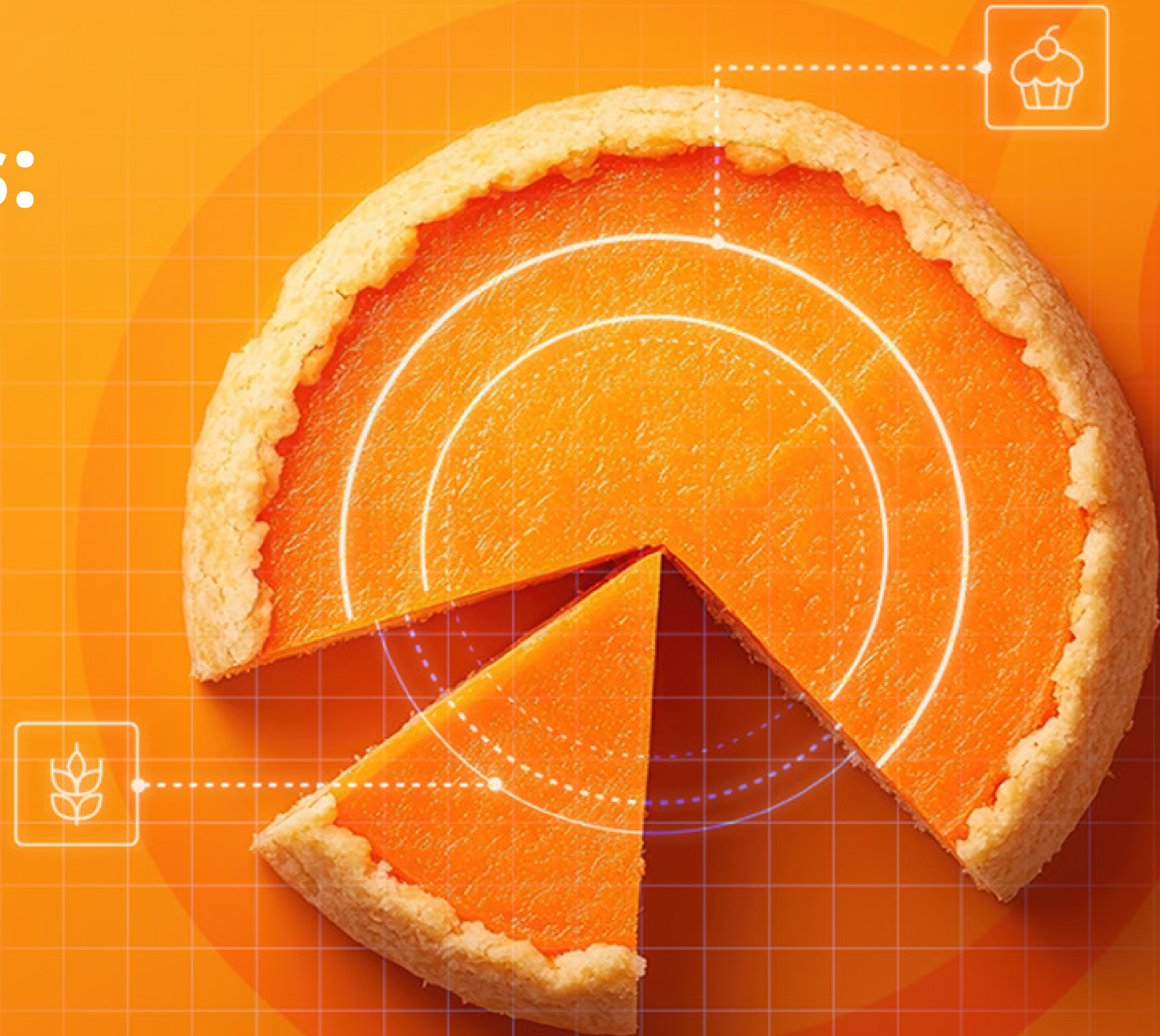


From Data to Decisions: The Essential Guide for F&B Leaders



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Introduction

The food and beverage (F&B) industry is evolving rapidly. Consumer preferences shift quickly, pricing sensitivity increases, margin pressures mount, regulatory landscapes grow more complex and competition intensifies. In this dynamic environment, the ability to make data-driven decisions is the key to success.

