



Tula Foods' Better Whey of Life yogurt expands national reach

June 30, 2009

Tula Foods, a natural food company founded by Daphne Mazarakis, launched Better Whey of Life yogurt in five flavors in September (DailyVista [article](#)), and has since expanded the national reach of Tula's products, according to the [Chicago Tribune](#).

The Evanston, Ill.-based yogurt products are now available in specialty groceries in 20 states, including Whole Foods, Sunset Foods and Treasure Island in the Chicago area.

Tula Foods' Better Whey of Life has also benefited from introducing products like Greek yogurts, which have higher protein content but have also been strained to keep the texture consistent.

The timing of this expansion coincided perfectly with yogurt sales on the up and up, and with the introduction of many probiotic yogurt brands that have claimed to aid digestion and overall internal health.

Tula Foods' Better Whey of Life is the first line of all natural whey protein-enhanced yogurts that have two or three times the protein content of most yogurts.

Joel Warady of Joel Warady Group, the marketing firm that Tula Foods hired to promote [Better Whey of Life](#), spoke further with DailyVista about the company's strategy moving forward.

He said that with Tula Foods products now available in the Whole Foods locations, as well as a few independent retailers, the company has utilized a two-pronged approach. The company works to educate people on why whey protein is the best kind of protein to ingest, as well as educating them on why yogurt is the best way to introduce whey protein into their systems as opposed to adding protein powder to various food products.

"We've been doing that from a marketing standpoint... we've focused very much online, working with getting products into the hands of key influencers and bloggers, and I think we're up to more than 50 blog mentions at the current time," Warady said. "From a readership standpoint, that exceeds over 240,000 readers."

Tula Foods has primarily focused on marketing Better Whey products directly to the fitness community as well as the nutrition and dietician community. Tula Foods hopes that these types of consumers will choose Better Whey when getting more protein into their systems.

"We're working on a limited marketing budget, so we've utilized a lot of guerilla marketing tactics like blogging and social networking, and Daphne is an active Twitterer; talking about the brands," Warady said. "We're also doing quite a bit of event marketing. For instance, coming up in a couple of weeks in the Chicago area, they're doing the

Chicago Night Ride where people ride their bikes throughout the night and finish up at 5 am. We're going to be handing out coupons at the Night Ride."

He added that Better Whey's whole marketing mix is a combination of event marketing, online marketing and experiential marketing, where the company has done a lot of in-store sampling to garner public interest in Tula Foods' offerings.

"We focus very much on the Better Whey of Life brand as opposed to the corporate Tula Foods brand," Warady said. "Tula Foods is pretty much unknown other than to the retail buyers, but to consumers it's the Better Whey of Life. One thing we're changing is the packaging, and the product will be called protein yogurt. It helps differentiate the product from yogurts that are probiotic or 'good for you' yogurts – even though we have those attributes – we're the only one that's 100 percent focused on protein."

Warady hopes that by conducting talks with consumers about introducing more protein into their meals, Tula Foods will convey that it's not a diet, but rather a lifestyle change and a way to live.

"When we're doing event marketing, the logo is on tents and T-shirts and everything we can do, and our early results are showing that when we get people to purchase the products on-shelf, the repeat buys are fairly significant," he said. "Off-shelf, we're exceeding our sales expectations based on what we had projected."

Evanston-based Joel Warady Group has worked with Better Whey of Life since its inception, and one of the things that Warady has felt to be successful is its working relationship with the Dairy Management Inc. He said that this partnership has helped the company to spread the word about the virtues and attributes of whey protein.

"We've been able to do that through the programs I mentioned, but we are looking at ways to connect with people through health clubs, and right now we have an outreach program with celebrity trainers, so we're trying to get the yogurt into the hands of celebrity trainers and celebrities," Warady said. "It's very much word-of-mouth, but we're big believers in this type of product, so if you can help execute word-of-mouth strategies, it'll help build the brand."

Joel Warady Group manages Tula Foods' Facebook and MySpace pages, as well as its blog, outreach programs and packaging design work.

"In our organization, we have different groups that handle each of these areas, but we're very much a boutique firm and we only deal with four or five clients at a time and we manage the complete program," he said.

He did say that Tula Foods are in talks with a couple of entities in an effort to establish a successful strategic partnership. He said that the great thing about Better Whey as a yogurt is that it can be incorporated with other foodstuffs and grocery store products.

"One thing we're looking at is the food service area and the quick service restaurants, because there are some real opportunities there," Warady said. "Again, we feel that it will help increase brand awareness and at the same time, offer these other entities, the QSR's, etc. a way to provide a 'better for you' product for their consumers."

