



Quality for life

Commitment to customer peace of mind

by Charlotte Frederiksen

Quality is undoubtedly the most important factor for manufacturers looking to source ingredients for the functional foods and nutraceuticals markets. For suppliers to prosper in this competitive industry, they must be able to clarify and substantiate their quality promise to ensure customer satisfaction and peace of mind. In light of this, DSM Nutritional Products models its approach around the customer, basing its commitment to quality around four priorities: quality, reliability, traceability and sustainability. Together they form the company's Quality for Life™ seal. Here, Anthony Hehir, Global Marketing Manager at DSM Nutritional Products, discusses the four pillars, and why they are vital for a successful and profitable business.

Quality is key

As health and nutritional ingredients are micro ingredients, suppliers must be aware that the impact of product quality on customers is acute. Only one kilogram of vitamin A, for example, makes its way into the production of 400,000 – 1,000,000 cereal bars or eight metric tonnes of infant formula, reaching a minimum of 9,000 infants. As such, it is imperative that products are rigorously tested. Such high standards can only be assured by companies aware of the processes at all stages of the supply chain. As the world's only fully integrated vitamin, nutrient and premix provider, DSM Nutritional Products plays a committed role in all its activities in order to safeguard product quality.

For suppliers, quality assurance should be a core part of their business model. Multilayered quality management systems should be implemented so that quality remains a priority throughout production. DSM Nutritional Products has developed a pyramidal system. Its foundations are rooted in the official regulations that allow the company to operate and the international standards that govern the company's activity. Nutritional ingredient manufacturing sites are ISO 9001:2000 certified on a worldwide basis, and all regulations pertaining to the different product categories in which the company operates. This base is strengthened by DSM Nutritional Products internal quality management, which encompasses process validation, recall processes and complaint management. Finally, it finds its pinnacle in the services the company provides and the quality and performance of the products manufactured.

Reliability guaranteed

Every ingredient manufacturer knows that customer trust is key to a successful and profitable business. Being a reliable supplier is vital in gaining and maintaining this trust and

customers rightly demand impeccable reliability of product and service as standard. Nowhere is reliability more important than in the health and nutrition industry, where the margin for error is miniscule. Internationally, suppliers must operate within national and international guidelines to ensure customer peace of mind. DSM Nutritional Products has gone further than simply adhering to external guidelines, by implementing a number of strict internal controls via QA (Quality Assurance) and SHE (Safety, Health and Environmental) Management. These precautions serve to complement measures already put in place by external bodies and ensure that reliability is ensured on every possible level.



In the nutrition industry, the health benefits of ingredients are also of importance. The viability of any health claims must be scientifically substantiated to create credible products trusted by consumers. In the European market, DSM Nutritional Products is uniquely positioned to offer solutions in line with the European Food Safety Authority's (EFSA) stringent guidelines, having received positive opinions for the health benefits of a number of its ingredients.

When it comes to reliability, there is high demand for the expertise of a global business paired with the reliability of a locally operating company. Sales and support teams as well as production facilities on all five continents maximises use of local expertise and knowledge of cultural practice to successfully manage a global business, with the logistics of a local one.

Traceability

Delivering a high quality and effective end product is an important requirement, but if the service that surrounds the product is not reliable or professional, then suppliers are not fulfilling their duty to the customer. Industry wide, traceability is becoming recognised as an extremely important requirement. It is therefore the duty of suppliers to be able to track ingredients at every stage of the supply chain. DSM Nutritional Products achieves this, by using a complex IT system to effectively trace ingredients originating from sites all over the world. In the very rare case that a product has to be recalled, measures are in place to deal with the situation quickly, efficiently and professionally. Mock product recalls are carried out on a regular basis, and a recall team are on call 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, so disruption to our customers' product development and supply is minimal. Furthermore, since DSM Nutritional Products is the only fully integrated vitamin and health ingredient supplier, customers can be assured of an extremely high and far-reaching level of control, guaranteeing control at every stage of the supply chain.

Sustainability – people, profit, planet

Nowadays, customers are looking for suppliers who offer high quality health and nutrition ingredients in line with an impressive and living sustainability policy. Sustainable measures are a core part of our business, with the board taking sustainability factors as a key performance indicator. For many people, sustainability relates purely to environmental concerns, but for DSM Nutritional Products, a company consistently amongst the leaders on the Dow Jones sustainability index, it also has an important humanitarian aspect.

Royal DSM's CEO, Feike Sijbesma links the company's success with its humanitarian efforts, saying: "We cannot be successful, nor can we call ourselves successful in a society that fails." Food and nutrition industry specialists have a duty to address the pressing issue of world hunger. DSM, for example, commits time and expertise to humanitarian programmes, including a number of projects to combat micronutrient deficiency or 'hidden hunger'.

One such project is the NutriRice innovation, which uses recomposed vitamin and mineral enriched rice kernels to deliver the added micronutrients to end consumers, thus helping to reduce hidden hunger in countries where rice makes up a large proportion of the staple diet. These projects are an example of how corporate social responsibility is essential to success in today's health and nutrition industry. In 2009, the ground-breaking programme won a GAIN (Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition) award for innovation, an example of how commercial expertise can be applied to humanitarian initiatives.

GAIN is not the only organisation to have noted DSM Nutritional Products humanitarian efforts. The company was recognised by the United Nations at this year's 'World Business and Development Awards' for its commitment to the attainment of the UNs Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). At the ceremony, the nutrition specialist was commended for its innovative and targeted solutions which are specifically designed to meet the requirements of those in the developing



world suffering from hidden hunger (micronutrient deficiencies). The hard work, however, is far from over. As a company that is renowned for going above and beyond, DSM Nutritional Products is aware that its commitment to humanitarian initiatives must continue if extreme world hunger and poverty are to be eradicated by the 2015 deadline.

Environmental measures, too, are crucial for forward thinking companies keen to ensure long-term prosperity in the nutraceuticals market. One of the most important ways a business can reduce its carbon footprint is by reducing waste emissions. Between 2005 and 2009, DSM Nutritional Products lowered emissions to water by an impressive 14,000 tonnes, from 21,700 tonnes per year to 7,700 tonnes per year. With commitment to sustainability and customer satisfaction in mind, targets should simply be a guideline rather than absolute. By 2010, the target for dust reduction was 75 per cent and 90 per cent was attained. To maintain its industry leading position in sustainability, the company must exceed our targets for next year and beyond.

Environmental responsibility is about much more than simply reducing emissions. Companies with a wider responsibility to the environment must have a level of contact with environmental agencies to ensure that the most effective action is taken. The Carbon Trust recently recognised DSM Nutritional Products commitment to protecting the planet, by making it one of the first 12 'pathfinder' companies. In addition to this achievement, the Dalry processing plant in Scotland has been awarded Carbon Trust Standard certification. DSM Nutritional Products environmental activity is not just skin-deep, but part of a wider global effort devoted to environmental protection.

Summary

For many years, DSM Nutritional Products has viewed quality as much more than a safe, effective and reliable end-product. It is more than systems, human resources and investment. It is a commitment and a mindset created over decades of business in the nutrition industry. DSM Nutritional Products' commitment to the four pillars of quality, reliability, traceability and sustainability is proof that a high quality product and service for the customer is, and will always be, the foundation of our business.