Alumni

Frozen Assets

Rachel Drori '09BUS is changing the way we think about frozen food with startup Daily Harvest.

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|
Spring/Summer 2018



Rachel Drori with one of her frozen smoothies. Photo courtesy of Daily Harvest

Rachel Drori ’09BUS has never had much time for home cooking. As a busy marketing professional turned CEO, she’s always appreciated the convenience of frozen food. But finding healthy options in a freezer aisle stocked with microwavable meals isn’t always easy. So in 2015, Drori decided to remedy that problem by

founding Daily Harvest, a superfood company.

The New York City–based startup offers frozen smoothies, meal bowls, snacks, and desserts made from plant-based ingredients and curated by chefs and nutritionists who look to food trends for recipe inspiration. All items are sold through a subscription delivery service at seven to eight dollars each, and most can be prepared quickly with a blender, stove, or microwave, with the sole addition of water, milk, or another liquid base.

With Daily Harvest, Drori wants to rebrand frozen food as more than just fast and easy. She says that items in grocery-store freezer aisles have changed little since the 1950s — the era of Betty Crocker and TV dinners — and that the category is ripe for innovation: “People have traditionally associated frozen food with things like a bag of chicken nuggets. Nobody has thought much about what it could be.”

Drori hopes that people will begin to associate frozen food with healthy eating, and says that the frozen ingredients in her harvest bowls and chia parfaits are more nutritious than fresh produce because they’re picked at peak ripeness. “For example,” she says, “frozen blueberries are actually healthier than the fresh ones at Whole Foods, which are harvested while still green and degrade significantly in nutrient content during their long journey to an end user.”

Drori’s message is clearly resonating. Over the last three years, Daily Harvest has added over one hundred thousand subscribers and has attracted celebrity investors like Gwyneth Paltrow and Serena Williams. Last year, the company raised forty-three million dollars in Series B financing.

For promotion, Daily Harvest plays into the aesthetic of “food porn” by posting gorgeous images of their offerings on Instagram. “People eat with their eyes first,” Drori says. She adds that the company also sets itself apart from other food startups by reaching customers who, so to speak, have too much on their plates.

“It can be a romantic idea to make things with a delivery meal kit, but it’s also a lot of work,” says Drori. “Then there are subscription meals that require less prep time, but they’re full of additives and preservatives.”

“Everything we do is meant for busy people who don’t have time to cook or do research, and who want someone they trust to tell them what to eat,” Drori continues. “Convenience without compromising nutrition is where Daily Harvest really stands out.”

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