

The background of the entire slide is a top-down view of numerous walnuts scattered across a light-colored, textured surface. One walnut in the upper-middle section is cracked open, revealing its reddish-brown, wrinkled kernel. The other walnuts are closed, showing their characteristic brown, deeply ridged shells.

From Plate to Psyche

the Food Matrix and Marketing to Gen Z

Presented by

Brittany O'Brien, Chief Executive of Marketing



About the Non-GMO Project



The Non-GMO Project has become one of the most trusted and widely adopted voluntary food labels in North America. What began as a grassroots initiative has evolved into a market-transforming force. This unprecedented scale of adoption for a private certification demonstrates the power of informed consumer choice in reshaping our food system.

66,000+

Non-GMO Project Verified products in the marketplace

\$45 billion

annual sales of Non-GMO Project
Verified products

The Butterfly

represents respect for nature's complexity with a commitment to transparency and consumer choice


The Non-GMO Project

has always cared about the food matrix

We may not have had a name for it, but concern for the food matrix has been at the heart of the Non-GMO Project since its founding in 2007.


The 'food matrix' is a term used to describe the fact that chemical and nutritional food compounds behave differently in isolation than as part of a whole food product.





“Reductionist nutrition strategies
aimed at mitigating disease
ignore the food matrix and
may lead to unintended consequences.”

Perspective: Seeing the Forest Through the Trees: The Importance of Food Matrix in Diet Quality and Human Health,
Advances in Nutrition, Volume 14, Issue 3, 2023



GMO science and technology methodology closely resembles recent food matrix and nutrition studies.



Arctic Apple

Trait: non-browning

The appearance of freshness may help reduce food waste, but the longer food is in transit and on the shelf, the more nutrients degrade. There are natural apple varieties that don't brown easily using traditional breeding techniques.



Pairwise Salad Greens

Trait: less bitter taste

Flavor provides essential information that our bodies understand consciously and subconsciously. It is crucial for the brain-gut connection. Bitter flavor is linked to improved digestion, gut health, immune function, and metabolic stimulation.



Golden Rice

Trait: higher vitamin A

Genetically engineered to contain higher levels of vitamin A to combat deficiency and malnutrition through higher beta carotene. However, beta carotene degrades rapidly, and the lack of diverse dietary fat sources in local diets hinders the absorption of the added vitamin A.

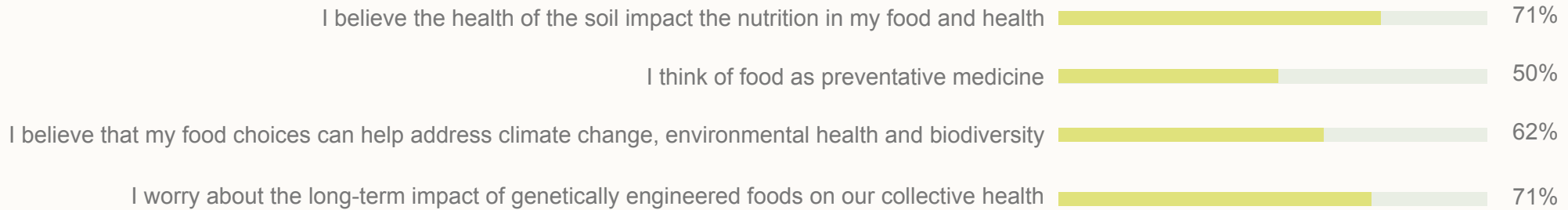
For conscientious consumers, signs point to a more holistic paradigm of sustainability, integrity and health.



