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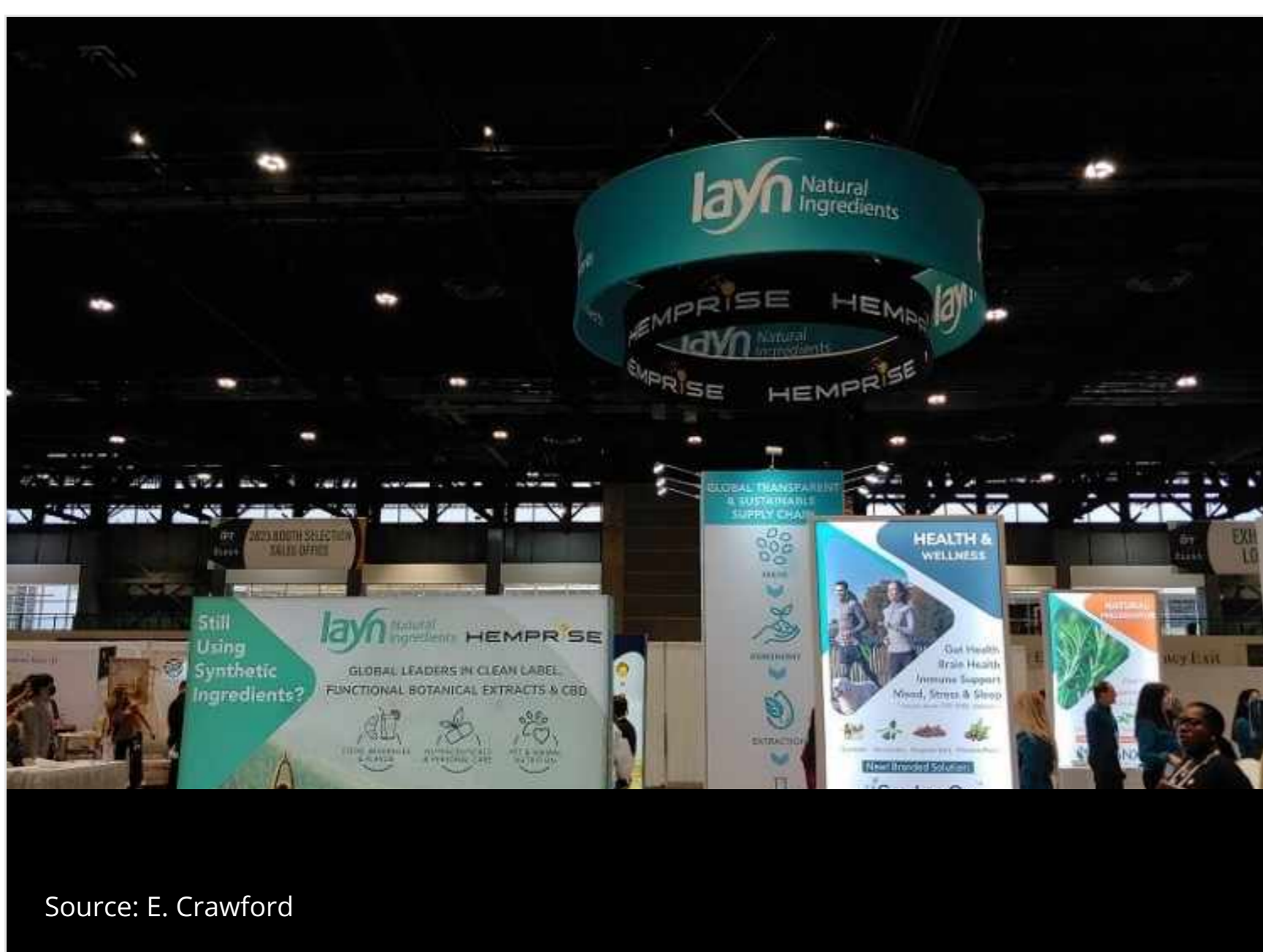
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# IFT FIRST

## Layn blazes digital trail with easily searchable online ingredient library for 'synergistic' exploration, product development

By Elizabeth Crawford

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Source: E. Crawford

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**Well-known for sugar alternatives, including stevia and monk fruit, Layn Natural Ingredients has steadily expanded its portfolio with a full line of functional botanicals that can now easily be explored through a just-launched online ingredient library – a free tool that is blazing a digital trail in the historically private and protective ingredient industry.**



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"A lot of [ingredient and food formulation] companies hold things very, very close the vest," and are unwilling to share information about the solutions and tools they offer for fear that a competitor will use the data to their advantage, Collette Kakuk, VP global marketing an Layn Natural Ingredients, told FoodNavigator-USA at the IFT FIRST conference in Chicago this month.

But, she said, this is an outdated way of thinking and that does more harm than good.

"I think this is more of an opportunity than a threat, because there are easy ways to get competitive information. You have a friend do it, or another company do it, and so what we are really avoiding is the opportunity to lead with value, to share what we have to offer and to make it easily accessible" for potential customers to "synergistically explore," she said.

She explained that by publishing detailed, easy to search – and ungated – information about everything Layn has to offer, the sales team has cultivated more and higher quality leads among both returning consumers and new companies, including start-ups that may be small now, but are growing fast.

"Leading with value, and making this information available in the library removes pain points that can slow or block sales. For example, there is no longer a lot of back and forth with a sales rep, which takes time and can cause a lag" that could potentially compromise a consumers' competitive edge or hinder their first-mover advantage, Kakuk said.

"It also quickly allows somebody, especially a product developer, who is thinking about complementary ingredients and different versions of a

product to synergistically explore" without delay, potentially resulting in a more robust partnership, she said.

"There is also the transparency aspect of it where everyone is expecting companies to be completely transparent. And, Layn typically, as far as the supply chain, exceptional in being transparent and traceable," she added.

The digital library is prominently featured on Layn's website and allows users to explore the company's ingredients by application (human, pet or animal) and by primary and secondary functions, which for humans include natural sweeteners, health & nutrition, sensory enhancers & maskers, preservation or shelf life and personal care.

After selecting among the three filters, Layn displays a selection of its more than 60 ingredients, more information about which can be downloaded as a PDF simply by clicking on the name and image.

The spec sheets include details about the ingredient's origins, how it is grown, why Layn included within the filtered requirements, it format, color, active compounds extraction method, common usage levels, pack size, shelf life and general benefits. Each sheet also includes other ingredients in which the viewer may be interested.

### Botanicals take Layn beyond sweeteners

The library includes more than 60 ingredients and solutions offered by Layn, which go far beyond the sweeteners that the company is best known for.

"We started with stevia and monk fruit, but we have expanded beyond that so that now there's a natural solution for every application," including botanicals for weight managements, immune support, joint health, energy and more, Kakuk said.

"We've also been doing a lot of innovation in our clean label portfolio, including polyphenol rick solutions for preservation" that works across applications, including sauces, spreads, meats, oils, snacks, baked goods and even pet food, she said.

The company also is using botanicals to further enhance its sweeteners by offering options that enhance or mask elements of the sweeteners and emulsifiers to help manage the sensory experience.

Looking forward, Kakuk said, as Layne continues to expand its selection of solutions she will also push for additional enhanced digital enablement – as she sees the two elements bolstering and reinforcing each other and adding a layer of customer support that sets the company apart from others.

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