



Functional Beverages in Today's Consumer Routine

Growth Drivers Shaping the Category in 2026

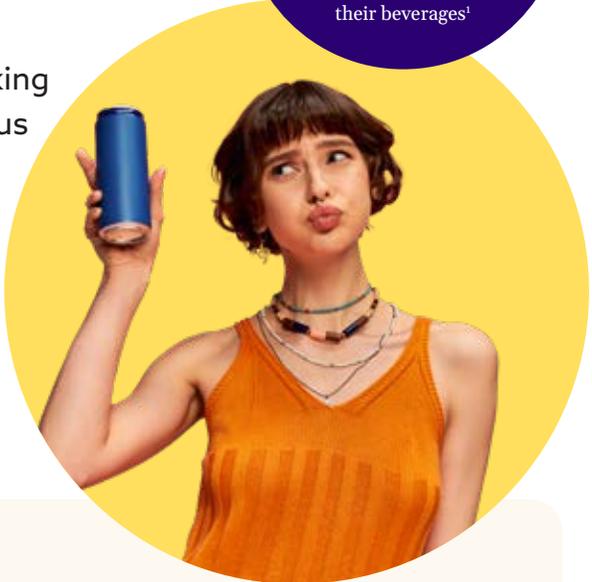


Sip with Purpose

Consumers are moving beyond “maxxing” on single nutrients and looking for ingredients that work together to deliver broader wellness benefits.

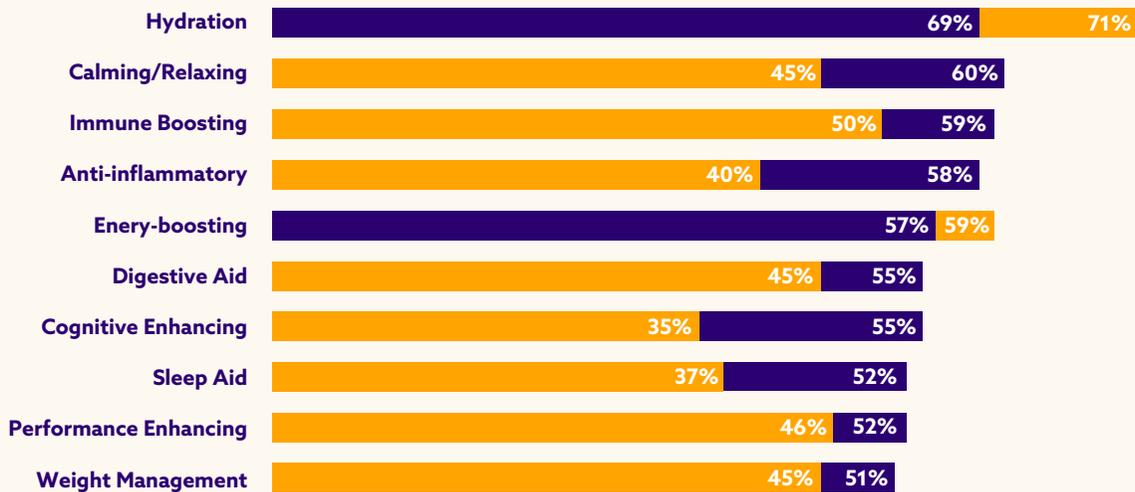
nearly
50%
of Gen Z consumers want at least four functional ingredients in their beverages¹

Today’s shoppers want more than hydration—they’re looking for drinks that provide real benefits, from energy and focus to immunity, digestion, and mood support. This shift reflects a growing demand for intentional consumption, where every beverage choice contributes to health and performance goals. Within this evolving landscape, Vibrant Ingredients™ supports brands by helping turn wellness expectations into clean label, functional beverages consumers can feel confident choosing.



Top Functional Benefits by Consumer Interest

Hydration and energy lead the way, reflecting consumers’ growing focus on purposeful, benefit-driven beverages that support everyday wellbeing. As functional needs become part of daily routines, interest in mood, immunity, and focus continues to rise.



Q: How would you describe your experience with, and interest in, the following benefits/claims in functional beverages?² ● Interested In
● Use

Source: ¹Kantar Profiles/Mintel, February 2024; ²Mintel Base: 2,000 internet users aged 18+



Tempo Drinking

Tempo drinking habits refer to the intentional pacing and timing of beverage consumption throughout the day. Consumers are choosing drinks that match their energy level, mood, or functional need at different points in time.

What It Means:

Consumers are no longer drinking one beverage all day long. They're selecting beverages that align with their daily rhythm. This has opened up strategic product positioning based on when a beverage is consumed, not just what it contains.



Tempo Drinking Habits

Time of Day	Tempo Need or Benefit	Beverage Example
Morning	Energy Boost & Focus	Cold Brew with L-theanine
Afternoon	Sustained Energy	Green Tea with Natural Caffeine & EGCG
Early Evening	Relaxation	Lavender Chamomile Iced Tea
Social Hours	Social Ritual without Alcohol	Non-alc Spirits, Mood-lifting Botanicals

With Vibrant Ingredients, brands can formulate clean label, functional beverages with consistent performance and great taste for any time of the day.

Social Shift

Adult non-alcoholic beverages are on the rise, driven by shifting attitudes around wellness, and social engagement primarily by Millennials. They are looking for functional, ready-to-drink options that support hydration, immunity, energy, and mood, without compromising their social lives. As sober curious lifestyles and tempo drinking habits gain traction, non-alcoholic formats are capturing more drinking occasions.



De Soi St Moritz Mule Sparkling Non-Alcoholic Aperitif



Kin Euphorics Kin Spritz



Elevating Function Through Flavor

Flavor remains the top priority for beverage consumers, even as interest in functional ingredients grows. To meet expectations, beverages must deliver both benefits and great taste. Current trends show rising demand for globally inspired flavors like yuzu and lychee, along with natural fruit, floral, and botanical notes that align with wellness and clean label preferences.



27% of consumers are more willing to try new beverage flavors when they are paired with functional benefits.¹

What It Means:

With growing household influence, Gen Z is reshaping beverage trends through their love of global flavors and clean label choices. To win them over, brands must deliver innovation that feels authentic, exciting, and transparent.

Innovation with Vibrant

Vibrant Ingredients has been at the forefront of natural ingredients for over 70 years, delivering clean label, functional solutions across the food and beverage industry. Fueled by our technical and marketing expertise to push boundaries in the functional beverage space, we combine nature's best ingredients with industry leading technology.

Coffee, Tea & Botanical Extracts

Extracts crafted from real coffee, tea, and botanicals for authentic flavor and functional benefits

Natural Caffeine

Derived from coffee and tea for a smoother energy release

EGCG

A powerful antioxidant and catechin found in green tea, known for its many health benefits

Acerola Cherry

Vitamin C component that supports immune health and fuels natural energy

L-theanine

A compound found in tea that promotes mental clarity and focus while counteracting caffeine jitters

Formulation Expertise

Partner with our experts to create standout, clean label beverages that deliver on taste and performance

Bring flavor and function together with Vibrant Ingredients.

Explore our portfolio of natural ingredient solutions designed to help brands deliver Purely Better™ functional beverages.

PURELY
Better™