



Promising Narratives, Trusted Voices, and Consumer Trends

PROMOTION

Growing the market for Alaska oysters 2024



Which narratives, trusted voices, and consumer trends are most effective in building awareness and driving adoption of Alaska oysters among eaters and B2B stakeholders?

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This deck is part of a broader suite of resources that supports the [Alaska Oyster Food Roadmap](#).

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1 Executive Summary



Building **Alaska brand power** is key to growing the market for Alaska oysters. **Key Tactics:**

1. Use Effective Narratives to Promote Wider Adoption

Use flavor (merroir of the Alaska oyster varieties) and Alaska origins as core messages.

Additionally, emphasize **versatility narratives**, which have been most effective in improving perception across all segments. That would **encourage traditional eaters to broaden their raw-food preferences** and move beyond fine dining. Versatility also improves flavor perception, helping overcome taste and texture barriers among Alaska visitors. **For B2B**, highlight **social sustainability**, including the unique stories of Alaska producers, alongside Alaska oysters' **health benefits** and **environmentally sustainable production**, to drive wider adoption.²

2. Partner with Eaters' Trusted Voices to Increase Awareness

Engage with well-known and local seafood chefs to spark interest and increase consumption occasions.

Over 90% of Established Oyster Eaters are unaware about Alaska oyster varieties and 75% of all eaters eat oysters occasionally.¹ B2B stakeholders suggest **building emotional connections** with trusted Alaska chefs to inspire them to **authentically champion the product as brand ambassadors**. Additionally, leveraging a blend of micro and macro influencers—such as Alison Roman—can amplify the marketing impact.

3. Tap into Consumer Trends Shaping Eaters' Behavior

Leverage key consumer trends shaping consumer behavior to align with market demands.

It includes **functional self-care, convenience, clean living, seeking connections, glocal flavors, nostalgia, and eco-consciousness**.

¹FCL Needfinding Survey (N=368), 2024 | FCL Task 4 B2B Stakeholder Interviews (N=14), 2024

2 Today's Oyster Brands Emphasize Quality, Origins, Sensory, and Sustainability in Messaging

Keywords and claims used by oyster brands in their communication assets:

 Health	 Sustainability	 Origins	 Sensory
<p>High in Omega-3 Full of vitamins Superfood Nutrient-dense Protein-packed nutrient powerhouses</p>	<p>Sustainably grown and harvested Honestly crafted</p>	<p>Pristine waters Uniquely Alaskan Farm grown Farm raised Carefully hand-packed Hand-crafted</p>	<p>Plump and delicious Clean and fresh tasting Briny Savory Mild flavor sweetness that spreads out in your mouth</p>
	 Special treat <p>For a perfect evening Oyster anytime Special Occasions Make a meal special</p>	 Quality <p>Premium Premium size High-quality freshest tide-to-table shellfish Fresh-harvested</p>	

3 Eaters are Most Interested in Alaska Origins and Flavor as Key Messages

Alaska origins and flavor are considered essential in any marketing message for Alaska oysters, as they align with the top attributes and key drivers for oyster consumption among eaters, as shown in our primary and secondary research.



78% of eaters eat oyster because they are tasty or like the texture.²

*"It has a very sweet, very tangy, very, beautiful depth of flavor that can be used all over the place."*¹

*"I would say the freshness is the first thing that comes to mind."*¹



Second driver in our primary ethnographic research.¹

They are highly associated with sustainability, quality, freshness, and safety – strong motivators and core needs* for oyster eaters.²

*"They're super cool from Alaska, which I think the texture is just better, tastier."*¹

*"I would highlight that these Alaskan oysters have a unique taste as compared to other oysters that may be coming from different regions, and also would say that they may be fresh caught."*¹

! *If you want to know more about core human needs, see slide 6 here: [link](#).

¹FCL DScout Mission "What's on Your Plate?" (N=60), 2024 | ²FCL Validation Survey (N=253), 2024

4 Understanding the Power of Narratives to Persuade Eaters

In the following slides, we'll present recommended themes that producers can draw inspiration from to build messaging that will drive positive narratives of Alaska oysters.