Many F&B companies struggle with fragmented data, inefficient collaboration and time-consuming manual processes. However, leveraging integrated digital solutions—such as Product Lifecycle Management (PLM) systems and Visual Boards—can transform the way businesses innovate, launch and orchestrate products and assortments.

This guide explores how F&B leaders can harness technology to optimize decision-making, accelerate time-to-market and drive sustainable growth.



The Role of Data in F&B Decision Making

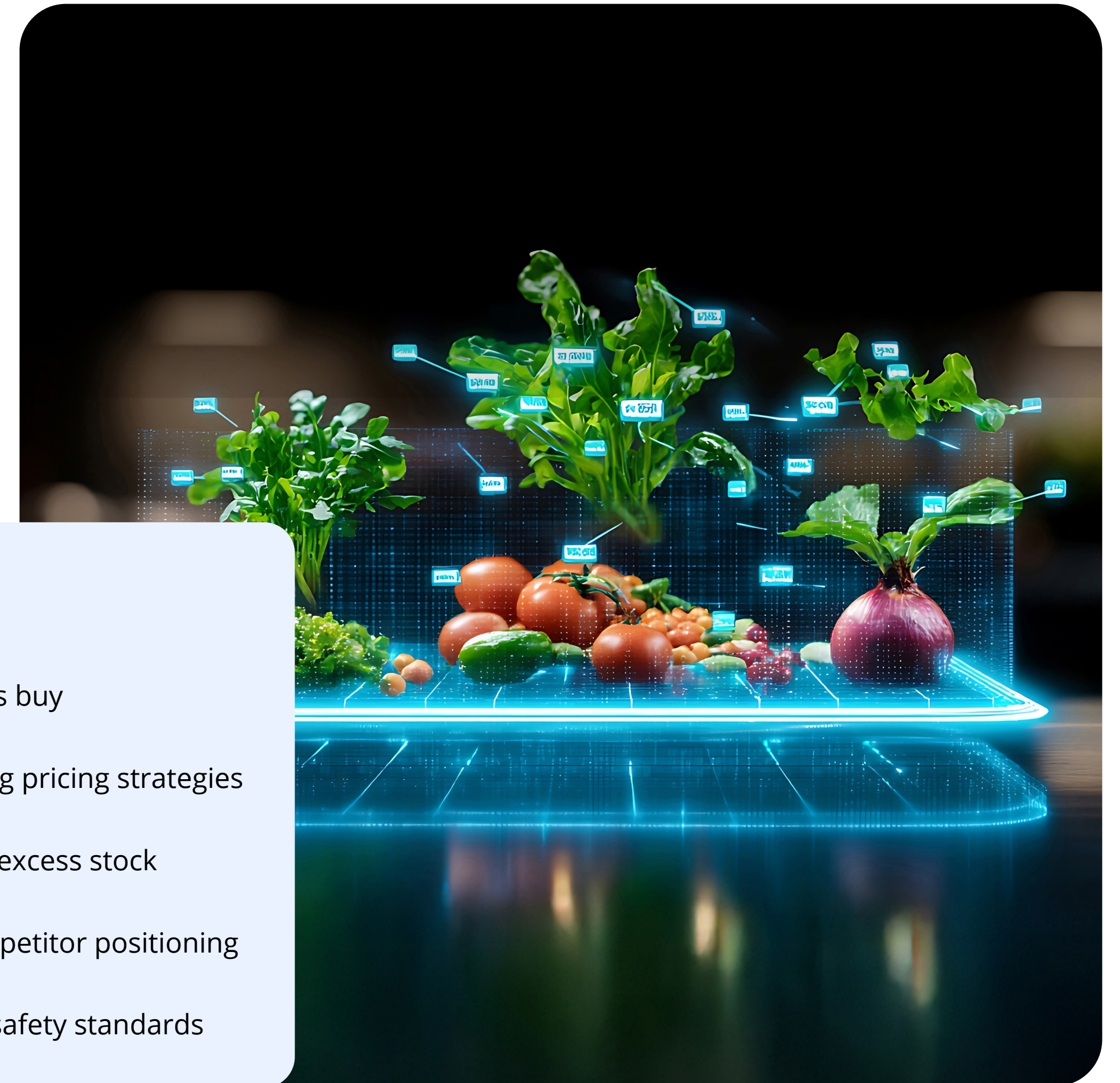
In an era where consumer behavior changes at lightning speed, data is the currency that keeps F&B businesses competitive. Those who understand how to capture, interpret and act on data insights gain an undeniable edge—allowing them to predict trends, optimize operations and refine product offerings with pinpoint accuracy.

