



Innovation keeps sales from melting for Frosty Boy

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Gold Coast-based Frosty Boy stared down the threat of COVID-19, successfully launching a new product and forging ahead with plans to export to Africa.

Oh, and it also discovered a way to extend the meltdown life of its iconic soft-serve ice-creams so they hold their shape for up to 20 minutes.

This product innovation helped preserve sales by expanding the network for home delivery of soft serve and thick shakes during the COVID-19 pandemic.

'The one thing we accepted very early on was that business is not going to be the same after COVID,' says Dirk Pretorius, Managing Director of Frosty Boy.

'So we immediately started talking about bounce forward and not bounce back.'

Timely innovation preserves sales

Frosty Boy is constantly working on new ideas, new products and new ways of delivery that can better the range of products that it comes up with.

One of the company's challenges was extending the short post-sale life of its soft-serve ice creams.

'You probably have five minutes before an ice cream starts running over your hand if you are not licking it,' says Pretorius. 'The challenge we set ourselves was to double that time as a minimum.'

Frosty Boy undertook extensive testing on the formulation, shelf-life, cooling methods, packaging and delivery was done to achieve the "extended meltdown" result.

A customer can now order a home-delivered soft serve and it will arrive in shape up to 20 minutes after leaving a retail outlet.

Lockdowns have spiked demand for home delivery so the fruition of its latest innovation couldn't have come at a better time.

Ensuring the process was robust and transferable across their global network was also crucial.

'We have thousands of customers using the product every day around the world. They have different makes of soft serve machines, different ages,' explains Pretorius.

'So every formulation we develop we test thoroughly to make sure it's robust enough to work in any machine.'

In the post-COVID-19 age, Pretorius believes 'innovation has never been more important.

'You think about innovation in the past, before COVID happened, it was sort of a process that you followed. You understood the consumer and you created products for what the demands were.

'Now the whole game has changed. It's not only flavour profiles. It is how you can get the product to the consumer – what equipment is needed, the SOPs you need. It's a much wider and broader innovation piece than it was before COVID.'

Pandemic no barrier to new product launch

Not many companies would be brave enough to launch a new product during a global pandemic, but that's exactly what Frosty Boy did.

'A few years ago we looked at the market and saw an opportunity in the nutritional supplement space,' says Pretorius.

'We bought on a dietician to help us navigate through some of the more technical issues and to help us with product development.

'We started to work on compilations and creating product and when COVID came we accelerated that process and got the product to market.

Wellboost – a range of immune-boosting nutritional supplements – is Frosty Boy's first foray into the lucrative health and wellbeing segment currently dominated by two overseas suppliers.

It is also the company's first step away from dessert and beverage manufacturing.

'We understand how to make things taste good so if we can give the customer a nutritional supplement that tastes fantastic compared to what they are used to in the market currently, that's the premise we are going out on,' says Pretorius.

Frosty Boy eyes move into Africa

Despite the challenges of international trade during the COVID-19 pandemic, Frosty Boy is forging ahead with plans to expand its reach into Ghana, Egypt, Nigeria and Kenya.

The company is working with Austrade to develop market share for its traditional soft serve and beverage range.

'The Austrade teams have done an incredible job under very difficult circumstances,' says Pretorius. 'Doing the market research and getting the sort of detailed information they've come back with has been amazing. It has really helped us accelerate our thinking around those markets.

'The opportunities they have identified and the understanding they have given us of who the competitors are in that space - as well as what challenges we can expect - has really helped us formulate an approach to that market really quickly.'

Frosty Boy marketing manager Suzie Wing says the expansion into Africa was happening at an amazing pace, thanks to Austrade.

'Something that would have probably normally taken us 12 to 18 months has been pushed into three months.

'It's something we couldn't have done even if there wasn't a COVID situation ... It has also [helped us] understand the relationship between government, industry bodies and the customer.'

Going further, faster

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