What are narratives?

Narratives are stories that we **collectively convey** that contribute to **people's interpretations** of the world. They're one way in which beliefs, emotions, values, motivations, needs, and culture influence how people process information—and ultimately, how they behave. They can show up in **imagery, stories, and product and brand messaging**.

Framing is a key technique for creating narratives

Framing is a technique where one can highlight certain aspects of a message while downplaying others, letting you **tailor a message to beliefs, values, and cultures**, to ultimately **influence perception and behavior**.

Use framing to build narratives around Alaska oysters by combining base themes with specific themes

Through a combination of secondary market research and quantitative testing with two eater segments, we have identified the following themes that speak to **eaters' core needs*** and help **overcome barriers** like texture, flavor, and safety.

Base Themes

1) Flavor and 2) Alaska Origins: These are essential themes in any marketing message for Alaska oysters as they are key drivers for its consumption.

Specific Themes

1) Versatility, 2) Sustainability, 3) Quality. These are themes that can be mixed and matched with the base themes depending on the eaters' context.

Example: Base Themes (Flavor + Alaska Origins) + Specific Theme (Versatility)

Alaska oysters are plump with a delicate flavor that reflects the pristine Pacific waters in which they are grown. Enjoy them raw and beyond—think Po'Boys, on the grill, or with other seafood.

! *If you want to know more about core human needs, see slide 6 here: [link](#)

5 Key Narratives Increasing Adoption among Alaska Visitors

Base Themes + Specific Themes = Narrative

These are suggested narrative messages that speak to each theme.

Alaska oysters are plump with a delicate flavor that reflects the pristine Pacific waters in which they are grown.

Enjoy them raw and beyond—think Po'Boys, on the grill, or with other seafood.

[Core need: Control]

They are sustainably cultivated.

[Core need: Control]

They are fresh-harvested for premium quality. **[Core need: Control]**

Alaska origins

"Reflects the pristine Pacific waters in which they are grown"

[Core need: Control*]

Flavor & Merroir

"Plump with a delicate flavor" **[Core need: Control]**

Versatility

Promotes the **highest intention to consume**. Increases significantly the positive perception that Alaskan oysters can be consumed in many other ways beyond raw. It also **led to the highest ratings for flavor, sustainability, quality, and ease of cooking** in our narrative test.

Sustainability (environmental and social)

Enhances the healthy perception of oysters.

Quality

Enhances the safety perception and drives the highest intention to learn more about Alaska oysters.

i *If you want to know more about core human needs, see slide 6 here: [link](#)
FCL Validation Survey (N=253), 2024 | FCL Task 4 B2B Stakeholder Interviews (N=14), 2024.

6 Key Narratives Increasing Adoption among Established Oyster Eaters

Base Themes



Specific Themes

= Narrative

These are suggested narrative messages that speak to each theme.

Alaska oysters are plump with a delicate flavor that reflects the pristine Pacific waters in which they are grown.

Alaska origins

"Reflects the pristine Pacific waters in which they are grown"

[Core need: Control]

Flavor & Merroir

"Plump with a delicate flavor"

[Core need: Control]

Quality

Increases premium perception. Promotes the **highest purchase intent. Best performance in foodservice. These eaters are** seeking uniqueness, sense of place, merroir.

They are fresh-harvested for premium quality. [Core need: Control]

Versatility

Increases significantly the perception that Alaskan oysters can be consumed in many other ways beyond raw. **Key for persuading these traditional eaters to move beyond their raw-food mindset.** It also enhances the **safety** perception, and makes it seem "easier to cook."

Enjoy them raw and beyond—think Po'Boys, on the grill, or with other seafood.

[Core need: Control]



*If you want to know more about core human needs, see slide 6 here: [link](#)

FCL Validation Survey (N=253) 2024 | Datassential Launches & Ratings, 2024 | FCL Task 4 B2B Stakeholder Interviews (N=14), 2024.

