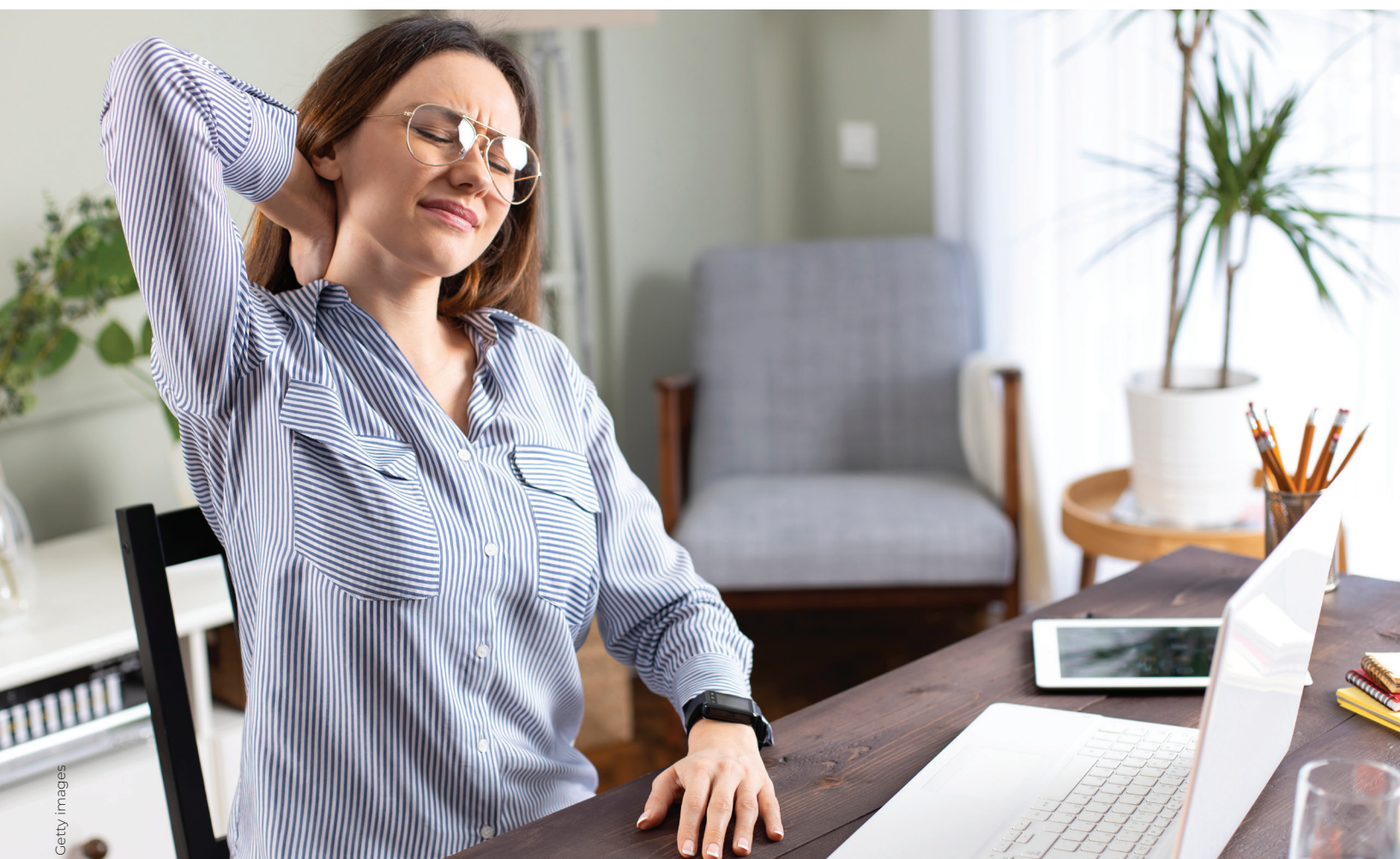


Rethinking Brain Health Supplements

A new retail-friendly product offering from Qualia aims to focus on enhancing mental energy and cognition, rather than relying on high doses of stimulants to jolt the brain into focus.



Stress, anxiety, brain fog, a lack of sleep or lack of focus, have been trending upward for quite some time. But, they truly percolated to the forefront of consumer awareness over the course of 2020. In the 2020 foreword to the American Psychological Association's (APA) annual Stress in America survey authors noted that external factors of stress that had been documented in prior years, had now become "compounding stressors" that are having "real consequences on our minds and bodies." For 2020, the APA outlined that the country is in fact facing a national mental health crisis that, "could yield serious health and social consequences for years to come."



