



# The future of chocolate for 2016: Science, sentiment or a touch of both?



Angus Kennedy recently spoke with Bas Smit, Barry Callebaut's Global & European Marketing Director, to find out what the future of chocolate holds for the year ahead. An individual with his finger on the industrial pulse of chocolate, Smit's predictions were most revealing – making this one-to-one interview one of our most insightful ever

**Angus Kennedy:** Bas, a real pleasure to speak with you again. Okay, 'the chocolate experiences of tomorrow', a statement Barry Callebaut has been using to great effect. Now is this anyone's guess when we look into the future of chocolate or is this a science? No one really knows the final consumer reaction, or do they?

**Bas Smit:** What the future will hold is

hard to tell, I agree Angus. Fortunately, life brings surprises! But what we do know is that consumers 're' value. We know how value systems evolve; we know what our next generation prefers, along with their needs and what they aspire to.

Needs constantly evolve in a changing environment, and with different opportunities, technologies

and concerns, we might even be able to expect specific solutions. Consumers expect more and 'no' is too easy for them.

I always remind myself about what happened in the tech industry in the mid 1990s. Philips decided to stop their mobile business, and Samsung decided to start, but with a different view upon the future of connectivity than Nokia who were the global market leader.

We know the result. Philips is still lacking growth and in a major restructuring programme, Nokia lost their complete business and Samsung is today one of the leading tech firms. You need to have a clear view on the future and how consumers move, or you might walk down a dead end. But this is not easy!

**AK:** I agree Bas, one of my favourite Maxims is always expect the unexpected! You mentioned recently in your FIE talk last year, the three words





“craft, create and collaborate”. Can you explain exactly what this means?

**BS:** Barry Callebaut is the global chocolatier. Why? It's in our DNA. Through our craftsmanship, we create the aspiring chocolate experiences of tomorrow. We aim to inspire our customers whilst leveraging trends and insights and we truly believe that only close collaborations between partners will deliver real innovations. The world is moving too fast and is too complex to have the answers all by yourself. By sharing knowledge and expertise, co-creation can lead to the solutions that consumers desire.

**AK:** You have been talking about ‘healthy agers’ a lot recently. How can chocolate fill their needs, and is this a big trend for 2016 and beyond? Is this a big market globally, and has it got more important recently?

**BS:** The fact that people get older across the world is not new. Nor is the fact that an aging body brings some potential threats to maintain a high quality of life. But we need to be mindful that today's ‘healthy agers’ celebrate life and wish to be active for longer. They prefer to have the same taste experience as they are used to. They care more about their lifestyle and are looking for brands and tasty products to satisfy their healthier lifestyle choices. ‘Healthy agers’ are concerned with compensating for their weaker functioning taste buds, supporting their changing metabolism, nutritional needs and preventing aging diseases. Chocolates with an intense taste, lower sugar levels, rich in protein, fibres or flavonols could be relevant propositions for the ‘healthy ager’ of 2016 and beyond!

**AK:** How are you helping your customers to have clean labels and easy to understand brands? It looks like the whole food industry is now in a race to be clean and understandable. It seems just as important now as origins, sustainability and accountability issues.

**BS:** You're right Angus! For consumers, clean and clear is the new ‘green’. They prefer natural products by using ingredients as nature intended. They are looking for simplicity and transparency about the production

“If you are not unique, and your price point is not competitive, you are heading towards a dead end”

process, reflected in an ingredient list and a ‘back of pack story’, which is understood.

For us this means we invest a lot in R&D to get to 100 percent natural, kitchen-cupboard-ingredient lists. We are on a journey and want to lead the game! But brands need to do more to keep their value for a consumer and to keep their brand equity. In times of increasing concerns, brands that lead with a ‘trust barometer’ will be most desired and preferred. And to rebuild trust, one needs to be transparent about the ‘making of’ and

allow consumers to follow the steps from farm to shelf. But being open and transparent is not enough now, as consumers need to understand what's in it for them. What product benefits will they experience? Which story is being told?

Our cocoa and chocolate sustainability offer, our on the ground origin presence and infrastructure, the Cocoa Horizons Foundation and the Cocoa Chronicles are all initiatives to support our customer's brands that lead the Trust Barometer! We support our customer's brands to tell a story, to do a story!

**AK:** We have heard a lot about being the piggy in the middle of premium and value chocolate. Is this becoming more apparent to you at Barry Callebaut? And if so, what can you do to help chocolate producers avoid the middle territory?

**BS:** Interesting question. Being relevant

**Craft  
Create  
Collaborate**

**BARRY CALLEBAUT**  
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**COME AND JOIN US IN OUR STUDIO AT ISM COLOGNE, 31 JAN - 3 FEB 2016**

As a global chocolatier, great sustainable cocoa and chocolate is at the heart of our business. We live for taste and through craft, skill and collaboration, we bring all kinds of ingredients together to create inspiring chocolate experiences of tomorrow.

Join us at our studio for an inspiring program of experiences driven by trends, insights and innovations to bring delicious chocolate dreams to life.

See you in hall 10.2, booth C10 / D19.





*Increasingly conscious consumers crave healthier lifestyles, but demand products that don't sacrifice taste*

and different as a brand is as old as branding itself. However, consumers are better informed, peer recommendations are within 'mobile' reach and are spoiled by a wealth of options. So, if your offer is not clear, if you are not unique and your price point is not

competitive, you are indeed heading towards a dead end.