7 Quality & Versatility as Key Messages for Foodservice Audiences: Insights from Datassential

WHAT:

We conducted a **narrative test** in partnership with Datassential to identify which narratives about Alaska oysters resonate most with general consumers in foodservice. While our identified segments prefer CPG as the primary channel, **this test could provide valuable insights for when Alaska oysters expand into wider foodservice settings.**

RESULTS:

We hypothesize that **the quality narrative performed the best because**, similar to our validation survey findings, the description of **oysters as “fresh-harvested and premium” increases the perception of safety** which satisfies people's **core needs of safety and control**. Versatility narratives also performed well, indicating a preference for formats beyond raw oysters.

Overall, the dish we tested, Alaska Oysters Rockefeller,* generated high interest and draw.

**Note: Alaska Oysters Rockefeller was used as the base concept because it is a popular dish among Established Oyster Eaters and it could have wider appeal for general audience in Datassential than raw formats.*

Theme	Narratives	TOTAL SCORE* <i>(relative to 100)</i>
Versatility	(an opportunity to enjoy Alaska oysters beyond raw with this all-time-favorite)	48
Quality	(are fresh-harvested and premium)	47
Nutrition	(This appetizer is packed with protein and omega-3s that support your overall well-being.)	41
Safe-to-eat	(They are safely grown, harvested, and handled from tide to table.)	36
Sustainability	(They are sustainably grown while supporting local communities.)	37

***Total score:** a single number that assesses overall performance across all key metrics (unbranded purchase intent, consumption frequency, uniqueness, and appeal).
N=1652 - General consumers (approx. 330 participants/theme)

8 Key Narratives Driving Adoption in Seafood Restaurants in Alaska and the Lower 48

Flavor and Alaska Origins remain essential messages for chefs to incorporate Alaska oysters on their menus, as they align with consumer preferences. In foodservice channels, adoption can be further strengthened by leveraging social sustainability through the unique stories of producers, sustainable harvesting practices, and the high quality of Alaska oysters.

Flavor & Merroir

Chefs want to experience the unique taste of place through different Alaska merroirs.

"Right now Alaska is treated a little bit as a monolithic singular location. Oysters from Alaska. And I think one of the things we're seeing and we'll see more of is that Alaska will begin to differentiate the unique flavor characteristics of different parts of Alaska." - Science, Education & Policy Director at a large oyster brand

Alaska Origins

The pristine, natural, and unspoiled image of Alaska strengthens perceptions of quality, safety, and trustworthiness.

"The cold water, the pristine water, the unpolluted water. Oysters are filterers, having a pristine oyster is much more appealing."
-Owner of an Alaska luxury lodge and restaurant

Sustainability & Transparency

Social sustainability: Chefs want to connect with the unique producers behind Alaska oysters and share stories of Alaska's traditional foodways.

"Chefs values authenticity when talking about sustainable production, which requires honesty—not just sharing the good stories but acknowledging the complexities." - Science, Education & Policy Director at a large oyster brand

Environmental sustainability: Chefs highly value sustainable practices that preserve and respect the environment. It is seen as essential but not a key factor in motivating chefs to purchase Alaska oysters.

"We buy some oysters that are very expensive, but they come with a story. We know the farmers that grow them. So I think a lot of that kind of comes with connecting. Who the person is who's growing these oysters to why we are deciding to purchase them." - Executive Chef at a seafood restaurant chain

Quality

Perceptions of quality are extremely high, and much work is being invested in to ensure the sensory experience of Alaska oysters matches the perceptions and taste expectations

"I think quality for sure. I mean if the quality is not there, we're not going to pay for it." - Owner of an Alaska luxury lodge and restaurant

9 Key Narratives Driving Adoption in Premium CPG Companies, and Large Supermarket Distributors in the Lower 48

Flavor and Alaska origins remain key messages in the CPG space to persuade decision-makers to adopt Alaska oysters, similar to consumer and foodservice audiences. Additionally, **health** benefits and **sustainable** sourcing further resonate with CPG stakeholders.