Why Data Matters

- **Companies leveraging data-driven strategies report 30% higher efficiency in operations.¹**
- **Businesses using real-time insights improve their responsiveness to demand fluctuations, reducing stockouts and overproduction.**
- **Predictive analytics in F&B reduces waste by up to 20%, leading to cost savings and sustainability.²**

Checklist: What every F&B Leader should track

- ☐ **Consumer Behavior & Preferences**
Understanding what, when and why customers buy
- ☐ **Sales Performance Metrics**
Identifying top-performing SKUs and optimizing pricing strategies
- ☐ **Supply Chain & Inventory Data**
Ensuring product availability while minimizing excess stock
- ☐ **Competitive Market Insights**
Monitoring pricing trends, innovation and competitor positioning
- ☐ **Regulatory & Compliance Data**
Adapting to changing laws and ensuring food safety standards



1. "The data-driven enterprise of 2025", January 28, 2022, [mckinsey.com](https://www.mckinsey.com)

2. "Edges of Southeast Asia Second Edition", 12 Nov 2024, [deloitte.com](https://www.deloitte.com)

1. From Product Performance Analysis to Idea Generation

Successful product innovation starts with deep market insights. Businesses must assess historical performance, recognize consumer shifts and align product development with emerging trends. Without structured data, teams struggle to identify gaps and make informed decisions.

Key Evaluation Criteria:

- **Sales Performance Analysis:** Comparing annual sales trends and regional variations
- **Market Trends:** Emerging consumer preferences and ingredient innovations
- **Competitive Benchmarking:** Identifying top-performing products and competitive landscape
- **Brand Positioning:** Aligning new product ideas with brand strategy and target demographics

Solution

Centric Visual Boards™ for Insights and Visual Collaboration

Centric Visual Boards centralize data-driven decision-making by enabling teams to:

- Consolidate data into interactive, real-time dashboards
- Simulate different assortment strategies
- Align product concepts with brand strategy and consumer demand


"Digital and analytics tools can leverage historical promotion and stock data to inform the extent and timing of future promotions. Because updating and synthesizing data without advanced analytics and AI tools can be expensive, using these tools can help food and beverage companies reduce costs while simultaneously improving performance."

McKinsey ³




3. "Fortune or fiction? The real value of a digital and AI transformation in CPG", October 3, 2024, [mckinsey.com](https://www.mckinsey.com)


