

# BRINGING FOODS WITH HEALTH BENEFITS TO THE WORLD

EXPORT CASE STUDY | NOVEMBER 2019

As the number of people with diabetes and food allergies increases worldwide, SalDoce Fine Foods has found a ready market for its gluten-free, vegan and plant-based protein products, which provide healthy and great-tasting alternatives.

SalDoce Fine Foods co-director Cristina Talacko moved to Australia from Brazil in 1997. While she loved her new home, she missed the foods and ingredients of her native country. In 1999, she decided to quit her legal career and start manufacturing a Brazilian delicacy called pao de queijo. Made with tapioca and cheese, the gluten-free bread – launched as Frevos – was a huge success among coeliacs, children and caterers.

Fast-forward to the present day, and SalDoce Fine Foods has become a leading manufacturer of allergen-sensitive and gluten-free foods. Since 2000, the company has introduced products that suit the diet of customers with gluten, dairy and nut intolerance, diabetes, and those wishing to control their weight or have a healthier diet without compromising taste.

The family-owned business (Cristina's husband Martin is a co-director) supplies more than 30 products under the YesYouCan brand – including gluten-free baking and pancake mixes, vegan-free baking mixes, vegan burgers, vegan protein shake mixes and Frevos – to supermarkets and retailers in Australia and overseas.

## Exports a key pillar in business strategy

SalDoce Fine Foods realised early on that exports would be a key driver of business growth.

'Compared to the domestic market, our products receive quicker acceptance from overseas retailers



SalDoce winning the NSW Small Business Award 2018

**'Austrade's support was one of the key factors in our rapid expansion overseas. Austrade introduced us to new networks and industry counterparts, and provided advice on export regulations.'**

Martin Talacko, Managing Director, SalDoce Fine Foods

and higher potential demand from their customers,' says Martin Talacko, Managing Director at SalDoce Fine Foods. 'For this reason, exporting is a key focus of our business strategy.

'We entered the export market after participating in local and international shows. In 2008, we met a Singaporean retailer who became our first export customer. We then started expanding to all the Asian markets, focusing on upscale supermarkets where a healthy diet was important to customers.'

Martin cites Austrade's support as one of the key factors in SalDoce Fine Foods' rapid expansion overseas. 'Austrade introduced us to new networks and industry counterparts, and provided advice on export regulations,' he says.



Australian Government

Australian Trade and Investment Commission

‘Austrade also organised for our products to be showcased in promotions across gourmet retail stores.’

SalDoce Fine Foods currently exports its gluten-free products to more than 20 countries, including Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, the UK and the United Arab Emirates and other Middle Eastern countries.

In 2019, SalDoce Fine Foods won the ‘Excellence in Small Business’ award and was a finalist in the ‘Excellence in Export’ category at the NSW Business Chamber Awards. The company was an Australian Exports Awards finalist in 2016 and 2018.

## Consider distribution channels

India is a key market for SalDoce Fine Foods.

‘India has strong appeal for us as the market matches many of the product areas in which we want to grow – vegan and allergen sensitivities, reduced sugar and improved nutrition for pre-diabetics,’ says Martin. ‘India has had high growth in these segments. We were also attracted by the growing middle class and increase in upscale supermarkets and health shops.’

Exporting products to India hasn’t always been easy for the company, with Cristina Talacko, Director at SalDoce Fine Foods, admitting the journey has been full of learning curves.

‘One of the biggest challenges we’ve faced during the export process is the amount of paperwork required in India and implementing changes to our packaging,’ she says.

‘One needs to understand the ins and outs and have the right paperwork in place, then the process is fairly easy.’

In addition, Cristina says choosing the right distribution channels to launch your products is critical in India.

‘On Austrade’s and our distributor’s advice, we launched our products through gourmet food retailers and slowly branched into large e-commerce platforms,’ says Cristina.

## Listen to your customers

Cristina says consumer interest in vegan and gluten-free products in India has accelerated over the past few years. This has driven SalDoce Fine Foods to develop a comprehensive range of vegetarian and vegan gluten-free products for Indian consumers.

‘Our newest range in India is our dairy- and egg-free baking products, including a vegan egg replacer that is flying off the shelves,’ says Cristina.

‘Meeting with potential customers also allows us to see them interact with our products and the qualities they require. This allows us to be more focused and export the lines that will succeed.’

## EMDG enables promotion

SalDoce Fine Foods received an Export Market Development Grant (EMDG), which assisted the company to undertake local consumer shows, develop promotional literature for online and physical retailers, and support its Indian distributor Chip Valley.

As consumer behaviour shifts to a more active and health-conscious lifestyle, SalDoce Fine Foods continues to bring to global markets healthier, vegan-friendly and delicious alternatives.

## About Austrade

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- › win productive foreign direct investment
- › promote international education
- › strengthen Australia’s tourism industry
- › seek consular and passport services.

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