Flavor

The unique flavor of different Alaska oyster varieties provides an opportunity for differentiation in CPG products.

“Our buyers are highly skilled and knowledgeable about seafood. Their interest in a product largely depends on its taste and quality. If they’re genuinely excited about the flavor of the oysters, they’re more likely to support and promote them.” - Principal Quality Standards Advisor at a large supermarket distributor

Alaska Origins and U.S. Grown

The established reputation of Alaska’s quality and safety provides a compelling story for CPG brands.

“If I’m sourcing help from Alaska, I would expect it to have, you know, better food safety attributes.” - Sustainability Business Developer at a multinational condiments CPG company

Health

Emphasizing health benefits is highly relevant for CPG brand owners, as it aligns with its consumer preferences and current market trends for healthy and nutritious seafood.

“After taste, nutrition is the second driver, as this has a strong impact on consumers looking for nutritious seafood to meet their dietary protein needs.” - Founder of a Premium Tinned Seafood Company



Sustainable Sourcing and Supporting Local Farmers

Highlighting the sustainable production of Alaska oysters, and the stories of its farmers, resonates with stakeholders aiming to meet consumer demand and environmental standards.

“In the CPG landscape, sustainability is a baseline expectation, not a differentiator. Consumers now demand quality and care in the product itself beyond standard sustainable practices.” - Founder of a Premium Tinned Seafood Company

10 Building Awareness through Trusted Voices

When asked who they would trust to deliver a message about oysters, both **Alaska Visitors** and **Established Oyster Eaters** said they would listen to **chefs and health professionals**, among other trusted voices.

#1: CELEBRITY/PRO CHEFS

32% ALASKA VISITORS | 37% ESTABLISHED EATERS



@chefmelissaking
(Melissa King)
Top Chef
Tasting Wild
242K followers (IG)



@chefadriennecheatham
(Adrienne Cheatham)
Top Chef
Ocean Cookbook 2023
(Marine Stewardship Council)
94.1K followers (IG)



@chefbentleyak
(Nathan Bentley)
Altura Bistro (Anchorage)
Alaska Seafood Culinary
Alliance
1.5K followers (IG)

Eaters look to well-known **celebrity TV chefs, seafood chefs, and local chefs**. They would specifically trust someone **experienced** with oysters and who can **safely prepare** them.

"Top-tier food influencers, like Alison Roman, Molly Baz, and the Bon Appétit team, have a significant impact. However, many brands today also focus on a micro-influencer strategy, collaborating with smaller creators to reach a broader audience. By targeting both micro and macro-influencers, brands can effectively cover the full spectrum of influence."

- **Founder of a premium tinned seafood company**

"You have to bring Alaska chefs emotionally involved with the ingredient in order to become brand ambassadors." - **Science, Education, and Policy Director at a large oyster brand**

OTHER TRUSTED VOICES MENTIONED IN THE RESEARCH:

DIETITIANS/NUTRITIONISTS

14% Alaska Visitors | 16% Established eaters
e.g., Sustainable seafood advocates like **Lauren Manaker** and **Joanna McMillan**.

FOOD COMPANIES

13% Alaska Visitors | 11% Established eaters
e.g., Local grocery and club stores like **Costco**; PNW and Alaskan shellfish companies like **Alaskan Shellfish Farms** and **Taylor Shellfish Company**; food marketing groups like **Alaskan Seafood Marketing Institution (ASMI)**.

PERSONAL CONNECTION

13% Alaska Visitors | 12% Established eaters
e.g., **Close friends** and **family members** who enjoy **seafood** or are **based in Alaska**.

