

**Bring back the great British tea**  
(23<sup>rd</sup> October 2009)

**By Max Jenvey of Oxygen Marketing Partnership, a strategic management agency that focuses on business and brand development within the bakery foodservice and convenience sectors**

Not everything about the days drawing in and the onset of winter is depressing. We all start dreaming of savoury or sweet, rich and warm comforting treats, enjoyed all the more because it's getting colder and darker. We need them! And we are not alone in this thinking, because, at Oxygen, we've noticed that there is a growing trend for mid- to late afternoon tea. For example, the stylish and fashionable West End restaurant the Wolseley is always packed at tea time. So let's bring back the great British tea tradition. After all, now that customers are economising and we're all time-crunched, it is up to bakers to drive traditional values. What's on the menu? Crumpets, scones and delicious toppings for hot buttered teacakes? And who can resist a cream-filled Victoria sponge or a tasty slice of malt cake or fruit slice, all washed down with the great British cup of tea. Speaking of tea, there has never been a better time to milk the hype of this drink: traditional English, Earl Grey, Assam, Darjeeling, Lapsang Souchong, Green, Black, antioxidants – you name it – the varieties and benefits are endless. After all, it's the nation's favourite! No doubt you've noticed the recent explosion of speciality teas, cafés and teahouses to attract our ever more discerning customers. As our colleagues at research firm him! would tell you, 60% of customers know the exact price they pay for their beverage, which is why offering a speciality tea range justifies a premium. Scientists have proved that eating carbohydrate-rich foods, such as cakes, pastries and slices, boosts your serotonin levels, which is why eating cake is so uplifting; it also gives a much-needed energy boost at a time of day when many workers normally lag. So not only will a proper tea break with a favourite cake or pastry pick consumers up in the afternoons, your productivity will also improve. Why not capitalise on seasonal cravings and offer customers a special meal deal, with a hot beverage, scone, slices and cakes? Or why not offer a conference room package to capitalise on those afternoon business meetings? Tempt your customers with mouth-watering displays, plate up your baked goods on trays, entice them with eye-catching cakes under glass, and don't forget the pre-packed slices, which can be easily merchandised at the counter for impulse purchase at the till or in your chilled cabinets. You could even promote your new range and offer under the campaign banner of 'Bringing Back the Great British Tea'.