ethos

Consumers connect to authentic brands they can trust. How can your company's values and positioning translate to flavor? If your brand is positioned on natural wellness, a natural flavor or a flavor with "healthier" associations (maybe that's true-to-fruit or a dark chocolate versus a chocolate flavor) makes sense here. If your brand is playing in the premium space, a more-nuanced flavor can support that positioning.

- Your target consumer

What's important to your target consumer? Your consumer demographic will influence the flavor choice—Gen Z consumers may be more adventurous with their flavor profiles while Gen X and Baby Boomers could be looking for a familiar favorite.

- Where your product is or will be selling  
Is your brand looking for mainstream appeal in mass stores or do you do well in the natural channel? For mass appeal, a well-known flavor may be your best bet, whereas

the natural or online buyer may be looking for a more-unique flavor.

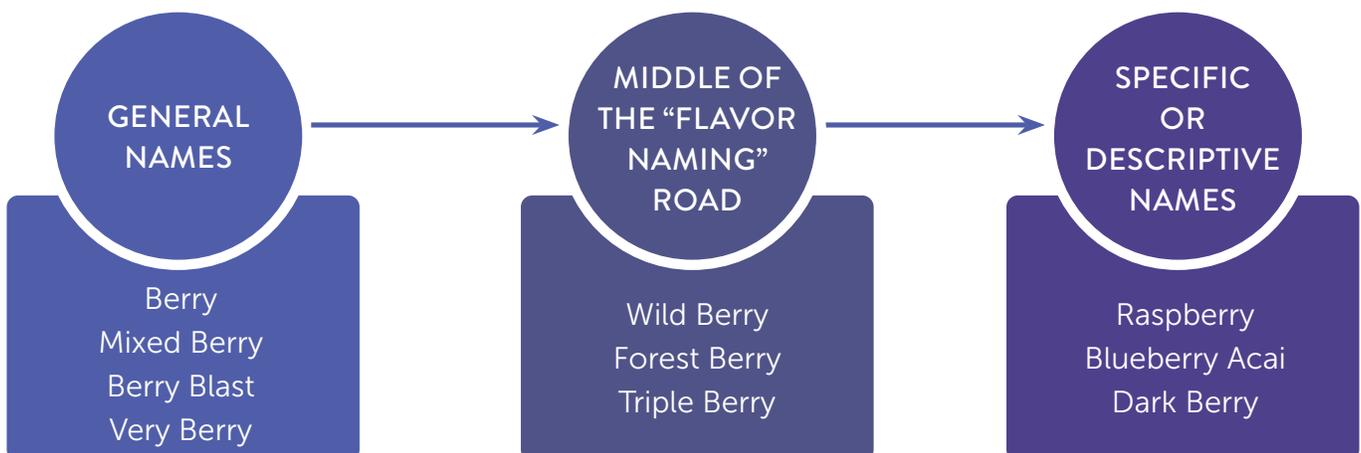
- Where innovation is coming from  
If you're innovating using flavor with a product that's proven, maybe you take a familiar profile and elevate it using an approachable adventure pairing. If you're bringing the innovation by introducing consumers to a new product, help them feel affirmed in their purchase decision through the use of a familiar flavor. That way, the product still feels new and fun yet accessible rather than "too new." Molly Zimmerman, Innovation Manager, discussed this in depth in a recent blog post [here](#).

### TIP 4

#### DETERMINE THE RIGHT "FLAVOR NAME" ON PACK

You've picked the right flavor profile for your product, but what should you call it on the front of pack?

General names like "Berry" or "Citrus" keep it simple and provide mainstream appeal while fantasy flavors add a layer of fun. Specific or descriptive names help differentiate products while helping set up and deliver on consumer expectations. Let's take a look at how a berry-flavored beverage could be named:



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## FLAVOR CAN BE AN ITERATIVE PROCESS, BUT OUR EXPERTS ARE HERE TO HELP.

FONA can help guide you through these steps to get you to the perfect flavor profile and name for your product.

Let's talk flavors, innovation and anything in between.  
Reach out to our team for inspiration, insights and actionable ideas to move forward.



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### ABOUT GENA

With nearly a decade of experience in B2B and B2C marketing, Gena brings a passion for communicating and connecting with customers and consumers. She serves as Sr. Industry Associate on FONA's beverage marketing team with the ultimate goal of providing actionable insights to valued partners. When she's not ideating on innovation or mapping out marketplace trends, you can find Gena recreationally researching consumer behavior or trying out the most unique beverage on a restaurant's menu.