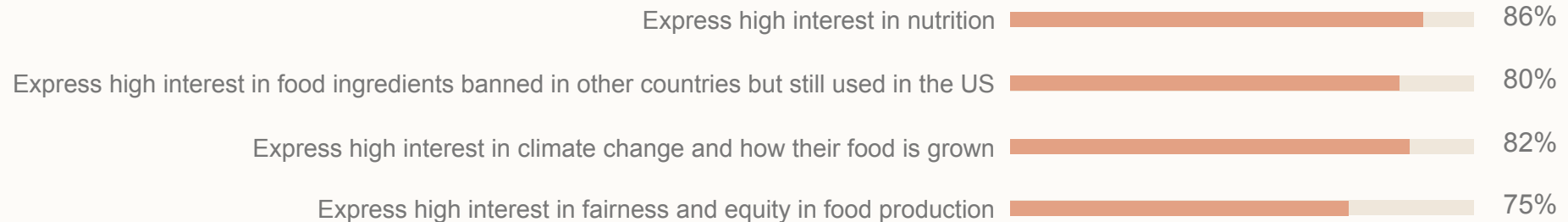
Gen Z

Let's look at some numbers

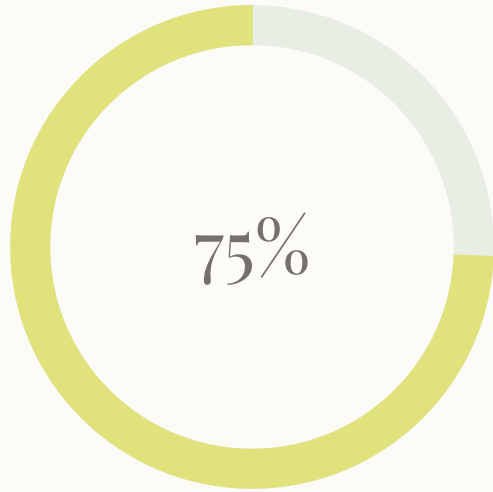
Attitudes on health, wellness, food, farming practices and climate



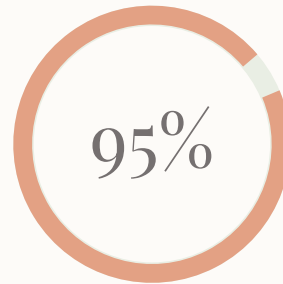
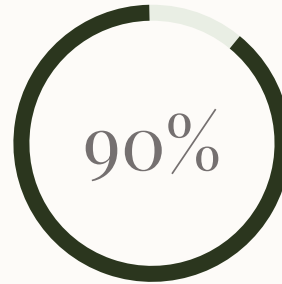
Interest by topic as rated by very interested, somewhat interested, not interested



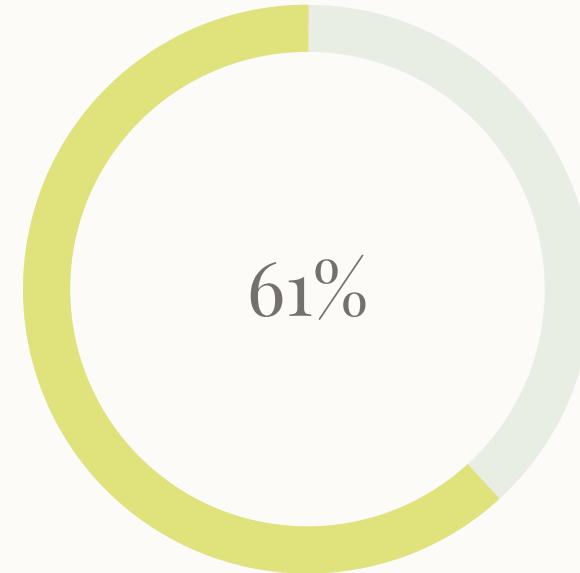
Believe their food choices can help
address climate change,
environmental health, and biodiversity