Key Takeaways



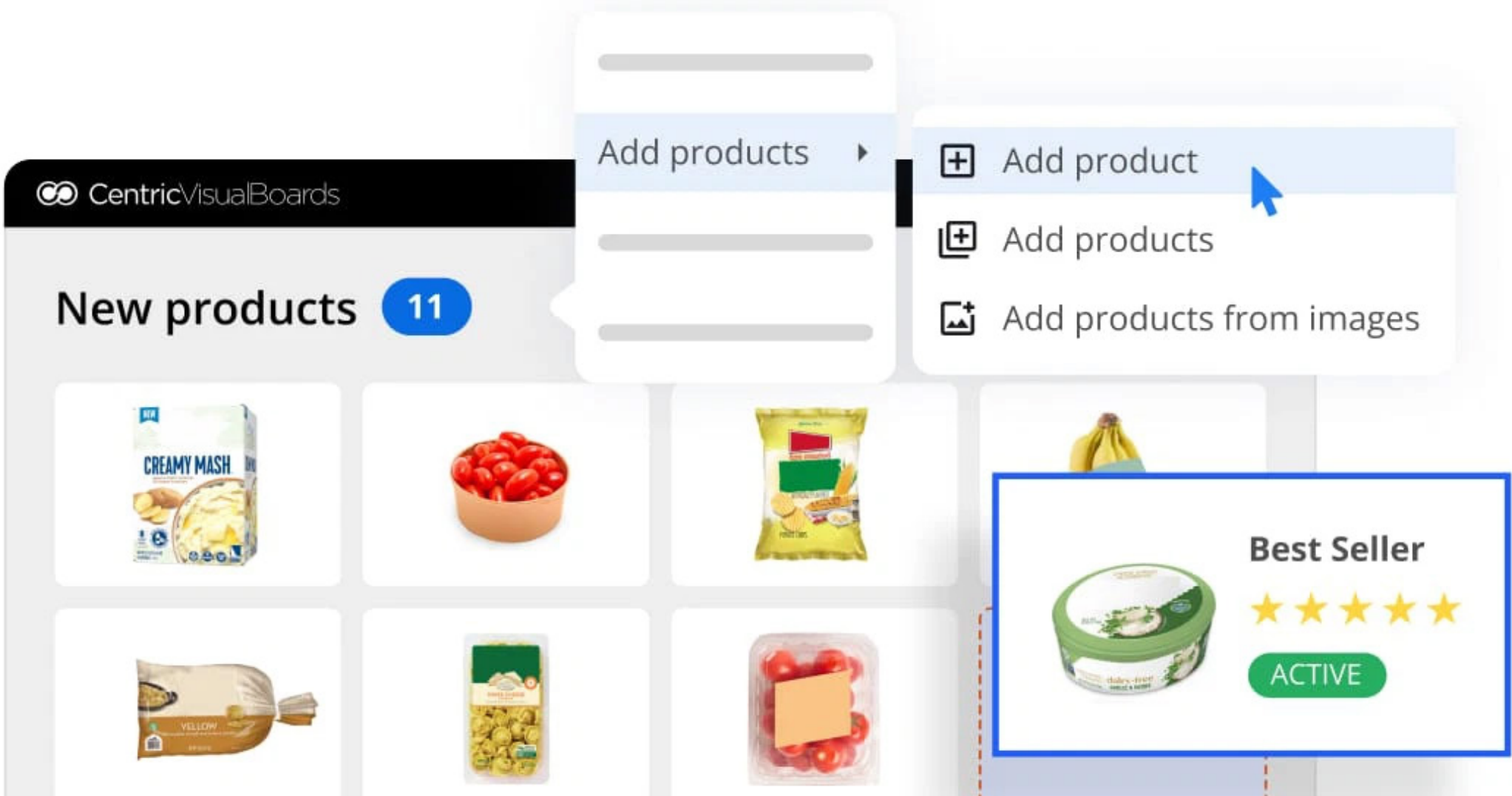
Seamless collaboration across teams



Quick scenario testing and validation



Integrated trend insights for informed decision-making



2. The Go/No-Go Decision: Evaluating Feasibility

Every product concept must pass a rigorous feasibility assessment to ensure commercial viability. This step involves evaluating multiple factors across different functions.

Key Evaluation Criteria:

- **Technical Feasibility:** Compatibility with existing formulation and manufacturing capabilities
- **Cost Analysis:** Alignment of material and production costs with budget forecasts
- **Supply Chain Readiness:** Availability of qualified and reliable suppliers
- **Regulatory Compliance:** Adherence to market-specific regulations
- **Sustainability Considerations:** Optimization of packaging and ingredient sourcing for sustainability

Solution

Centric PLM™ for Streamlined Feasibility Assessment

Centric PLM enables teams to centralize feasibility evaluations and automate key workflows by:

- Utilizing AI-powered formulation matching for rapid feasibility assessment
- Automating compliance and packaging validation
- Streamlining supply chain analysis for efficiency

Highlight

Accelerate Product Development with AI

Traditional formulation methods rely on time-consuming trial and error, requiring multiple iterations to achieve the optimal recipe. AI-powered capabilities in Centric PLM revolutionize this process.


Formula Match introduces a new level of formulation optimization. This advanced tool instantly compares multiple recipes and identifies the most relevant ingredient substitutions, ensuring seamless alignment with product and market requirements.

Labeling Management


Centric PLM offers advanced formulation management with full traceability of ingredients and recipes. Regulatory requirements are built into the system, enabling automatic generation of compliant labels — including nutritional values, allergen lists and country of origin — tailored to each market where the product is sold. Centric PLM also streamlines updates in response to regulatory changes, ensuring all products remain compliant across regions and reducing risk.




