



Voice Search Q4 2020 US Food & Beverage Industry Data

Summary for Marketing Professionals

SUMMARY

This report illustrates how each smart speaker device (Google Home with Google Assistant, Amazon Echo with Alexa and Apple HomePod with Siri) measure up when asked specific questions about the **Food & Beverage** industry. **Over 840 questions** were programmatically asked to the devices, covering multiple categories including Alcoholic Beverages, Caffeinated Beverages, Dairy, Meats, and Snack Foods. Examples include:

- “Alexa, what are types of white wine?”
- “Hey Google, how to make chocolate chip cookies?”
- “Hey Siri, what to make with chicken breast?”

How does your brand “sound” to your audience? Similar to SEO 20 years ago, today’s voice experiences pose a **threat to brand safety** as the devices are frequently delivering many incorrect answers or no answer at all – i.e. “Sorry, I don’t know that...” The short-term opportunity is to **own your brand**. Food & Beverage brands need to provide the “right” answer to the questions their customers are asking. Structuring your content to deliver answers to critical questions posed in voice search could put you ahead of the competitive curve.

The long-term play is in capturing the non-branded voice search queries that are also happening earlier in the buyer journey. Consider a hot topic like **Microbreweries**. The brand that provides the answer to those early-stage queries will gain topical authority and competitive advantage.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Alexa answers general questions and is moving away from answering with “Sorry, I don’t know that.”, replacing it with “this might answer your question”.

- Amazon Alexa provided an answer **81%** of the time, usually for frozen food queries (“*How to cook frozen pizza?*”) and top-of-the-funnel general interest questions (“*Types of cheese?*”).
- Alexa often refers to Alexa Answers contributors. For example, when asked “*Can you substitute flour for cornstarch?*”, Alexa’s answer is “*According to an Alexa Answers contributor, yes, it will take about three tablespoons of flour to replace one tablespoon of cornstarch and you will need to cook the sauce for much longer to get rid of the raw flavor of the flour.*”
- Alexa is beginning to answer queries around best brands in Food & Beverage although they are often not the intent. For example, when asked “*Best healthy snacks?*”, Alexa answers “*anything bite sized*”.

Google Assistant provides more relevant results and is better at answering questions all the way through the buyer journey.

- Google Assistant provides accurate answers for general interest questions and provides quality answers for middle-funnel questions.
- For example, when asked “*What are the best snacks?*”, Google answers “*I found a list on the website delicious.com, 21 insanely delicious snacks that should be on your radar.*”

- Google is also much better at citing their sources. For example, when asked “*Is red wine gluten free?*”, Google answers “*On the website healthline.com, they say wine is naturally gluten free, but some practices include using gluten in the fining process and aging it in oak barrels...*”

Apple Siri on the HomePod provides less relevant results than other voice devices.

- 30% of the time, Siri did not have an answer or responded, “*I can’t help with that.*”
- Of the questions answered, Siri often misinterpreted questions, resulting in incorrect answers.
- One example of this was when asked “*What’s the best can wine?*”, Siri responded with “*Yeah*”.

ANSWER PERFORMANCE

Food & Beverage sites that have structured their content to deliver accurate answers to questions in voice search are leading the pack.

- For **non-branded** questions, the following sites stood out as having better voice performance.
 - Amazon
 - All Recipes
 - Food Network
 - The Kitchn
 - The Spruce Eats
- For middle-bottom of the funnel, **branded** questions, four brands stood out as having answers, but those answers were **not always accurate answers**.
 - Coffee mate Creamer
 - PediaSure
 - Foster Farms
 - Digiorno Pizza

THE OPPORTUNITY & ACTION FOR BRANDS

Today, consumers are no longer constrained by screens and keyboards. Access to a world of information is now controlled simply by our voice. Tremendous **white space opportunities** exist today across the industry. Unlike desktop search, **there’s only one answer in voice search**, and this first mover opportunity may not exist again for quite some time.

Don’t miss the boat - WPP’s Voice Practice can help you provide relevant, accurate answers to the questions your customers are asking the voice assistants. All of this is done at Enterprise scale.

Contact us today for a consultation: contact@globalstrategies.com

