

NIQ Demographic

Millennials Are Rewriting the FMCG Growth Equation

“For years, Millennials were defined by what made us different. Today, we’re shaping the mainstream consumer economy. Yet the generation is far from uniform. Some households are building wealth and trading up, while others are making difficult tradeoffs. Understanding that divide may be one of the biggest growth opportunities in food and beverage over the next decade.”



Chris Costagli
Vice President,
F&B Thought Leadership

For brands...

Millennials may share a generation, but they are not sharing the same financial reality. Brands need strategies that serve both households willing to spend more and households looking to stretch budgets. Growth will come from products that solve real needs, earn repeat purchases, and communicate value clearly across every touchpoint.

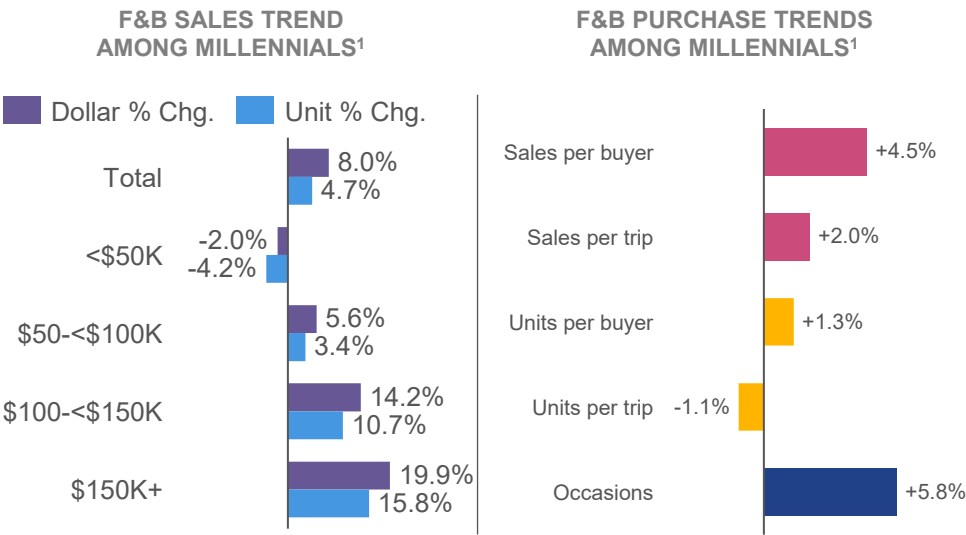
For retailers...

Winning Millennial trips requires more than low prices. Shoppers expect value, convenience, and a reason to choose your store over the alternatives. Retailers have an opportunity to simplify navigation, make benefits easier to identify, and use digital capabilities to strengthen customer relationships before, during, and after the trip.

Implications for the Food & Beverage Industry

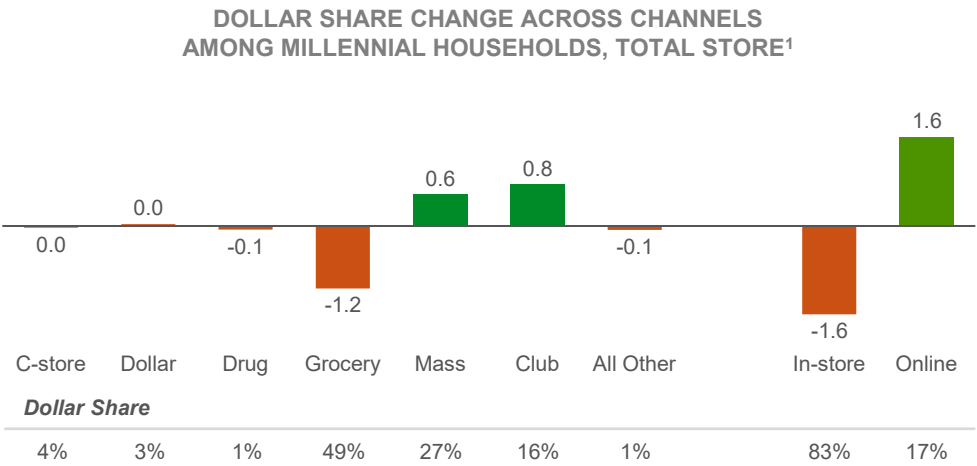
Growth is increasingly concentrated among Millennials

Millennials remain the most important growth audience in food and beverage. No other generation is contributing growth at the same scale. Yet beneath that growth story are very different realities. Some households are trading up while others are making tougher budget decisions. Success will depend on understanding how Millennials define value and which benefits are worth paying for.



Convenience only matters when it saves time, money, or effort

Millennials are not loyal to channels. They're loyal to outcomes. Online, Mass, and Club are winning because they simplify shopping while helping consumers stay in control of spending. Many Millennials actively use digital tools to compare prices, plan purchases, and avoid unnecessary spending. The retailers and brands gaining share are making shopping easier without making consumers work harder.



Industry Analysis Sources: ¹NIQ, Expanded Omnishopper Panel, Total US, Total Outlets, Total Product, 52 Weeks Ending 07/11/2026; ²NIQ, BASES Quick Question Omnibus Survey, May 2026, n=2,007

Author: Chris Costagli, Vice President, Thought Leadership, F&B Insights Lead; Maria Camila Garnica, Full Industry Insights Analyst

The takeaway...