Say they're willing to pay more for
sustainable products



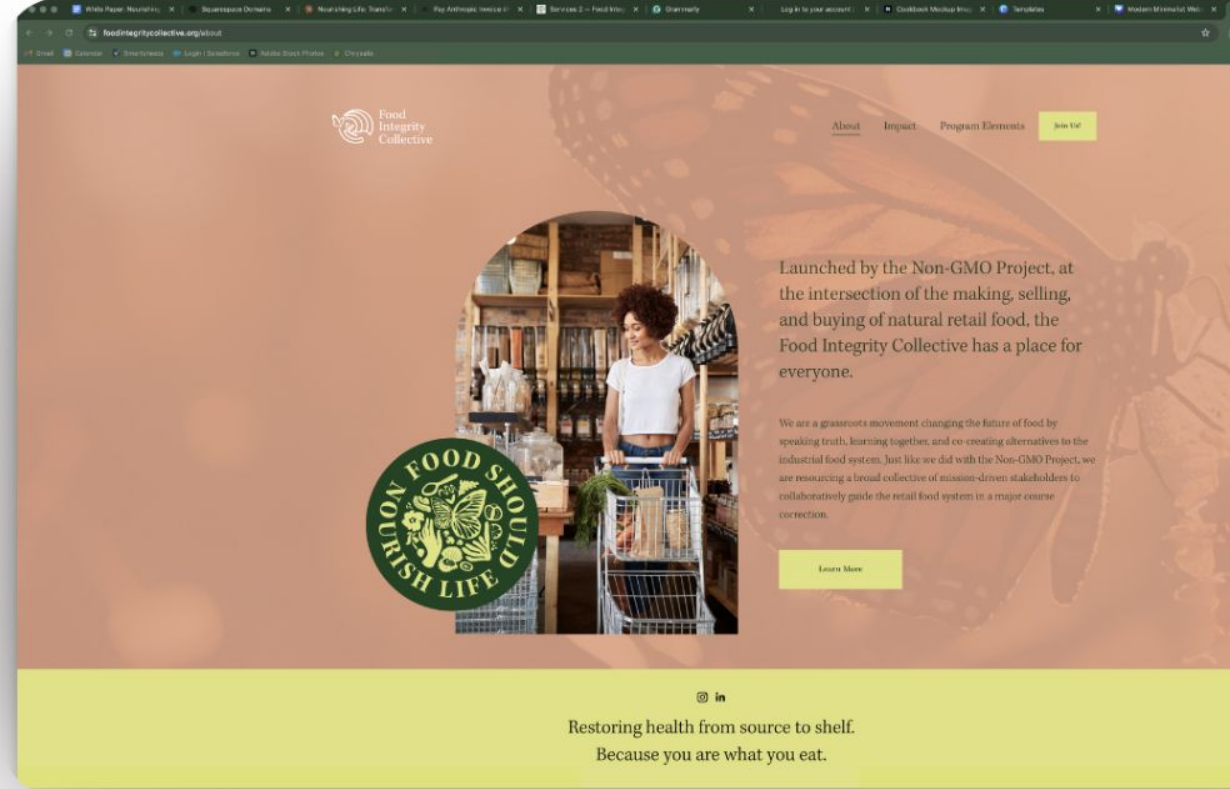
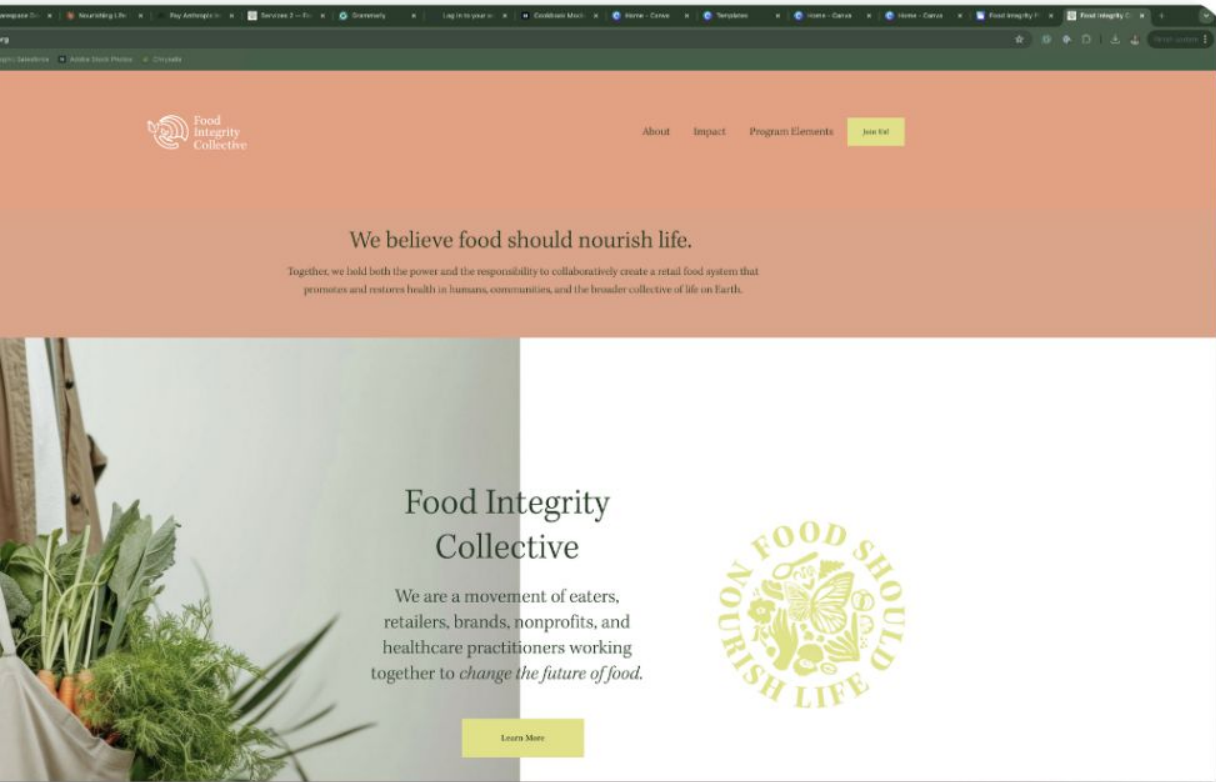
Agree, the quality of the food we
eat is a critical factor to our health
and wellness



Gen Z is more likely to rate their overall
health as excellent or very good,
however at least 6 in 10 report
experiencing anxiety or stress

Gen Z is the first generation to grow up fully immersed in the digital age. They're constantly bombarded with information, much of it conflicting, about health, nutrition, and the environment. This information overload can contribute to anxiety, but it also means they're more aware of the connections between their food choices and their overall wellbeing.



