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IN DEPTH:
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FOODSERVICE
OPERATIONS

ICONIC BRANDS AND BOLD INNOVATION

BY MARI BRAND

Brian Huff

CEO / Nissin Foods USA

All over the world, Cup Noodles® and Top Ramen®—two top brands for Nissin Foods—are known and loved. So, as Nissin Foods® USA continues to grow, the questions that President & CEO Brian Huff and his leadership team need to answer are unlike those of other lesser-known brands: How do you improve the best ramen business in the world? And where do they go from here?



1972
Year Founded

1,300
Employees

Gardena,
California
HQ

NASDAQ: NFPDF
Stock



WHEN HUFF WAS CONSIDERING taking the role of President & CEO at Nissin Foods USA, several key components drew him to the position: First, the appeal of working in the ever-growing and evolving instant noodle business. Next, taking advantage of the market position where the iconic Cup Noodles and Top Ramen are brands everyone knows. Finally, leading the company's culture of innovation and entrepreneurship. It was those values that helped Huff realize "this is the place for me."

As the ramen noodle market continues to grow from an already impressive \$3 billion in the US and almost \$57.9 billion globally, according to Huff, so do the opportunities for Nissin Foods to truly commit to the innovation and entrepreneurship that are central to the company's mission—and though he's relatively new to his role at the helm, Huff has already thoroughly dedicated himself to that mindset.

RE-EMPHASIZING ICONIC BRANDS With Cup Noodles and Top Ramen, Nissin Foods USA has a well-established presence as the iconic instant noodles business not only in the U.S. but globally. Huff recognizes not only the value, but also the responsibility that comes with leading such a popular brand.

"I look at our ability to capitalize on [the growing ramen noodle market]—

"I love the notion of being meticulous because it talks about quality and an unrelenting zest to have the best."

BRIAN HUFF
CEO / NISSIN FOODS USA

and certainly a lot of that is going to be these strong, iconic brands that we have developed here in the U.S. over 50+ years."

Continuing to highlight the brands that Nissin Foods is most known for is a top priority for Huff and his team, whether that means going back to their roots or leveraging that brand strength to improve upon and innovate those products.

“What you will see in the next three to five years is a continued significant investment in innovation.”

BRIAN HUFF
CEO / NISSIN FOODS USA

“This year, for the first time in nearly 20 years, we went back to Times Square in New York City and had a significant billboard that showcased our Cup Noodles - something we did back in 1996 to 2006 for steam-ing Cup Noodles,” Huff explained, ac-knowledging the value in remember-ing where you came from as a way to grow as a business.

“So we’re certainly getting back on our front foot as we invest in our be-loved brands that we’ve had for more than 50 years to foster their continued growth and evolution.”

But as important as honoring a historic, decades-long legacy is, Huff recognizes that a brand cannot main-tain its foothold in its industry without advancements.

“We also continue to work on our base business and products, which we have been in for years. Just this year, we’ve renovated our Cup Noodles product line to convert it from poly-styrene to paper from a sustainability perspective,” noting that Nissin Foods USA is the first major brand in the US to make that move toward a more planet-friendly product.

All these efforts come down to a commitment to honoring Nissin Foods’ place in “a leadership position of branded instant noodle companies” as well as the recognizability of their brands on a consumer level.



“We are delighted with our 20+ year partnership with Nissin, delivering their secondary and advanced robotic end-of-line packaging solutions. This collaborative relationship has provided sophisticated turnkey solutions fully automating their packaging lines.”

PAUL FERRANDINO / SVP SALES, NVENIA, A DURAVANT COMPANY

STRENGTH IN LOCAL AND GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS

Regardless of its notable brand status, Nissin Foods USA would not be where it is today without its long-standing relationships with strategic partners. They include equipment manufacturers and suppliers of staple ingredients, both on a local and global

scale, as well as the suppliers upward of 1,000 unique ingredients necessary for manufacturing processes.