Key Takeaways



Accelerated decision-making process



Reduced risk of compliance issues



Improved cross-functional collaboration

“

Centric PLM streamlines the workflows related to the lifecycle of a product. It manages tasks from the project’s LAG (local action groups) to everything related to the formula, technical data sheet, raw materials, suppliers and manufacturers involved. All product data is consolidated in one location, with a single click you can access information without having to search through different sources.



”



3. Supplier Selection and Collaboration

Choosing the right suppliers is a strategic necessity. Traditional selection methods often involve lengthy, manual processes that slow down innovation and increase operational risks.

Key Evaluation Criteria:

- **Supplier Capabilities:** Ability to meet product quality, safety and innovation requirements
- **Cost and Lead Time:** Pricing structures and delivery timelines that align with launch schedules
- **Sustainability and Compliance:** Supplier alignment with sustainability goals and regulatory standards
- **Reliability and Scalability:** Supplier track record and ability to scale with demand

Solution

Centric PLM for Supplier Collaboration

Centric PLM simplifies supplier management by enabling procurement teams to:


- Compare supplier capabilities in a single dashboard
- Drive RFQs and collaboration through a centralized platform
- Automate supplier scoring based on predefined criteria

“Monitoring the growth of unit prices gives close insight into the cause-and-effect relationship of ingredients supply and the impact on end product prices.”


Jared Conway,
Euromonitor ⁴

4. Jared Conway, “How to Track End Product Prices and Availability by Ingredient in Soft Drinks”, February 4, 2023, [Euromonitor.com](https://www.euromonitor.com)


Key Takeaways



Faster supplier selection with automatic scoring



Improved transparency and collaboration



Real-time supplier engagement

“

Cross-functional teams use the same data source and have insights in project progress. That way, we can collaborate efficiently to define artwork briefs and proof them, but also define, manage and source packaging items all in one system.



”



4. Tracking & Launch: Ensuring Smooth Execution

A successful product launch requires seamless coordination, strict timeline management and proactive issue resolution. Without a centralized system, teams risk delays and budget overruns.

Key Evaluation Criteria:

- **Project Milestones:** Tracking progress from formulation to production
- **Bottleneck Identification:** Identifying and resolving roadblocks in real time
- **Regulatory Readiness:** Ensuring all compliance requirements are met before launch
- **Budget Adherence:** Monitoring costs to avoid overruns and maintain profitability

Solution

Centric PLM for End-to-End Product Launch Management

Centric PLM optimizes product launches by:

- Monitoring milestone completion and project status in real time
- Identifying bottlenecks and mitigating delays proactively
- Automating regulatory compliance checks for streamlined approvals


Highlight

Turn Compliance into a Competitive Advantage


With the Centric PLM–FoodChain ID connector, brands gain enhanced traceability, improved audit readiness and greater transparency for both consumers and retailers. This powerful integration provides real-time access to regulatory databases, simplifying certification workflows and strengthening risk management.




Key Takeaways



Real-time milestone tracking



Automated compliance verification



Bottleneck identification for proactive issue resolution

“The gains are immeasurable. Before the Centric PLM implementation, it would have been necessary to update each spreadsheet for each product. Now we only need to update the raw material and all related products are automatically updated. This change would otherwise take months!



”



5. Product Allocation: Optimizing Market Entry

A successful product launch is only as effective as its market placement. Proper allocation ensures that products reach the right markets and store formats to maximize impact.

Key Evaluation Criteria:

- **SKU Performance Forecasting:** Predicting demand for different store formats and regions
- **Category Plan Alignment:** Ensuring new products fit into category strategies
- **Distribution Strategy:** Defining store allocations based on sales potential and regional preferences
- **Inventory Optimization:** Balancing stock levels to prevent under- or over-supply issues

Solution

Centric Visual Boards for Data-Driven Allocation

Centric Visual Boards empower category managers to:

- Review available SKUs and allocate them to the right store formats
- Adjust distribution based on demand forecasting
- Optimize regional rollouts for maximum impact

“For a food and beverage company with \$10.0 billion in revenue, the value at stake from implementing digital and AI successfully and comprehensively across the full value chain is between \$810.0 million and \$1.6 billion, driven by both top-line growth and productivity gains.”