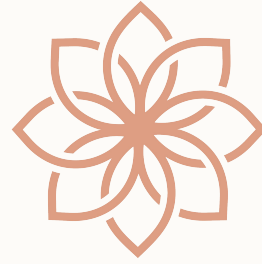


“As we
end to the
ideration
ans’ role

The Human
Imperative
Shifting Consciousness from Separation to Interdependence

reface





Food Integrity Petals

- 01

Minimal Processing and Additives

Increase the safety, healthfulness and nutritional value of finished food products by minimizing the processing and additives.
- 02

No GMOs or Crop Desiccants

Preserve foundational ingredient integrity by avoiding GMOs and crop desiccants
- 03

Regenerative Sourcing & Biodiversity

Enhance ingredient quality and reciprocal nourishment by sourcing ingredients from systems that support regeneration and biodiversity
- 04

Nutrient Density & Diversity

Increase overall food quality by prioritizing nutrient density and formulating food in a way that values holistic nutrition and uplifts the potential for food as medicine
- 05

Healthy Human Communities

Support the sovereign human right to grow, make, and eat food in a way that is dignified and culturally appropriate
- 06

Animal Wellbeing

Respect and prioritize the emotional and physical wellbeing of animals and habitat
- 07

Mindful Packaging

Choose packaging that minimizes harm to people and the planet
- 08

Other Contributions to Food Integrity

Evolve the potential of the retail food system to nourish life in other individualized ways.



What does this means for food producers, manufacturers and marketers?

We are awakening to the remembering that food is deeply connected to our relationship with the land, our cultural heritage, and our aspirations for a sustainable future.

So, how do we effectively communicate this to Gen Z?

Gen Z is notoriously skeptical of traditional marketing tactics. They value authenticity and transparency above all else. They're not just looking for products – they're looking for brands that align with their values and contribute to a better world.



Marketing to Gen Z

01

Establish a Clear Brand Voice

Gen Z loves a brand with a strong personality. Find your unique voice and own it.

02

Education, Not Promotion

Instead of just promoting products, focus on the benefits.

03

Transparency

Be open about your sourcing, production methods, and the science behind your products. Gen Z appreciates brands that have nothing to hide.

04

Sustainability

Highlight how your products benefit individual health and contribute to environmental sustainability. Remember, for Gen Z, personal and planetary health are interconnected.

05

Digital Engagement

Create interactive content and leverage influencer marketing. Gen Z appreciates being engaged by "real people"—celebrity endorsements are not as convincing.

06

Emphasis Visual Content

The top three social media platforms among Gen Z are YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram

07

Community Building

Create platforms for Gen Z to connect with each other around the issues that you both care about

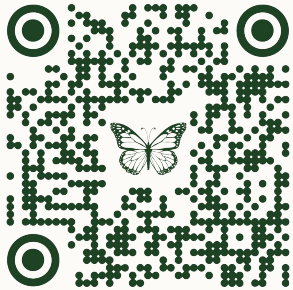
08

Personalization

Leverage data insights to provide personalized recommendations based on individual preferences

We have the capacity to nourish life on earth.

Find Out More



The food industry has a responsibility to do more than just feed people—we need to nourish them, body and mind. Gen Z, with their passion for authenticity, sustainability, and holistic health, is the perfect partner in this endeavor.

The connection between our plates and our psyches is powerful.

By understanding and honoring the complexities of our food and its impact on our mental and physical health, we have an opportunity to address one of the most pressing health crises of our time.

In Conclusion (TL;DR)



The Food Matrix Concept: Understanding that food is more than just the sum of its nutrients. The way components interact within whole foods significantly impacts how our bodies process and benefit from them. This challenges the reductionist view of nutrition and emphasizes the importance of whole, minimally processed foods.

Gen Z's Holistic Approach to Food and Health: This generation shows a deep understanding of the connection between personal health, food choices, and environmental sustainability. They're willing to pay more for products that align with their values and are actively seeking transparency and clean, functional ingredients.

The Link Between Diet and Mental Health: We highlighted the critical connection between what we eat and our mental wellbeing. This is especially relevant given the high rates of anxiety and stress among Gen Z and the global mental health crisis.

Launching the Food Integrity Collective: Our new initiative offers comprehensive frameworks for improving food integrity, from reducing harm to fostering reciprocal thriving across eight petals. It's a systemic approach that could significantly impact how we produce, market, and consume food.

Marketing Strategies for Gen Z: We provided a few practical thematic strategies for marketing to Gen Z, emphasizing authenticity, education, transparency, and engagement.



Thank You



Brittany O'Brien

Chief Executive of Marketing and Communications

"One cannot think well, love well, sleep well, if one has not dined well." — Virginia Woolf

@nongmoproject

@foodintegritycollective

