

Campbell Canada and Nourish by Jane Londerville

The Campbell Company of Canada was incorporated over 80 years ago and first began producing soup in New Toronto in the summer of 1931. Campbell is primarily known for its soup, with the distinctive red and white label, but it also produces V8 juice, Prego spaghetti sauce and Pepperidge Farm Goldfish.

When Philip Donne became President of Campbell Canada in 2002, he discovered through a survey of employees that over half did not serve Campbell's products to their friends and families. As a result, Campbell has reformulated its products substantially over the past few years to offer healthier alternatives. These changes have included reducing the salt content (they now have a no-salt-added chicken broth) and introducing gluten-free and Halal certified products. More than 40 of their soups now carry the Heart and Stroke Foundation's Health Check™ certification.

Campbell Canada has also committed to helping reduce hunger in Canada through donations of 1 million pounds of food annually to Food Banks across Canada and contributing to the Food Banks' community kitchen programs. Employees wanted an additional way to help alleviate hunger. This led to the formulation of "Nourish".

Each can of Nourish is a complete meal containing 3 food groups from Canada's food guide. Each can contains two servings of vegetables, includes fibre and has 18 grams of protein. It is also an excellent source of zinc and iron. There is a vegetarian version and one with chicken. The grain used is "Naked Oats" developed by Canadian scientists; it is called naked because it does not have a hull. Oats with hulls cost more to transport and use more fuel in processing the removal of the hulls. Nourish is packaged in a can with a pop top lid so no can opener is required. The product does not require water to be added, can be eaten hot or cold and can be safely stored for 24 months.



Campbell's initial goal is to donate 100 000 cans of Nourish to food banks across Canada. Campbell's suppliers have helped by donating ingredients and packaging for the initial 100 000 cans. At the current time the product will not be available in supermarkets. Eventually the product could be used in other countries to reduce world hunger.

When introducing Nourish, Donne said "Companies are getting populated with the new generation [of employees] that really has global awareness. They're challenging and pushing the corporate agenda to manifest both a shareholder focus but also our responsibility as citizens to get involved in food. This is a first step. We'd like to raise the bar for industry."¹

Nourish was unveiled at a "Hunger Lunch" at the University of Guelph during the Universities Fighting World Hunger conference in February 2011. This conference was organized by U of G B. Comm. Marketing student Gavin Armstrong; over 300 people attended. It is the first time the conference has been held outside the U.S.. The annual conference brings together universities, non-governmental organizations, and service agencies to discuss how students and faculty can help alleviate world hunger.

Officials at the United Nations' World Food Program (WFP), which is based in Rome and is the world's largest distributor of food aid, are in talks with at least a dozen private-sector companies developing ready-to-use foods, including Campbell's. "The Haiti earthquake was a real catalyst for us because we realized when those millions of people were suddenly homeless and hungry that we didn't really have

¹ Leeder, J. "Campbell's Nourish brand tackles hunger through Canada's food banks", Globe and Mail, February 26, 2011

the right kinds of foods for that situation,” said Nancy Roman, the WFP’s director of communications, public policy and private partnerships. “You’re in a situation where there’s no water and you don’t have conditions to cook some of the things that we traditionally give, like rice or beans.”

The queue of companies hoping for consideration was already deep. The private-sector foray into the food-aid realm has increased in recent years; global conglomerates PepsiCo and Unilever are both developing products aimed at humanitarian use. It is not clear whether the products are being developed on a for-profit basis. Mr. Donne, Campbell’s president, said making money from Nourish would “mess up the intention” of the initiative.

“The reality is if we end up taking this to retail, all net profits from cans sold will go to funding future relief efforts,” he said.²

Initiatives like “Nourish” are considered Corporate Social Responsibility projects. Companies are spending more time and resources on these types of activities, partly because consumers are demanding it and partly because their own employees are demanding the companies be more responsible. However, because corporations have a responsibility to their shareholders to earn profits, consumers are frequently suspicious of the motives behind these actions.

In a blog about the launch of Nourish, Klein says:

As corporate responsibility continues to become a higher priority for consumers, regulators, shareholders, and employees, the lines between profits and purpose will continue to become more blurry. In this context how can we best discern the difference? Here’s a framework that may help:

- Is there a clear and measurable social objective that is aligned with the company’s business purpose?
- Does the program or product address the root cause of the issue?
- Has the company engaged its people, resources, and knowledge resources to the same degree it would with its core business activities?
- Has the company had a long-term commitment to the issue or does its social purpose appear opportunistic or contrived?
- Are the company’s leadership personally committed and involved? (e.g. as directors of relevant charitable organizations, as participants in internal and external activities, etc.)
- Are the company’s non-profit or charitable partners credible and engaged?
- And, at the most basic level, does the social initiative *feel* believable, honest, and genuine?³

Based on this list he states that he believes the motives behind the development of Campbell Nourish are genuine although he feels there are unanswered questions still.

Information for this case was taken from the author’s participation in the Universities Fighting World Hunger Conference 2011 and:

www.campbellsoup.ca

www.heartandstroke.on.ca

Klein, P. “Campbell’s Nourish: Authentic Social Purpose or Smart Marketing”, Kitchener Record, February 26, 2011.

Leeder, J. “Campbell’s Nourish brand tackles hunger through Canada’s food banks”, Globe and Mail, February 26, 2011

² Leeder, J. “Campbell’s Nourish brand tackles hunger through Canada’s food banks”, Globe and Mail, February 26, 2011

³ Klein

Thana Dharmarajah Making chicken soup for the hungriest souls , The Kitchener Record