



## The USDA Small Changes Summit Washington, DC January 14, 2009

**Featuring Perspectives of the Institute of Food Technologists,  
American Society for Nutrition, and the International Food  
Information Council**

This meeting highlighted the accomplishments made by members of the Partnering with MyPyramid Challenge and provided a forum for representatives of these organizations, Federal agencies, and others in attendance, to explore emerging concepts in dietary guidance messaging — *small changes*. In addition to presentations, the *small changes* concept was further examined at breakout sessions with the participants—focusing on the needs and opportunities for reaching consumers where they work and play, as well as purchase and prepare food. Below are the top needs and opportunities identified in these sessions.

### The Top 10 Considerations in Reaching Consumers with Dietary Guidance and Small Changes Messaging

1. Because of the complexity in information channels these days, consumers convey that the food and nutrition advice they receive is inconsistent and that a true “authority” seems absent.
2. Competition of programs and messaging in this area of consumer communications appears to be the rule, rather than the exception.
3. In light of 1 and 2, there is a need to create a strong brand identity around science-based, government dietary guidance.
4. “Small changes” may have the potential be a coordinated communication platform from which specific and consistent assistance can be provided to consumers.
5. Messages should be positive, achievable, realistic, and consider a broad array of lifestyle factors.
6. There is the potential to segment and target messages to audiences by goal (e.g., maintaining a healthy weight, losing weight, feeling better)
7. Sometimes confusing terminology gets in the way of good nutrition education.
8. It’s important to get to the heart of consumer behavior change and help them APPLY dietary guidance.
9. There is a need to get back to the basics—teaching consumers simple food preparation and cooking skills, as well as addressing the role of the family in health and nutrition habits.
10. MyPyramid Challenge partners cite the importance for continued financial commitment and support.