Huff emphasized the importance of maintaining those relationships, as they have enabled Nissin Foods to adapt to challenges, fuel logistical advancements, and foster creativity.



PACKAGING & PARTNERSHIP

Next Level Packaging Solutions



nVenia delivers more than just packaging equipment. We are dedicated to excellence in integration services, automation solutions, and long-term partnerships, exemplified by our over 20-year relationship with Nissin. We provide turnkey solutions that add value and ROI, helping you expand production and profits while elevating your business to the next level.

NVENIA
A DURAVANT COMPANY

www.nvenia.com

“[We have] decades worth of experience and talent in making instant ramen, significantly improving the structure of how we do that over time,” he said.

Andrew Klucznik, the company’s vice president of supply chain management, echoes that sentiment, adding that stable, long-term partners are key to their success. “As opposed to us having to go find new partners to develop business, it’s always easier to stick with good partners,” he shared. “We will be looking to strengthen alliances in the future, specifically, with the partners that support our strategic endeavors and operational objectives.”

Nissin Foods’ business model, along with its manufacturing and supply chain footprint, has taken inspiration and utilized talent from “around the globe,” not only those based within the U.S. and Japan.

Keeping up with cutting-edge equipment and manufacturing processes, im-

“Our partnership with Nissin is in place to drive enhanced capabilities, and to transform some of Nissin’s key internal business processes, including S&OP, Logistics, Customer Service, and Operations. Our organization is working side-by-side with Nissin to deliver operational efficiencies through process re-engineering, automation, and the introduction and implementation of best practices.”

RICK DAVIS / CEO / DEMAND CHAIN AI, INC.

““**Bold,**” to us, is continuing that spirit of entrepreneurship, continuing that spirit of innovation, and investing in our brands and business.”

BRIAN HUFF / CEO / NISSIN FOODS USA

proving nutrition and taste profiles, and adapting to changing regulations—both around the world and across America—are all examples of specific, vital areas

of Nissin Foods USA’s advancement and successes that Huff attributes in part to the company’s strong relationships with strategic partners.

These relationships were particularly vital during the COVID-19 pandemic and the global supply chain disruptions it triggered. “Throughout the pandemic [Nissin Foods USA] was servicing our customers at a significantly higher level than our competition and, in a lot of places, actually replacing some of those across retailers that couldn’t supply,” Huff recalled.



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“We’ve rebranded
our values to be bold.”

BRIAN HUFF
CEO / NISSIN FOODS USA

“And I think a big piece of that was the strong relationships that we had globally with our suppliers, to allow us to get access to more products faster as the business and the dynamics of that business really changed.”

Nissin Foods’ supplier network strategy is a longer-term endeavor, Klucznik said, and it involves looking at not just how the supply network is positioned across the U.S., but also the technologies being used to manage it.

“The intent is really to position ourselves in the best possible way to service our customers and deliver efficiency for growth,” Klucznik shared. “Part of that customer focus strategy is building strategic partnerships and figuring out the optimal distribution network.”

Local and domestic partnerships are equally important, and part of Nissin Foods USA’s three- to five-year plan includes opening a new manufacturing site in Greenville County, South Carolina, joining its facilities in California and Pennsylvania, to serve the growing demand for its brands. Expanding the company’s footprint to the southeast market will create further opportunities to utilize the latest, global technologies and manufacturing processes, significantly improving efficiencies compared to older facilities.

THE SPIRIT OF INNOVATION

Being “meticulously bold,” as Nissin Foods’ founder Momofuku Ando would put it, is a key aspect of the company’s culture and values. Today, under Huff’s leadership, that culture of innovation



MAKING PRODUCTS EVEN SAFER

- It’s our priority to ensure the quality and integrity of our products. All our facilities are SQF (Safe Quality Food) Certified.

**MAKING PRODUCTS
“BETTER FOR YOU”**

- We improved the health profile of all our products by removing the added MSG* without compromising on taste.