11 Key Eater Trends That Drive Market Demand for Alaska Oysters

Our trends analysis is organized around **the 3 core human needs***: **control, community, and purpose.**

Why? Understanding **what drives people** helps us better **predict** and **interpret changes** in **food culture** and **consumer behavior.**

CONTROL	COMMUNITY	PURPOSE
<p>1-Functional self-care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-care movement • Food as medicine • Functional foods • Holistic health <p>2-Convenience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All day snacking and better-for-you • Snacks • On-the-go • Anything, anytime, anywhere <p>3-Clean living</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethical practices • Minimally processed • Clean label • Positive claims 	<p>4-Seeking connections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human-as-premium • Sense of community • Embracing artisanal <p>5-Glocal flavors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Third culture cuisines • Indigenous origins • Global flavors with local ingredients <p>6-Nostalgia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comfort • Familiarity • Indulgence 	<p>7-Eco-consciousness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible sourcing • Biodiversity • Regenerative agriculture • Upcycling • Ethical trade • Minimally processed plant-based

! *If you want to know more about core human needs, see slide 6 here: [link](#)

12 APPROACH

How FCL Developed the Promotion Strategy TRENDS RESEARCH

SOURCES

49+ Existing Oyster U.S. Brands

18 Datasets (U.S. and State Census, Mintel, Datassential)

22 Industry Reports & Articles
(e.g. ASMI, Mintel, FMI)

Find the full bibliography: [here](#)

TREND ANALYSIS

Reviewed **macro-trends using a PESTEL framework,* including cross-industry and food-specific trends** in secondary research. Data collected was recent (2022-2024) with the largest focus on the U.S. consumers.

Analyzed **the drivers behind each trend.** For example, the rise of the functional self-care as a trend stems from the growing health crisis and a rapidly aging population.

Connected **these trends to core human needs:** Control, Community, and Purpose (based on Self-Determination Theory, a behavior change framework).

Evaluated **the implications and opportunities for Alaska producers** in relation to each trend.

***Note:** The PESTEL framework analyzes external factors influencing a business or market, focusing on Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental, and Legal trends.

12 APPROACH

How FCL Developed the Promotion Strategy NARRATIVES & TRUSTED VOICES

SOURCES

49+ Existing Oyster U.S. Brands

18 Datasets (U.S. and State Census, Mintel, Datassential)

22 Industry Reports & Articles
(e.g. ASMI, Mintel, FMI)

899 Eaters

1652 General audience

14 interviews with B2B stakeholders
(e.g., R&D chefs, including an Indigenous chef, CPG brands, large distributors, and food historians)

Find the full bibliography: [here](#)

NARRATIVES

Analyzed

how existing brands are talking about their products on their social media platforms, websites, and marketing assets.

Conducted

narrative validation tests with Established Oyster Eaters, exploratory segments, and general audiences in foodservice.

A. Narrative validation with eaters (N=899)

- We tested the five prioritized themes using an **implicit testing approach**: sustainability, versatility, global cuisine, and U.S. grown.

B. Narrative validation with general audience in Foodservice | Datassential (N=1652)

- In collaboration with Datassential, we tested five key themes using Alaska Oysters Rockefeller as our base concept, with the narratives adjusted to reflect how they could be presented on menus. Eaters then rated each narrative on a scale of 1 to 5 for unbranded purchase intent, consumption frequency, uniqueness, and appeal.

C. Narrative validation with prioritized B2B stakeholders in CPG and foodservice (N=14)

- Through semi-structured interviews with key B2B stakeholders, we further tested these themes' potential to drive adoption among prioritized B2B segments.

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899 Eaters

1644 General audience

Find the full bibliography: [here](#)

TRUSTED VOICES

Conducted primary research to identify key influencers shaping eaters' food choices.

Researched influencers aligned with AMC's philosophy, drawing from FCL's needfinding and validation survey responses.

Prioritized those making a positive impact through food, with connections to aquatic or sustainable foods. Given the prevalence of celebrity chefs in responses, we prioritized niche, approachable influencers who better align with project values. The goal was to find trusted voices who could effectively promote Alaska oysters to our target audience.

THANK YOU!

Questions? Please contact us at:
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Visit the [Southeast Conference website](#) to access the Roadmap Resources Hub