Consumers prefer evident quality.

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In Medieval craft guilds we see the first examples of quality certifications, ensuring the quality of goods, authorizing the use of collective marks on products which met the required standards. The concept developed passing through the flourishing of 16ᵗʰ century global trade, the industrial revolution, when additional forms of quality definition and verification started to be developed.

Worth to mention that in the beginning of the 20th century the definition of "processes" started to be strictly related to quality. Where process is "*a group of activities that takes an input, adds value to it, and provides an output*". This started in the 1920 focusing control not only on the finished product but on the actual processes to obtain it.

B2B driving quality food. Especially in the last four decades certifications were developed main in the B2B sector to verify producers, in addition to compulsory local regulations, both in food processing and non-food goods manufacturing, touching processes and products characteristics. In food industry certain certifications were supported by retailers to raise the level of producer's "compliance" to good practices. Most of them working behind the scenes at B2B level.

Food organizations started to encounter a highly complex business environment, with quality and especially food safety at the centre. The globalization of economic and social life has raised the need for a unitary approach in the production of quality and safe products for the final consumer. Therefore, at international level, a series of standards have been developed to support organizations in the design, implementation and certification of food quality and safety management systems for the benefit of all parties. For example, the most important food safety management systems in Europe are:
- BRC (British Retail Consortium)
- IFS (International Food Standard)
- FSSC 22000 (Food Safety System Certification)
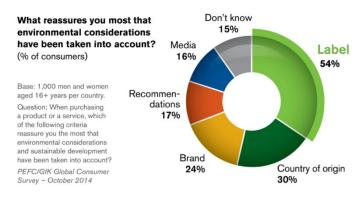- SQF (Safe Quality Food Standard).

None of the above is specifically touching edible insects and insect food products, additionally while these certifications are relevant mostly for retailers, they are unknown to end consumers. Neither communicable on product packaging.

Customers driven certifications. The raising demand for more healthy products, safe & authentic, combined with higher farming and manufacturing sustainability expectations, both for the environment and social fairness, gave stimulus to certain streams and certification purposes that became well known also with consumers. For example, the FSC initiative in forestry products (wood and related goods); the Rainforest Alliance for coffee, or RSPO for palm oil; for social compliance the Fairtrade initiative is widely known; and in the pesticides-free products the EU Bio framework, or the USDA Organic approach.

In the last 10 years, and nowadays with stronger emphasis on safety, a recognizable certification on pack, which is not a pure "code number", gives added value to the product in consumer perception, definitely increasing loyalty for the actual customers and increasing the choice rate, trust and first purchase.

Studies confirm that a certification on product packaging provides:

- **Trust.** Tangible proof of marketing statements on quality and good practices.

- **Visibility.** Higher attention and attraction on shelf, or online.

- **Purchase.** Supporting initial trial and tasting.

- **Value.** Willingness to pay a premium price.

What reassures you most that environmental considerations have been taken into account? (% of consumers)

Base: 1,000 men and women aged 16+ years per country.
Question: When purchasing a product or a service, which of the following criteria reassure you the most that environmental considerations and sustainable development have been taken into account?
PEFC/GfK Global Consumer Survey – October 2014

Don't know 15%
Media 16%
Recommen-dations 17%
Brand 24%
Country of origin 30%
Label 54%

Consumers' ability to choose among products can be undermined by asymmetric quality information. Surveys investigated the influences of brand and certification on products as well as the determinants of consumers' reactions to different quality signals. Results indicate that consumers tend to buy branded rather than non-branded products, and among branded products the ones **carrying quality certifications are preferred**. Additionally, the benefit provided by a certification label to a newly launched or not yet well-known brand is much higher, given the richer communication, the visual attraction and the extra guarantee provided.

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is actual, and very much driven by the customers demand and scrutiny of producers. Social and environmental issues are regarded by consumers as important as product quality, becoming an integral part of this, with growing expectations that business makes a positive impact beyond economics. The Authenticity Gap study made by the consultancy firm Fleishman Hillard Fishburn's (2019) for consumer attitudes towards CSR, showed that 59% of consumers said they expect companies to make a stand on climate and environmental issues.

> **59% of consumers expect also food companies to act on climate change and environmental issues**

Larger than product benefits. All stakeholders value the effects of a visible certification, meaningful to end consumers. When provided by a third party, is an additional proof of concept, good practice in processes, consistency and organization solidity. These aspects are not only valued by a retailer deciding whether to list a new food product or not, but also by investors or investment funds considering to invest in new innovative ventures.

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About ENTOTRUST

ENTOTRUST is the voluntary insect-food certification, an independent and science-based organization established in 2018, which allows producers to assess their food safety and sustainability. ENTOTRUST mission is to recognize quality insect farmers and products. Nudging the people decision when buying new alternative food and working with the stakeholder's network to improve the scientific knowledge and best practices. The ENTOTRUST logo is a registered trademark, which can only be used by certified producers and farmers. For more information, please visit http://www.entotrust.org

The ENTOTRUST certification program envisions a world where edible insects will supply healthy food, making high value proteins accessible to a wider population with important environmental and social benefits.