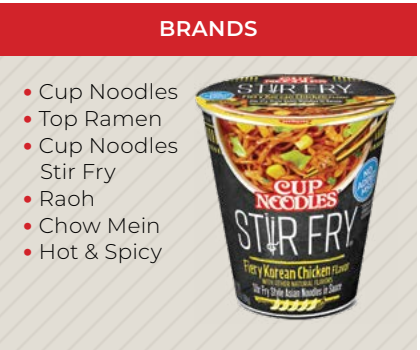


includes branching out from its traditional instant noodle products, as well as growing the original Cup Noodles and Top Ramen brands.

Considering consumer wants and dynamics are central to Nissin Foods USA’s product expansion and innovation. As consumers “continue to look at authentic and more global foods and tastes,” Nissin Foods USA steps in to meet and exceed those emerging needs by prioritizing innovation and research and development.

“We are developing multiple products outside of our current category of ramen,” Huff explained. “The global company is in the snacks business, they’re in the beverage business, and they’re in the refrigerated and the frozen business with multiple product types.”

Launching multiple new products yearly, including seasonal and limited time offerings, is another critical area in which Nissin Foods USA is continuing to evolve and listen to consumer trends. From limited ramen flavors of s’mores, everything bagel and pumpkin spice to breakfast products, Huff highlighted the specific ways the company keeps longtime customers intrigued and draws new consumers to their brands.



“Putting customers
first will essentially
drive our innovation
and our growth engine.”

ANDREW KLUCZNIK
VICE PRESIDENT, SUPPLY
CHAIN MANAGEMENT
NISSIN FOODS USA

“These types of innovations get people talking about ramen and get people thinking about the category a little bit differently, driving the consumer to the aisle to look for them,” Huff shared. “We try to do a mix of standard and value-added innovation, to do more of these LTOs to drive some excitement in the category and bring people to the category.”

Internally, Nissin Foods is also working to innovate and strengthen

its business processes. “We are intensely improving our integrated business planning process, making sure it’s the best one we can possibly build for our business,” he shared.

BOLD VALUES, BOLD LEADERSHIP

Ultimately, being bold defines Nissin Foods USA’s brand. It’s the culture of innovation and entrepreneurship that originally drew Huff to the company, and it’s what drives everything from its new product development to maintaining the strong partnerships that have been crucial to their business for decades.

“We look at bold as a fun acronym to describe our values as a company,” Huff shared. “Being entrepreneurial for the ‘B.’ ‘O’ is for owning the business. ‘L’ is leadership, and ‘D’ is driving diversity.”

That’s everything from “who we are, what we are, and certainly how we operate and challenge the status quo,” Huff said. “That’s how we continue to be a great business partner for our suppliers, a great neighbor for the communities that we represent, and also a steward of the globe, leading in terms of sustainability and renewable energy.” ✍

IN THE SPIRIT OF THE FOUNDER

MAKING PRODUCTS GREENER

- As the creator of the instant ramen category, we’ve made a global commitment to reduce carbon emissions by 30% by 2030. Our premium products use a paper-foam container that reduces CO2 emissions by 25% compared to our classic cup packaging.

MAKING OUR SITES CLEANER

- To offset the energy usage of our manufacturing plants, we purchase green

Renewable Energy Credits. In addition, the U.S. corporate office uses power generated by on-site solar panels.

MAKING BETTER NEIGHBORHOODS

- To support underserved communities, we launched the Nissin “Good Neighbor” scholarship for local high school students. We also enjoy partnerships with local food banks and employee-led initiatives such as holiday food-toy drives and fundraisers.

*Contains small amounts of naturally occurring glutamates.

**MAKING PRODUCTS
MORE SUSTAINABLE**

- Nissin purchases 100% mass balance, certified sustainable palm oil for all the products we make. We’re proud to be the first instant ramen company in the U.S. to make this important investment in sustainability.



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