



## PRESS RELEASE

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### The future of brand loyalty

- The opportunities of digitality for organic brands

Together with futurologist Max Thinius, the trade fair duo consisting of BIOFACH, the World's Leading Trade Fair for Organic Food, and VIVANESS, the International Trade Fair for Natural and Organic Personal Care, is investigating the future of the organic food and natural and organic cosmetics sector. In light of the latest developments in buying behaviour and brand loyalty, they're examining the opportunities associated with ongoing digitization. How do organic brands and associations position themselves to be fit for the future?

#### The current situation and the first question marks

A consistent and fundamentally positive attitude toward organic foods is currently experiencing its first highly noticeable decline in the purchasing of branded organic products. The acceptance of higher costs for sustainable products dropped 50 percent within a year (67 percent acceptance by those surveyed in 2021, 30 percent in 2022)<sup>1</sup>. Given the increase in energy costs and the cost of living, it's no surprise that people want to save on their purchases. But the question is: How strong is their loyalty to organic brands and what direction will buying behaviour take in the future?

#### Brand loyalty is essentially based on two factors:

On the one hand, brand loyalty is created by familiarity and a certain need for security. A positive brand experience builds trust. There's less risk involved in a repeat purchase than in buying an unknown product. It keeps people reaching for organic products, says Kathrin Jäckel, Managing

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<sup>1</sup> Monitor Deloitte survey from August 2022



Director of the Federal Association of Natural Food and Natural Goods (BNN) e.V. “Our brand is perhaps based less on a label, colour or snappy claim and more on a basic understanding of qualities. In my own experience, that’s what binds people to organic products.”

On the other hand, a brand’s emotional positioning plays a major role. If a person can clearly identify with a brand, they accept fewer alternatives within a category.

### **Emotions and digital communication**

This is where the different communication strategies of the brands come into play. In the age of digitality, an emotional relationship between brands and consumers can be established and intensified through various channels. “Things have become much more complex, much more diverse,” stresses Jäckel. Futurologist Max Thinius predicts: “In the future, consumers will have a greater influence, for example, on what’s suggested to them in their newsfeed. Each individual will have more authority over their own data and will be able to control their own algorithm.” This means that digital options should be identified and utilized in order to achieve brand loyalty in the young target group in particular. “Digitality doesn’t mean that in the future, refrigerators will determine which products should be purchased. We’ll retain decision-making authority. But decision making can be supported by data,” explains Thinius.

Suppliers can also take advantage of the opportunities of digitization by collecting and analysing more data. That will allow them to make differentiated statements about current declines in the organic sector. This is what Jörg Reuter, Head of Food Campus Berlin / Managing Director of Artprojekt Nature & Nutrition GmbH, has also been advocating lately: “The industry has never analysed why the market behaves as it does and proactively drawn conclusions from it, making the current awakening in the third year of multiple crises even more bitter.”

Digitalization opens up new potential for the organic sector in two significant areas: firstly by giving it the ability to achieve a more accurate, data-based

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understanding of consumers and infer well-grounded developments and secondly by enabling it to respond to future challenges before they arise.

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