

A protein drink that tastes good

Charles Walkley, who's marketed CSDs, bottled water and juices, recently launched the sports protein drink NuAquos

Interviewed by Andrew Kaplan

Charles Walkley knows beverages. Over his 25 years in the business, he has been involved in some of the industry's biggest categories. His career began at Pepsi and Gatorade, followed by senior leadership positions at the water company Vermont Pure, and then the juice company Tampico Beverage. In 2009, he was made CEO of New Whey Nutrition, a leading liquid protein sports nutrition company, with a mission to bring protein-based beverages to mainstream America. We recently caught up with Walkley to discuss his plans for his new brand: NuAquos.

Why do you think the time was right to launch NuAquos?

Over the course of the past 5 to 7 years there has been a growing acceptance of protein as part of a healthy diet. We have seen protein go from "something athletes use" to an ingredient that any person who lives an active lifestyle uses as part of a healthy diet. Consumers are more educated on the benefits of protein, in fact 72 percent of consumers consider protein as important or very important in their pur-

chase decision. With double digit growth over the past 5 years, the time to launch a mainstream protein drink could never be better... the market is searching for a great tasting protein based sports beverage that delivers real functionality... and we have this in NuAquos.

How long did the R&D take?

Protein is not easy. There are several factors to consider when developing a protein-based beverage. Every ingredient has a different reaction to protein, the Ph balance is important in stability, the process and environment in which the beverage is produced is critical, the source and type of protein in conjunction with other ingredients all need to be tested out in order to find the right combination... In short, producing a great tasting and stable protein beverage is extremely difficult. Luckily for New Whey Nutrition, makers of NuAquos, we are experts in this field and have been producing liquid proteins since 2005. Our development time from conception to implementation was approximately 3 years.

What strategies have you been using to market the brand?


The key to cutting through the clutter is communication and

trial. What we know is; once someone tries and understands the science and benefits of NuAquos, we have a dedicated customer. All of our efforts are geared toward that end. As the brand and awareness grows in our existing markets we will expand our educational efforts on a broader scale by partnering with the appropriate "high profile" spokesperson.

What are your future plans for the brand?

One thing we will not do is expand too rapidly. I have seen too many good brands fail due to cash flow and lack of capital issues caused by rapid expansion. We will continue to entrench in our current markets in the East and West and methodically expand in appropriate markets.

What advice would you give to others who are looking to launch a beverage?

Passion and persistence. You need to be passionate about your brand. Your sales/marketing team, distributors and retailers will feed off of your enthusiasm. If you are not passionate no one else will be either. Passion only gets you so far. Persistence wins the race. If you stay the course and creatively muscle through all the challenges, your brand will succeed. 

Charles
Walkley



"You need to be passionate about your brand. Your sales/marketing team, distributors and retailers will feed off of your enthusiasm."