



Bulletin Board

News, information and comment

The voice of
the natural health
industry



From summer of sport into summer of opportunity

This summer is set to be a huge one for sports fans. But as retailers of products that can ultimately make you better at sport, as well as healthier and fitter, how can we as an industry capitalize on this summer's Olympics and the Euro 2016 football tournament to capture new customers?

In my view, it's about being realistic. As the team running London 2012 quickly found out, one sporting event can't change the world overnight.

According to stats from Sport England, participation in 20 sports actually declined in the 12 months after the Olympics.

No magic bullet

The reasons for this are unclear, especially since the whole nation got behind stars like Mo Farah and Bradley Wiggins. But perhaps despite what marketing might tell you, there is no magic bullet in terms of linking interest in sport to interest in health. Buying the latest running trainers, sports watch, or athlete-endorsed sports drink is not going to make you win a medal. I wonder how many kitchen cupboards are still full of good-intended but barely-



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used whey protein containers four years on?

Compare those quick fixes to simply kicking a ball around with your children, taking the stairs instead of the lift, or swapping your chocolate bar for a healthier snack, however, and you might find those habits easier to make. And to keep.

Long-term strategy

This longer term strategy towards sport is also being seen in changes to Sport England's approach. Previously it was only tasked with getting children aged 14 and over to participate. Now it's five plus. Where its remit was once solely getting more people to play sports, it is now getting inactive people to exercise. It is playing the long game, and we should too.

As leaders in health, we need to view these large sporting events as more than just an opportunity

for sports nutrition. It's impractical to think that the general public will adopt the same regimes as the top athletes instantly, and nor do many need to. But they might think twice about their own health when they head to the fridge, feel out of breath on a brisk walk, or worry about ageing joints and muscles.

Between us we have several thousands of locations on the UK's high streets, all primed to give little nudges to the general public about taking that first step towards being a little bit healthier at the exact time this challenge is likely to be foremost in their minds.

So when you plan your window displays for the Olympic months or order your stock, remember that while it is tempting to go for the quick wins on sports nutrition, you might be better placed with an approach that reaches out to the masses in more general terms, linking to their willingness to perhaps take their first step on the road to being healthier.

With our collective experience in helping people make healthier decisions, let's kick-start a wave of 'healthier' health consciousness from the ground up.

See you on the starting line!

News... Diet and dementia

Due to the lack of effective drugs to defend against it, the link between diet and dementia is a topic increasingly covered by the press. This month, new research conducted by the University of Cincinnati Academic Health Centre emerged showing the effect that consuming blueberries from middle-age could have on the development of dementia, decades later. Simultaneously released was a study which claimed that maple syrup could help ward off Alzheimer's by protecting brain cells against the proteins that destroy them.

Getting the best from the HFMA

Democracy in action

In a challenging and ever-changing commercial environment, the representation of the interests of your business is crucial. The HFMA acts to actively promote, protect and defend the interests of each of its member companies. Regardless of size, each member receives the same benefits, information and guidance from their membership. Additionally, any company is able to stand for the council and every member has the opportunity to shape the interests and direction of the industry. From day-to-day decisions to issues management, the HFMA's officials and secretariat work tirelessly with the members to pursue the areas which are of most interest and benefit to them. For more information on how to join the HFMA, visit www.hfma.co.uk.

NEWS... A HEALTHY BUDGET

March's budget filled the headlines with speculation on the Chancellor's approach to the UK's economy, and in particular, what would be suggested to deal with the wide range of health issues throughout the UK. The decision which gained the most column inches within the national health media was undoubtedly the

proposed sugar tax on drinks which contain over 5g of sugar per 100ml, with a second, higher band for tax applying to sugary drinks with more than 8g per 100ml. The levy is expected to fetch £510 million which the government proposes to reinvest into children's sports within primary school budgets.

Whilst it is encouraging to see that healthier and lower sugar alternatives are being recommended by the government, it is disappointing that the mainstream media debate did not go beyond reducing sugar as a strategy in helping the nation to be healthier. With vitamin D deficiency hugely prevalent, both in

government-recognized at-risk groups, and in the general population, and levels of understanding around the importance of folic acid supplementation to reduce the risk of neural tube defects in pregnancy, these types of health subjects would benefit from the mainstream media attention which health budget spending affords issues.