



Landmark Collaboration Between The National Food Lab and the Culinary Institute of America Brings Breakthrough Innovation Process to the Food Industry

DUBLIN, California and HYDE PARK, New York, – A new collaboration between The National Food Lab (The NFL) and The Culinary Institute of America (The CIA) Consulting Services Group and brings significant advancements in the area of food and beverage product development. For the first time, the culinary expertise of The CIA has been formally combined with the product development and commercialization strengths of The National Food Lab to create a unique culinary-driven concept development process. Over the course of a one-week time frame, The NFL and the CIA will identify and deliver consumer-validated culinary concepts that can be readily translated to innovative, commercially-viable food products.

“Our goal is the delivery of high-quality, tested culinary concepts that can be quickly converted into successful commercial products,” said Kevin Buck, President of The National Food Lab. “It’s the **combination** of culinary arts with product development and commercialization expertise that truly makes this offering unique, innovative and compelling.”

The week-long process begins with a three-day collaborative session at The CIA’s Greystone (St. Helena, CA) or Hyde Park, NY campus. During this session, a cross-functional client team is joined by specialists from The NFL and chefs from The CIA to brainstorm across different product platforms, create culinary protocepts, and design commercialization punch lists. The winning concepts and protocepts are then evaluated by consumers at the end of the week in a concept-product test. Results are captured and used to prioritize concepts for future product development.

Benefits of the culinary-driven concept development process to food industry clients include:

- **Speed** – In one week a client will progress from concept to winning protocepts, gold standard recipes and commercialization roadmaps to guide future development.
- **Culinary-Led Innovation** – The Culinary Institute of America brings global flavors and cuisines into the process, and delivers innovation through authenticity and differentiation.
- **Translation of Gold Standards** – The most difficult aspect of culinary recipe development is translation to commercial products. The combined talents of The CIA and The NFL allow this to happen smoothly.
- **Collaboration** – Cross-functional client teams participate in three days of exercises, creating buy-in to the process and ownership of the results. The combined efforts of key stakeholders in the session saves months of product development time, speeds products to shelf, and creates competitive market advantages.

"The strategic collaboration between The NFL and The CIA is an exciting initiative; it will result in a positive impact for both organizations in product and menu innovation," said Victor Gielisse, head of The CIA Consulting Services Group. "Ultimately, the results of our combined expertise will reaffirm our positions as key players in the dynamic and demanding field of food service consultancy."

For additional information or interviews, please contact Lucinda Wisniewski 925.551.2479

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About The National Food Lab:

Established in 1976, The National Food Lab provides a fully integrated menu of services to the global food, beverage and consumer packaged goods industry, including new product strategy and concept development, product innovation and commercialization, sensory evaluation, consumer research, food safety, quality assurance and analytical testing. From its initial roots as the food industry's principle scientific testing and research organization, The NFL is now also widely recognized as a leader in new product strategy, ideation, development and marketing. Through a collaborative partnership approach, The NFL helps many of America's most recognized brands and successful start-ups achieve competitive and commercial success. For more information, please visit www.TheNFL.com.

About The Culinary Institute of America:

Founded in 1946, The Culinary Institute of America is the world's premier culinary college with a network of more than 37,000 alumni and campuses in New York (Hyde Park), California (The CIA at Greystone, St. Helena), and Texas (San Antonio), as well as a New York City location (The CIA at Astor Center, Manhattan). In addition to its degree programs, the CIA also offers courses for professionals and food enthusiasts, as well as wine education. Since 2005, the CIA/Consulting Services Group has worked behind the scenes with companies to provide creative product development and menu solutions, as well as new directions in marketing and packaging. The CIA/Consulting Services Group combines chef insights with food science, consumer needs and marketplace trends. The result has been exciting new products, marketing approaches and menu and flavor development makeovers for leaders in the foodservice industry. For more information, please visit www.ciachef.edu.