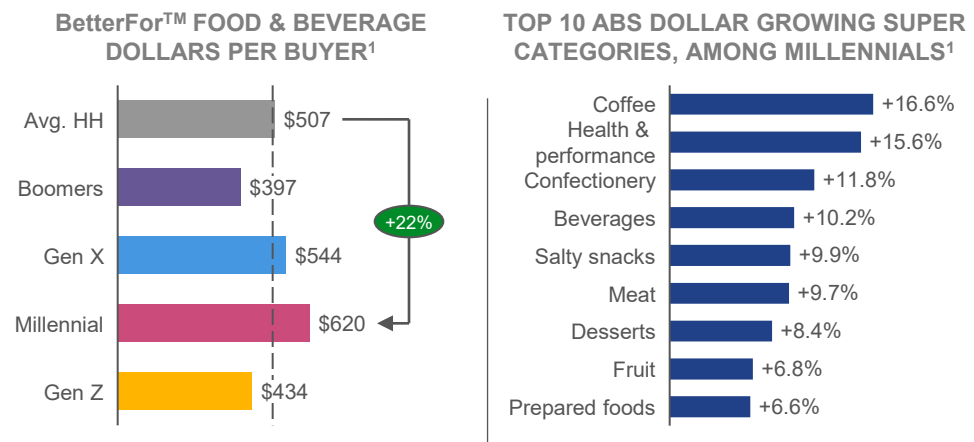
- Millennials continue to drive disproportionate food and beverage growth.
- Growth is coming from both premiumization and value-seeking behaviors.
- Functional benefits are giving consumers stronger reasons to spend.
- Discoverability is becoming as important as distribution.

Your next move...

- Build products around benefits consumers can easily recognize and explain.
- Expand protein, fiber, and wellness beyond specialty occasions.
- Improve product content so shoppers and AI tools can understand your proposition.
- Design every product experience for both shelf discovery and digital discovery.

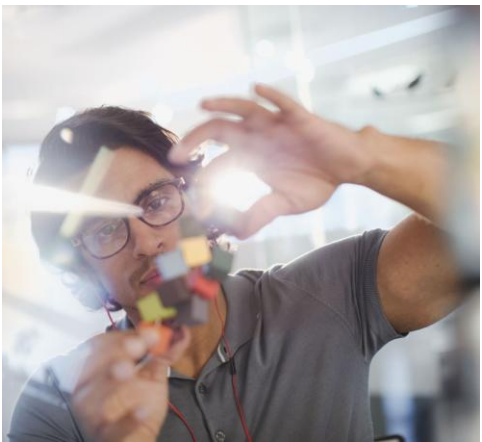
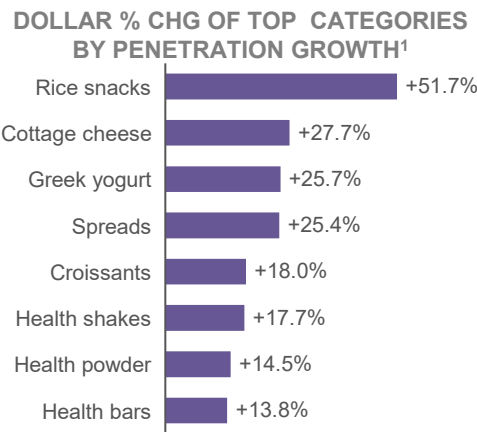
Benefits are giving consumers a reason to spend more

Millennials are willing to pay more, but only when the benefit is obvious. Wellness claims alone are no longer enough. Products need to deliver value that consumers can see, understand, and fit into their daily routines. Categories that successfully combine enjoyment with functional benefits are capturing a larger share of spending.



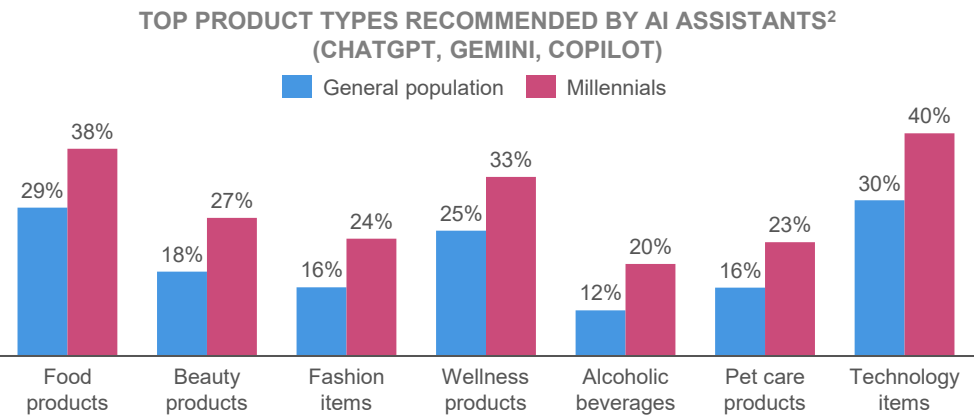
Protein is part of the daily habit

Growth across protein-rich categories points to something larger than category-specific momentum. Millennials are looking for easier ways to meet health goals throughout the day, creating demand for products that make nutrition simple, convenient, and visible. The opportunity extends well beyond traditional protein categories.



AI is becoming part of the path to purchase

Millennials are turning to AI tools for recommendations, product comparisons, & purchase decisions. As discovery shifts toward AI-assisted search, brands will need to think differently about visibility. Products that clearly communicate what they do, who they're for, & why they matter will have an advantage in traditional & emerging search environments.



Looking for more?

The next chapter of Millennial spending will not be defined by age. It will be defined by priorities. Convenience, functionality, and value are becoming more intertwined as consumers look for products that solve real problems and fit seamlessly into everyday life. The brands and retailers that grow with Millennials will be the ones that make those benefits easy to find, easy to understand, and easy to justify.