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Working in the brand's favor are its taste appeal and the better-for-you visual cues presented on packaging, noted Perry Seelert, strategic partner and co-founder of United dsn.

◆ This doesn't look and feel like a private label, ◆ Seelert said. ◆ But it's not just about the aesthetic; consumers will be amazed at how delicious, great-tasting and healthy [the products are]. ◆

A new option is also available at Raley's Supermarkets for frazzled holiday shoppers who are short on time and unable to prepare a meal for their family.

The Raley's To Go Fresh Meals line includes 23 entrees and side dishes created by Raley's corporate chef Evelyn Miliate, who uses fresh, premium ingredients.

◆ As a mom, I understand the need to have quick and easy dinner solutions that I can rely on, ◆ Miliate said in a statement. ◆ With Raley's To Go, I can feel good about feeding my family foods that I know they will love ◆ and at a great value. ◆

Varieties of single-serve portions sell for \$5 and include Grilled Chicken Breast with Mashed Potatoes & Gravy with Tender Vegetables, Cheese Bandolini Pasta in Chardonnay Tomato Cream Sauce with Tender Green Beans, and Cheese Stuffed Shells with a Rustica Tomato Sauce & Tender Mixed Vegetables. Family-sized dishes of Classic Lasagna and Grilled Chicken Penne Alfredo with Broccoli are available for \$10.

Key nutrition facts are posted on packaging. Each also comes with a thumbs up from Raley's Moms World Panel ◆ a group of Raley's shoppers that the chain taps for opinions about products, ideas and advertising.

◆ Raley's To Go meals come tested and approved by the Raley's Moms World Panel, ◆ states Raley's in promotional materials.

To encourage trial Raley's uses signage to highlight an offer to buy four single-serve meals for \$5 and get the fifth free. It's also publicizing the brand via unconventional means.

According to the Fresh & Easy Buzz blog, the chain has partnered with Sacramento radio station KYMX to give listeners the chance to win four free Raley's To Go meals each day. Prizes include one entree and two side dishes.

By casting a wide promotional net, Raley's is thinking like a national-brand marketer, an important mindset for retailers hoping to incite trial of new private brands, said the New England Consulting Group's Stibel.

◆ Everybody knows that private labels and store brands are less expensive, but the smart money will promote in ways that look more like national promotions, ◆ he said.

That's not to say that value messaging should go by the wayside.

As food prices rise faster than overall inflation, consumers will continue to rely on competitively priced private brands, Stibel added

◆ There will be a continued shift because inflation is not only higher today, it's going to get even higher tomorrow, ◆ he said.

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