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*“Consumers
are having
a hard time
concentrating.”*

Both New Hope Network research and that of the APA have unveiled that young people, those who fall into the Gen Z (ages 13-23) and Gen Y (ages 25-40) categories, see mood and stress as their top health challenges. Yet, across age groups, the APA reports an increase in people feeling tired, restless and having a hard time thinking properly or concentrating, or feeling down.

As research numbers continue to emphasize how stressed out and sleep-deprived the American population has become, it should come as no surprise that brain and cognitive health dietary supplements continue to hold steady growth. As all things aimed at supporting immune health have flown off shelves as of late, experts expected to see dips in other categories, including brain health and sub-categories such as nootropics. But this has not been the case according to *Nutrition Business Journal*. The category continues to see high single-digit growth and experts project it to continue to move into low double-digit growth in the years to come. As it turns out, consumers are seeking brain health solutions that can help optimize their mental and emotional wellbeing.



Overcoming category limitations

When it comes to trying to focus, and enhancing cognitive functionality, consumers are looking for products that give them an edge. Nootropics are designed to do just that.* But until recently, the category has had some limitations, both in the nature of formulations and in being retail friendly pricewise. On the formulation front, many products focused on enhancing cognition have tended to be high in caffeine. While caffeine supports alertness, energy and motivation, the boost a high dose provides can be followed by a crash—along the lines of when you drink too much coffee. Another common barrier that has limited growth in the category has been the high cost of products by the leading nootropic brands and conversely, the ability to offer a robust formula at retail that is affordable on shelf and dosage-friendly to consumers (not 6 to 10 capsules a day, for instance). Yet, demand supports innovation, and as the category gains traction with consumers, product offerings are becoming more differentiated in their formulations, and more cost-effective.



Qualia Focus

Once such innovative offering, is Neurohacker Collective's new Qualia Focus, priced at just \$29.85, with a serving size of 2 capsules daily. Designed specifically as a retail offering, Qualia Focus is a departure from other like products both in price but also in its approach. "Caffeine is by far the most widely used and popular nootropic ingredient—it's been the top-rated dietary supplement in every survey I've seen of the Nootropics Subreddit

Qualia Focus is designed with a three-prong approach of supporting and enhancing mental energy, mental stamina and sharpness.”

community,” says Gregory Kelly, ND, Director of Product Development at Neurohacker Collective. “But caffeine can come with costs such as jitteriness, irritability or a feeling of crashing later in the morning or by early-to-mid afternoon. Qualia Focus was formulated to take advantage of what caffeine does well, amplify and extend the mental energy and productivity benefits, and counter the mood costs.”*

Meaningful mental clarity

Qualia Focus is instead designed with a three-prong approach of supporting and enhancing mental energy, mental stamina and sharpness. While Kelly says, customers are buying the benefits not the ingredients, the ingredients are selected to drill down into each of these areas. The formula does include caffeine “the most well-known nootropic,” but it doesn’t overwhelm, giving users the caffeine equivalent of about an eight-ounce cup of coffee. Another standout, yet less familiar nootropic ingredient is *Celastrus paniculatus* seed extract. Referred to in India as “the intellect tree,” this ancient nootropic was used traditionally to enhance memory performance and counter mental fatigue. Likewise, *Ginkgo biloba* married with ginger root works together to counter oxidative damage that may occur in the brain while supporting the gut-brain connection and cognitive processing.



“We study formulas in real life before taking them to shelf.”

Yet, the biggest differentiating quality of Qualia Focus, says CEO, James Schmactenberger, is the meaningful dosages of each ingredient, the synergy between the ingredients and the fact that you don't need to take it for a month to see results.* “We study formulas in real life before taking them to shelf,” explains Schmactenberger. The company conducted beta studies with the final Qualia Focus formula to validate product functionality and reliability with end-users. The vast majority reported cognitive benefits after 5 days.*

Product efficacy has already led to enormous success in the direct-to-consumer (DTC) space for Qualia. “We’re taking what we’ve learned in DTC into the retail space to offer up something new, which adds value to the entire category. We do things differently than 99% of the companies in retail,” adds Schmactenberger.

In addressing what an end user might be looking for from Qualia Focus, Schmactenberger says, “Now, more than ever mental energy stores are being taxed and depleted and so many things are competing for that resource—everything we do takes mental energy. So, it’s about feeding your mental energy stores. It’s about more than focus, it’s about supporting willpower, drive and the ability to be present. Giving your body the ability to have more mental energy will show up and benefit potential users in so many ways beyond just enhanced cognition.”*

*These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease.