



Recipe for Success

For almost 120 years, Euroma has been travelling the world searching for the best herbs and spices. Today, they are one of the top three players in the European food ingredient market, leading the way for sustainability and innovation. CEO Bert Bakker shares the ingredients for success.

BERT BAKKER
CEO @ Koninklijke Euroma

Euroma's journey to turning over €230M a year is one steeped in tradition. Based out of Zwolle, NL, since 1899, the brand has been based on a rich legacy of Dutch exploration, bringing herbs and spices to Europe from all over the world in order to add flavour to people's lives. Back then, the herbs and spices were used for a variety of pharmaceutical uses, but some of the surplus spices were sold in cans with the slogan 'pure spices, finely ground'. Over time, Euroma transformed into a food and food ingredient player based on natural ingredients, and today the company produces herbs, spices, ingredients, seasonings, marinades, meal mixes, dry soups, and a range of sauces for wholesalers, retailers, caterers, food manufac-

turers and consumers, mainly in Europe but also globally.

After achieving a top ranking in the European natural food ingredient market following the acquisition of Intertaste in 2018, Euroma introduced Bert Bakker as their new CEO for the next chapter in the company's history. Bakker's entrepreneurial spirit and desire for challenge led him to take the helm of the ambitious company. "I love a good challenge. If you want a CEO to babysit, hire someone else. What I love is to accomplish things," Bakker says. Previously the CEO of Aliancys, a global leading supplier of composite resins, Bakker knows a thing or two about accomplishing things. Under his leadership, the company grew on an international scale to an annual turnover of around €450 M. →



A wealth of experience

It was not just the 25 years of commercial experience in commodities that made Bakker a perfect fit for Euroma. At Aliancys, he oversaw the company's genesis from the divestment by Royal DSM to CVC Capital Partners. Similarly, at Euroma, Bakker was first challenged with shaping the takeover of Intertaste by Euroma, integrating the companies, implementing a new vision, and fully grasping the benefits of the new state-of-the-art production facility in Zwolle (NL), whilst growing the factories in Nijkerk (NL) and Schijndel (NL). "My job is to put a dot on the horizon, an appealing vision of where we want to go exactly. This way it becomes clear to every colleague 'How can I personally contribute to this journey?'"

Bakker now leads a team of over 600 employees, but for him, leading from the front has been a methodical process. "What every leader needs to do is listen to a lot of people, then make a good analysis and really understand which points are good and which points need development." It is from this analysis that Euroma has been able to differentiate and exploit trends in their market. "We are continuously developing in terms of trends and innovations in food. We also pay close attention to the behaviour of consumers, translating them into relevant insights."



We pay attention to the behaviour of consumers.

Culture shift

Bakker highlights the three important trends in food today: "transparency, well-being, and convenience." Around these three, Euroma is formulating its plans for growth. "People want natural ingredients, with less sugar and salt, sourced in a sustainable way, trends that are enabling many new products," he says. "I love creating new business opportunities. →"

About SÜDPACK

SÜDPACK is a leading producer of high-tech films and packaging materials for food, non-food and medical applications, offering maximum product protection as well as optimized material efficiency and functionality.

Its production sites in Germany, France, Poland, Switzerland, the Netherlands and the United States are equipped with latest state-of-the-art technology and manufacture according to the most demanding standards, also including clean-room conditions. With its world-wide sales and service network, the company ensures a high proximity to its customers as well as a sophisticated technical application support in more than 70 countries.

SÜDPACK is highly committed to a sustainable development and assumes its responsibility as employer, towards the society and the environment as well as its customers by offering the most efficient and sustainable packaging solutions.



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It is a creative process to build on concepts and to develop pragmatic solutions for each trend.”

Among the recent trends has been a broader shift in culture in the post-pandemic era. “We sell to both retail and restaurants, but we have seen restaurants taking a dive and retail increasing,” he notes. “While our business has been balanced, our product portfolio has had to change.” Through this transition, Bakker has shown his operational excellence by reacting quickly and altering Euroma’s asset balance, anticipating shortages by foreseeing trends throughout the supply chain. “With our strong network of global partnerships, Euroma can often anticipate shortages. We have several alternative raw material suppliers so that we can always safeguard the continuity of our customers’ business.” Such a requirement for supplier diversity leads Bakker to regard 30 suppliers as ‘key’.



My job is to put a dot on the horizon.

One of these collaborations is with Südpack. Bakker describes it as “an excellent example of a long-lasting relationship at a higher level between two companies.” He goes on to explain, “With this strategic partnership, we managed to find the best opportunities together for our common customers.” Südpack, he says, “used the right tools and efforts for innovation and sustainable packaging according to our customers’ wishes regarding the retail business. Besides that, Südpack is aware of the key elements for daily business like competitive pricing, flexible logistic solutions, guaranteed supply of materials, and structured production planning.” It is a partnership that benefits both companies. “The communication is open and straight, always finding the most optimal way to meet our customers’ requirements and wishes.”

Developing so many stable relationships with suppliers has been a vital component of Euroma’s success. Bakker credits this to the



“Our relationship with Euroma started over 20 years ago. Both companies, Euroma, and Südpack Grootegast are situated close to each other. This is an advantage regarding logistics and sustainability. Sharing an open and transparent communication results in this appreciated, trusted and long-lasting relationship.”

BART BAVELD

Sales Director @ Südpack Grootegast

company’s focus on the long-term. “It is always about the long-term,” he asserts. “If you think short-term, you make worse decisions, so from a supplier’s point of view, we have a very honest dialogue.” Drawing from his experience in the automotive sector, Bakker points to how short-term thinking creates pressure in the supply and distribution chain, where a shortage of micro-chips has halted production for many automotive firms. “They [suppliers] are always under pressure. If the pressure comes, you will be out of fa-

vour with the suppliers if you have not built the right relationships.” He adds proudly, “Of course we have had challenges, but so far, we have not had major distribution issues.”

Investing in sustainability

Investing in supplier relationships has also enabled Euroma to lead the way for sustainability in the sector. One of the things that excites Bakker the most about Euroma has been the focus on sustainability. “To strengthen our efforts to improve sustainability in the

spice markets, we have founded the Sustainable Spice Initiative (SSI) together with industry partners,” Bakker says. The SSI aims to sustainably transform the mainstream spices sector, secure future sourcing, and stimulate economic growth in producing countries. By leading the way, Euroma became the first company to bring certified Rainforest Alliance pepper onto the market and has implemented training programs for local farmers in India and Southeast Asia, showing them how to grow spices sustainably. Not only has this benefited the local environment, but sustainable cultivation also has a positive impact on the local community. The children of the farmers are given the opportunity to study beyond primary school through a training budget.

For some time now, Euroma has been the European leader in sustainable food packaging. Even their namesake, Euroma, is the name of their trademark glass packaging from the 1960s. Today, in the area of retail packaging, increasing awareness is being shown around the amount of packaging material used. For example, sauces for the catering industry are often packed in buckets, generating a lot of waste. Euroma’s innovative solution has been to deliver the sauces as a bag-in-box or bag-in-crate. In addition to the impact of Euroma on sustainability in the food chain, Euroma also pays attention to sustainability within their own organisation. “In Zwolle, we have built a state-of-the-art automated factory covered in solar panels, and we are more or less self-sufficient for our energy,” Bakker says. “Sustainability was the key role in the construction of the facility, and we are now BREEAM plus certified.” This certification identifies the company as excellent in environmental performance.

In it for the long-term

All of these factors show that Euroma’s focus on the long-term is not just talk. Sustainability in all areas is now playing a central role in business longevity, a topic Euroma knows a lot about. “We have been in business since 1899 with spices and herbs as the cornerstone of the larger food ingredient business,” he says, adding that there are no plans of slowing down. “At the end of the day, we want to make sure that we still have the same suppliers for a broader range of great products, and a lot more business in 30 years.”