Barry Callebaut has a huge 'toolbox' to support brands to go premium with multi-sensorial chocolate experiences. Unique in texture, colour, shape and flavour, customers co-create with

our chef chocolatiers in our global network of Chocolate Academy Centers and Chocolate Labs. Barry Callebaut supports brands in their story-telling with sustainable origin chocolates and its 'making of'.

Whilst we have a vast portfolio of products - ranging from specialty cocoa powders, to Belgian chocolate, Swiss chocolate, heat resistant chocolate, fresh Mediterranean nuts, Decorations, Caramel and to fruit fillings etc – whatever is needed to make an aspiring chocolate experience come true, Barry Callebaut can provide!

**AK:** Do you feel that supermarkets might be lagging behind in some of the new radical changes that are individualizing chocolate offerings now, especially artisan movement products?

**BS:** Consumers don't expect mass scale portfolios to be the same as products crafted by an artisan. When shopping in a supermarket, they are looking for portfolios being inspired by artisans and how they magically combine great quality ingredients. They do expect to see the supermarket portfolios in



## 1-2-1 Interview

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some years to be the mass scale family member of hand crafted chocolate experiences. That's true.

If you will join us in our newly designed Barry Callebaut Studio at ISM in Koln at the end of January you can experience what we offer to our customers. You can experience what 'craft, create, collaborate' means to us as global chocolatiers and how we support our customers' brands with their journey to be the mass scale family member of hand-crafted chocolate experiences. You can see a sneak peak via Barry Callebaut's YouTube channel ([www.youtube.com/c/BarrycallebautGroup](http://www.youtube.com/c/BarrycallebautGroup)).

**AK:** I am definitely coming to ISM! I see you have done a lot of research? But for me, a flurry of new, quite funky and often poetic words are now 'in' – like: style rebel, raw culture, natural sensing, slowcial and benefit territories. It's exploding with new products and an almost new language! Before I get completely left behind and I must admit, confused, can you take me through the main trends and terminology? I'll go quiet for a while, this is a big question!

**BS:** It's indeed a big question. We would like to welcome you to step into our studio, where our passionate and skillful craftsmen and women will create fascinating chocolate experiences live on stage, redefining the confectionery, ice cream, bakery, pastry, biscuits, desserts or drinks markets... chocolate experiences suiting tomorrow's consumers needs!

Throughout the four days of the ISM fair you can discover what consumers are looking for: specifically, what satisfies them and adds value to them, along with details on how their changing lives drive their changing chocolate preferences. Be it chocolate

**CHOCOLATE  
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your chocolate way  
to brighten your day



experiences to be more wholesome, more premium, express consumers' personalities or what they have defined to be the 'new green'! Each day of the fair the program will be different. The freshly prepared creations by our chef chocolatiers will highlight different manifestations rejuvenating different market segments. We can learn what 'symphony of caramel' and 'mademoiselles' are about and how they can unlock the confectionery and biscuit categories.

**AK:** Sounds fascinating, a symphony of caramel sounds tempting. Lets move onto the trends again. Did I leave any trends behind that you would like to add?

**BS:** Food not just being personalised. Expressing your personality is

something to keep in mind in the coming years. We are what we eat! But can you already find chocolate experiences really fitting you like your custom made Nike's? Something else to think about...are chocolate experiences teasing our eyes, emotionally engaging us, impacting what our taste buds experience? And we surely should not forget the struggle of millennials and how to satisfy their appetite for life. For them we need to re-invent cocoa – 'the food of gods!'

**AK:** I see you are gearing up for personal chocolate experiences, you have always been good at this at Barry Callebaut. I look forward to being invited to your Chocolate Academy in Weize again! Great people and place to



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be, I loved it. But new experiences and combinations for the consumer are the driver of the industry, can you let me know what you are doing here now to beef it all up?

**BS:** Wow, well we have been 'cooking' a lot over the last couple of months. Leveraging trends, insights and chefs - we have identified for each market segment, consumer relevant Concept Platforms - like chocolate nibbles or happy bakes, which have many different manifestations depending on the 'benefit territories' or a combination of them. It's our intent to craft, create, and collaborate with our customers and fuel their strategic programs. With our customers we co-create to innovate and define the chocolate experiences of tomorrow!

**AK:** Okay, a philosophical one here, but a question we need to ask anyway. Who, in your opinion, really drives innovation? Advances in machinery technology, innovative ingredients, chocolate suppliers, manufacturers or consumers? I am sure our readers would be able to answer this handsomely as well, but it's interesting to see this answered from your perspective.



**BS:** Nice question Angus! Once more I have been inspired by the tech industry and mathematicians too. Innovation or problem solving starts for them with finding partners and stakeholders with different perspectives to the same question. You know the story of Minecraft, the computer game and how it evolved? A brilliant one!

I believe innovators should not think in 'chains' passing batons, but rather in 'webs' with one shared point of attention. This 'web' thinking is something we would like to drive at Barry Callebaut. Closely working together, sharing knowledge and expertise to get to real innovation and not just another variant of an existing product.

*Barry Callebaut has initiated a strong focus on clean labels and natural ingredients in recent times*