McKinsey ⁵



5. “Fortune or fiction? The real value of a digital and AI transformation in CPG ”, October 3, 2024, [mckinsey.com](#)

Key Takeaways



Data-driven SKU allocation



Demand-based market entry optimization



Faster response to sales performance

“As we embark on a company-wide business transformation, we identified an opportunity to develop digital product management expertise. Our rapidly expanding portfolio and growth model adds a level of complexity to our business, and we need a best-in-class PLM solution to speed-up the process.”

QUALITY GROUP



6. Performance Review: Continuous Optimization

Long-term success requires ongoing performance monitoring. Without proper tracking, businesses may struggle to adapt to market shifts or optimize product success.

Key Evaluation Criteria:

- **Sales Forecast Accuracy:** Comparing predicted vs. actual sales performance
- **Inventory & Replenishment:** Adjusting stock levels based on real-time demand
- **Consumer Feedback:** Analyzing market reception and making necessary improvements
- **Competitive Performance:** Benchmarking against industry leaders to maintain a competitive edge

Solution

Centric Visual Boards for Real-Time Performance Tracking

Centric Visual Boards provide:

- Weekly sales forecasts vs. actual sales comparisons
- Demand and replenishment planning optimization
- Inventory and marketing strategy adjustments based on real-time insights

“Food data analysis tools help businesses look at various regions of their operations including sales, customer service and product development. This leads to the identification of weak points, growth opportunities and enhanced business operations.”

Prasanna Chitanand,
Express Analytics ⁶

6. Prasanna Chitanand, “Data Analytics in the Food and Beverage Sector: Examples and Uses”, January 25, 2024, [expressanalytics.com](https://www.expressanalytics.com)

Key Takeaways



Continuous performance monitoring



Adaptive inventory and replenishment planning



Data-driven decision-making for sustained growth

“

We are already seeing improved visibility, communication and coordination across departments and PLM’s streamlining capabilities across multiple functions will support our international growth.

”



Conclusion: The Future of Decision-Making in F&B

The future of F&B leadership lies in data-driven, technology-enabled decision-making. By leveraging Centric PLM and Centric Visual Boards, companies achieve:

- Streamlined product development
- Enhanced cross-functional collaboration
- Optimized market entry strategies
- Assured compliance and sustainability
- Continuous product performance improvements

Digital transformation is essential for maintaining a competitive edge.
Companies that harness the power of integrated data and collaborative tools
lead the industry in innovation, efficiency and market success.

Discover how Centric solutions fuel smarter decision-making.

BOOK A DEMO



About Centric Software®

From its headquarters in Silicon Valley, Centric Software provides the market-leading AI-enabled product lifecycle management platform for food & beverage manufacturers, grocery, brands and multi-category retailers. As experts in all fast-moving consumer goods, Centric Software delivers best-of-breed solutions to design, develop, source, comply, buy, make, package, assort, market and sell products. Centric Software solutions optimize the product portfolio, harmonize product offers and streamline product development by speeding time to market and innovation while enhancing quality control and ensuring regulatory compliance.

- **Centric PLM™** features integrated industry best practices and innovative, AI-enabled capabilities tailored specifically for food and beverage manufacturers, retailers and food service providers. Seamlessly manage the overall product lifecycle, from initial concept and formula development to packaging, quality, supplier collaboration, nutritional labeling, production, SKU rationalization and beyond. Results include up to a 50% improvement in productivity and a 60% decrease in time to market.
- **Centric Visual Boards™** are a visually oriented product portfolio optimization tool. A singular accessible workspace pulls in real-time data and imagery from multiple business systems. It is a new, visual way of working to ensure robust, consumer-right product offers, dramatically decreasing assortment development cycle time.
- **Centric PXM™** AI-powered Product Experience Management encompasses PIM, DAM, content syndication and Digital Shelf Analytics (DSA) to optimize the product commercialization lifecycle resulting in a transformed brand experience. Increase sales channels, boost sell through and drive margins.

Centric Software's market-driven solutions have the highest user adoption rate, customer satisfaction rate and fastest time to value in the industry. Centric Software has received multiple industry awards and recognition, appearing regularly in world-leading analyst reports and research.

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