

SA brand's push into global markets shows increasing returns

Appletiser's expansion into global markets continues to show strong returns, the company says, with the successful launch of Peartiser supporting double-digit global growth for the South African-born beverage brand. The brand's growth in the United Kingdom has been particularly strong over 2007, coming in at over 30%.

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Francois Rozon, Appletiser MD, staying ahead of the pack through innovation.

"The launch of Peartiser in April 2007 has been very successful and has helped stimulate category growth. The drink is already listed at prominent stores such as Harrods and Waitrose, and has enjoyed success in two major international awards. These are key components of a positive arrival. The goal is now build on this momentum in the UK with further brand extensions, and elsewhere with a more comprehensive range," says Francois Rozon, Appletiser MD.

Peartiser was launched in November 2005 in the South African market to allow consumers a wider range when selecting their beverage of choice. While the original intent was to introduce it as a seasonal flavour, strong consumer adoption required for a more permanent presence on South Africa's shelves for the drink.

The product's position as a market leader in the 'healthy alternative' beverage category was reinforced in June 2007 at the International Taste & Quality (iTQi) Superior Taste Awards. iTQi is an independent organisation based in Belgium which judges and awards superior tasting beverages. The product received a Superior Taste Award, reflecting a global sensory analysis score of more than 70%.

It also won the Best Juice Product Innovation at the World Juice awards held recently in Barcelona. The awards received entries from across the world before a final short list of four drinks was selected. The list included Innocent Drinks (UK), Aroma Bursa Fruit Juices (Turkey), Seabuckthorn Indage Ltd (India) and Peartiser, the eventual winner.

The success in the UK is particularly noteworthy, given the intense competition that characterises the global non-alcoholic beverage sector. In the UK alone 120 soft drinks were launched in 2006. To secure a share of the spoils, brands need to compete across the board against alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages – from fizzy drinks to juices and water.

"Innovation is a constant across the sector," says Rozon. "To compete successfully a beverage brand has to be clearly positioned in terms of price, packaging, the identity it adopts in the market place and most importantly the value it delivers consumers. Our success, for example, has come from its taste proposition and its ability to tap into several emerging trends especially the desire within the market for healthy beverage alternatives in social contexts. In the UK, both Peartiser and Appletiser have been star performers in this niche, which bodes well for the future."

Sales back up the awards; Appletiser, the flagship brand, had a stellar 2007 in the UK, accelerating its growth to more than 20% and now accounts for 75% of UK sales, with Peartiser delivering 20% and Grapetiser 5%.

Peartiser's success in the UK also underscores Appletiser's status as one of South Africa's major international brands. For example, apart from its ongoing success locally and its increasing achievements in the UK, the brand has been increasing global footprint with recent introductions in Ireland, Spain, Hong Kong and the USA.

"I believe our global strength is due firstly to the inherent taste and sensorial qualities of our products, and secondly to our ability to keep on innovating in terms of packaging and offering," says Rozon. "These are our focus areas moving forward and we believe they will continue to underpin strong growth."

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