

‘SOUPA’ Challenge For Total Logistics

European logistics experts help deliver fresh soup to Germany



Yes Please Foods, GmbH, a new German company promoting healthy eating choices, has partnered with Total Logistics, the supply chain consultancy, to secure an exciting foothold in the German premium chilled food market.

Following a comprehensive assessment of the business's strategic needs, logistics specialists from Total Logistics aided the recent successful launch of a unique range of quality chilled soups in Berlin, which has a fast developing market for organic produce.

Using original recipes developed by well known German chef and food writer, Ursula Heinzlmann, Yes Please Foods manufactures its range of soups – “classics with a twist” – in the UK. The present range includes Beetroot and Orange; Green Pea, Coriander and Mint; and

Carrot, Ginger and Cardamom. A fourth variety -- Potato with Leek and hint of mustard – will be in the shops before Christmas. All are made from organic produce and contain no artificial preservatives of any kind. “The only difference between the way our soups are made and the way one would cook them at home is the chilling process,” says Yes Please co-founder Gemma Michalski, “as soon as our soups are cooked and put into their pots, they are blast chilled at very low temperature to keep them fresh for up to 21 days.”

The ambitious scope of the Yes Please venture is notable in itself as a start-up enterprise. However, Total Logistics believes that this, coupled with the company's particular aim to ensure thorough expert planning of its immediate and longer term supply and distribution requirements, provides a valuable model for many other FMCG businesses.

For quality control reasons, the Yes Please products are manufactured in the UK and sold exclusively through specialist delicatessen and quality food outlets. The small management team worked hard to conduct extensive research of opportunities in the German market before establishing a partial supply route and securing warehousing and suitable chilled transport in Berlin. The initial positive reaction to the products by German consumers has exceeded even the founder's most optimistic expectations.

However, as Total Logistics project director, Martin Brickell, explains; “The business owners were passionate about their product, but realised that they lacked adequate supply chain and logistics expertise. They rightly focused on the importance of customer service and order fulfillment in underpinning the successful development of their brand.”

Once appointed, Total Logistics made sure that Yes Please was fully prepared for the vital product launch. In addition, it helped the company to understand the key points at which scaling the operation would become critical – with everything from point of sale availability to waste management issues covered.

Martin Brickell continues; “We used our industry expertise and knowledge of the German market to work through the supply chain in detail, reviewing delivery arrangements, re-ordering and production points, stock holdings and forecasting demand. However, the company required that we also offer wide ranging practical advice about growing the business.

“In addition to formulating a launch countdown checklist, we created a business model to allow for accurate budgeting for start up, growth from one city to several in 12 months, and for the costs of servicing customers. We also modelled the effects of volume and selling price at different rates of growth. In effect, this enabled Yes Please to have robust discussions over funding and pricing issues.”

As Gemma Michalski says; “We were pretty confident that our high quality natural product would fare well among discerning German customers, and that our carefully branded proposition was on target. Working with Total Logistics confirmed the value of a thorough analysis of our supply chain needs and general business gearing. Our discussions also provided an excellent sounding board for even more new ideas.”

The Yes Please range of organic soups was launched throughout Berlin in October 2007 through the 11 branches of The Bio Company, an organic supermarket chain.

Gemma Michalski is delighted with progress to date. “Since the launch in October, demand for our soups has been amazing. Customers sampling our soups in The Bio Company stores and elsewhere are really enjoying the fresh taste of our products and coming back for more. We have been overwhelmed by the enthusiastic response of both our retailers and our consumers. We look forward to extending our range of products beyond fresh soups and to expanding our business to the rest of Germany.”