



THE MARKET

Tropical Heat is a household brand in Kenya: At least three generations have used the brand's products, which include spices, seasonings and snacks. Tropical Heat offers excellent products aimed at the high-end and middle class A, B, C1 groups as pricing is commensurate with quality.

Tropical Heat potato crisps are certified by the Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS) and have a diamond mark of quality. The company is ISO 22000 certified and has put in place various quality assertion processes. All the spices are sourced from the most well known and reputed regions of the world. Each shipment is carefully examined in a well equipped in-house laboratory and certificates of analysis issued for each shipment. This guarantees that they have met the company's quality standards.

Tropical Heat is the undisputed market leader for spices and seasonings. According to a market share study conducted by a leading research company, as well as figures from leading retail outlet Nakumatt, market share is currently around 25 percent.

To stay ahead of the pack and keep up with modern retailing trends, attractive internationally inspired packaging has been introduced. The company is soon to launch point of sale merchandising tools to help with product access, information, rotation and information on recipes.

Tropical Heat sees itself as the dominant brand in East Africa for spices and snacks in the next five to ten years. It anticipates 30 percent annual growth and envisages a total market share of 35 percent across its categories. More products will soon be launched during this period, in line with the Tropical Heat vision.

ACHIEVEMENTS

In May 2007, Tropical Heat became the first spice and food company in East Africa to get an ISO 22000: 2005 certification.

This was part of the company's policy of offering safe, hygienic food to its customers, and to use the certification to realise additional overseas exports. The certification will guarantee internal compliance with food safety and hygiene issues by ensuring consistency in the company's processes and identifying critical control points that are constantly monitored.

The brand has received the KBS diamond mark of quality for some products and is working on a complete listing.

An innovative brand, Tropical Heat was the first company in Kenya to offer easy to use grinder jars for the simple dispensing of freshly ground spices directly onto food, ensuring the fresh taste of pure spices ground at the table.

HISTORY

The company traces its origins to humble beginnings in 1973 in Mrs Chandraben's small kitchen in the tiny rural town of Thika, about 40 kilometres from Nairobi. Products were originally produced to meet the requirements of the town's small population, but word of mouth saw the company grow as its reputation spread across the country. From an initial staff of two, Tropical Heat now employs 140 people.

The original brand name was "Deeps", signifying a traditional symbolic light. In 1986, the company was bought by the present owners Navin Shah, Nilesh Shah and Smita Shah, and relocated to larger premises in Nairobi. At the time, there were 25 staff members.

In 1992, the brand eventually secured the name Tropical Heat after a lengthy struggle to use the word "tropical", used by sweet manufacturer

Tropical Mint. As the two products were not competing, the name Tropical Heat was allowed to be used.

The company outgrew its premises and in 2004 acquired land and a building to create a custom-designed, modern and hygienic facility. In 1990, Tropical Heat began exporting to Uganda, with Tanzania following in 1992. A number of initiatives promoted the spices and seasonings to the predominantly indigenous population of the three East African countries. Over time, customers learned about taste, flavour and health benefits of spices and the market now expands with education levels.

In 2004, the first exports of some snack products started to the UK, where there is a large East African population with nostalgic memories for traditional Kenyan foods. In 2006, the first shipment of spices and snacks left for Australia where the brand is slowly gaining acceptance and market share.

THE PRODUCT

Tropical Heat spices and seasonings are aimed at a wide cross section of consumers who prefer fresh, natural, hygienically prepared quality spices. The product has been a standard, found in many kitchens in Kenya over the years.

The company has developed special packaging and innovative presentation of Tropical Heat products. Its new spice jars are easy to use with one hand and have a sprinkler top to avoid the consumer having to use a spoon: spices are sprinkled directly onto the dishes.

For herbs, the container top has a large opening that allows just the right quantity to be sprinkled onto food. The new grinder range supplements the shaker range and is designed to create the freshly ground taste most cooks - and consumers - prefer.



RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Tropical Heat recently introduced new spice jars that are attractive and easy to use. In September 2005 the company opened a new custom designed state-of-the-art factory with modern machinery. The factory is hygienic, spacious and designed with Kaizen principles in mind for worker comfort and efficiency in manufacturing. All offices are bright with modern amenities including air conditioning.

As the company focuses on new markets, distributors have been appointed in the UK, Rwanda, Uganda, Zambia, USA, Tanzania and Australia. Tropical Heat also recently started contract packaging for Nestlé - a world leader in food processing.

PROMOTION

The brand has made good use of the print media for brand and product awareness. Experiential marketing is also used extensively and events like road shows, sampling and sponsorship of cookery programmes are used as marketing tools. Sponsorship of various sporting and entertainment events have also helped in creating brand awareness as well as opportunities for sampling.

A focus group comprising top users of spices and herbs helps to enhance the company's product range. The Tropical Heat website is helpful in directing enquiries and acts as the company's easy-access notice board. Brochures, shelf stickers, wobblers, posters and calendars are used. Participation in trade shows are other promotional activities the brand uses. Special product promotions are held regularly at various supermarkets in Kenya and in export markets.

For the snacks range, factory visits by primary and secondary schools are encouraged to create awareness and loyalty. East Africans living in Diaspora have created a huge demand for Tropical Heat products, which has seen the company exporting products to the growing UK and US markets.

As a way of growing the brand, a new range of

affordable single-serve spices is being prepared to target the mass market. Continuous research is performed to achieve suitable packaging that improves both product use and quality.

BRAND VALUES

Tropical Heat is a bright, happy and cheerful brand that conveys the tropical image associated with spices, warmth, humour and taste. Tropical Heat quality can be trusted: products are safe, tasty, fresh, natural and pure. The range of products will always satisfy the discerning customer and the quality is supreme.

The brand is committed to ensuring a superb culinary experience. When you eat a Tropical Heat product, it will taste good and it will be safe to eat. The brand logo's colours reflect the warm colours of the earth, from which the raw materials

are sourced. The three dominant colours are red, orange and yellow - predominant colours of good tasting food.

The implementation of the ISO22000 systems ensures full control of the product from the farm to the supermarket shelf and onto the consumer's table. All critical control points where there is any threat to the product quality are monitored conscientiously to ensure full compliance with safety standards.

Tropical Heat believes in consumer trust. Suppliers are vetted thoroughly and consistently to ensure the most rigorous standards. Every employee is fully trained to follow rigorous procedures and a highly visible standard operating procedure is used to ensure consistency. The plant follows stringent sanitation and decontamination procedures for all personnel, thus reducing risk.



THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT TROPICAL HEAT

- The Tropical Heat brand is 33 years old
- Tropical Heat crisps are the only KBS certified crisps in East Africa
- Tropical Heat sources its spices from the best producer countries for each specific type of spice used in its product range
- Tropical Heat spices are available in around ten countries worldwide