

Marketing a new baby food in sweden for nestle

[Business](#), [Marketing](#)



The company that is planning to introduce a new babyfoodproduct in Sweden already has a presence and it is among a group of companies that are under Nestle Nordic where other Nestle companies that are operating in Denmark, Finland, and Norway are under and these four companies work in concert and represent Nestle's operations in Northern Europe.

This means Nestle is not new for Sweden where it is selling a number of products among which there are a few baby food products such as Bona and Piltti that have a wide range of acceptance among those that are using breast milk substitutes. The baby food business had been and still is lucrative even if it is a very sensitive area of business that has a lot of controversies around it simply because there are a big number of organizations that are against breast milk substitutes and had been highlighting the problems that are related to it.

Because of that the company had always been on the defensive in order to do business in this particular sector and it had made a concession with consumers and the concerned members of society, by putting a statement out on the very outset declaring that there is nothing better for a child than the mother's milk and every mother had been encouraged to use breast milk at least for the first four to six month, even more if possible.

The only time the company recommends the use of its mother milk substitutes early on is whenever mothers are not in a position to provide breast milk for their children, which could be because of a premature birth of a child or when the mother is either sick or deceased. Since it is not always possible to find wet nurses the breast milk substitutes come close to what the breast milk will provide the newborn children.

There are a few problems surrounding breast feeding where if somehow mothers start using the breast milk substitute early in a child's life the possibility that their own natural milk producing process could be disrupted and they will have no choice other than to depend on the breast milk substitutes that are scientifically proven to be as good as a breast milk, albeit some shortcomings where the breast milk is proven to have a natural immune building mechanism that will enable children to fight disease better.

At the same time in the absence of the scientifically processed and manufactured baby foods such as what Nestle is selling in Sweden, it is difficult to come up with a baby food recipe that could be prepared at home that will have all the required nutrition, and the only substitute that could come close to the mother's breast milk, which is cow milk is not digestible by a small child's metabolism process creating problems such as anemia in addition to forcing the child's system to absorb a large amount of calcium and fat that it is not ready to do so.

Because of all these controversies organizations such as the WorldHealthOrganization (WHO) had to intervene and come up with a code that every company that is manufacturing and selling baby food products will have to adhere to and it has the support of all government bodies. The particular code is not new to Nestle that had been applying it for all these years, but when it is time to come up with a new baby food product and marketing it effectively, there are difficult procedures to follow, one of them being the code has to be observed.

The main focus of the WHO Code is in preventing such companies that are marketing baby food products to have a direct access to mothers and to

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regulate the interaction they could have with those who are providing them essential services such as physicians, nurses, and other health care staff, because those who are against companies that are coming up with breast milk substitute products believe that mothers will have to be protected from their marketing ploy as much as possible, at least for the first six months of a child's life.

Such approach is difficult since most mothers living in societies such as Sweden will be strapped for time because most of them could be working outside of the home and nature itself is such that if the breast is not used continuously after birth it will stop producing milk. And in between the mother milk advocates believe that if mothers are not approached with various marketing tactics this problem could be averted and mothers will start to feed breast milk right after birth up to six months and more if possible.

Without disputing this assumption, it is not difficult to visualize the hurdle a marketing team that is trying to promote a new product that the company had gotten a permit to manufacture and put into the market has to overcome. Nestle had been focusing lately on what is called functional or nutraceuticals baby food that has a dual purpose of serving as a nutritional breast milk substitutes while at the same time it has medicinal advantage that the children using the product will be benefited from.

The company did not want to come up with a new name for a product and what it did was it took one of its popular products Piltti and created a different version that is converted into a functional baby food and simply named it Functional Piltti. In doing so it added three ingredients, " selenium"

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which is a substance that helps the body get rid of harmful oxidants since it is a proven antioxidant that has the capacity to turn harmful radicals that appear in the body into innocuous water and oxygen.

The second ingredient it added was “ nucleotides” whose main function is helping the growth of good bacteria in the gut so that the gut can fight bad bacteria and this ingredient is available in breast milk enabling children to build a natural immune system. And when children are using breast milk substitute formula, unless this substance is added they could be vulnerable to many kind of diseases, one of the reasons breast milk advocates had been highlighting, although it could be solved by simply introducing this substance into baby foods, which nestle did.

The third ingredient was “ beta-carotene” whose main function is to create a fortified immune system in the body since it is an antioxidant and it also helps in developing good vision early on, as well as it adds to the good development of the skin. These are ingredients that are supposed to raise the eyebrows of mothers and their pediatricians who are mostly responsible for recommending what kind of baby food formula is good for the newborn children.

From the outset the team knew that it has a winning product on its hand and this product is expected to cannibalize the regular Piltti in the long run, which is a little bit cheaper, but it is also presumed to beat many of the competing products that have not yet introduced functional baby food products in their baby food product line, even if their catching up quickly is imminent.

However, until that happens the team was aware that there would be a window of time the company could do a quick profitable business. They have everything at their disposal except that they were aware of the WHO Code, which stipulates rules that make all the areas where an effective promotion could have taken place off limit.

They are not allowed to have a direct contact with pregnant women or mothers of small children, although in today's marketing campaigns that might not be essential, yet sometimes it is possible to come up with events where a close interaction between the marketing team and those who would be firsthand users of their product would have been possible. Because not only they can educate the mothers about their products but also they can give out samples and gifts that will build good relationship, which the code prohibits nonetheless.

It is not only that they cannot advertise using the known methods where they can put their ads on billboards, distribute brochures, or give out samples. All that can be carried out is through approved institutions by the WHO Code and if any of the allowed institutions are engaged in giving out free samples that are allowed to receive free samples from the manufacturers they have to make sure that there will be enough supply for the involved mothers for as long as they need it.

This is so because this tactic had been highlighted where marketers and distributors of baby food products would usually start giving out free samples and if the mothers become dependent on it at the earlier stage of their breast feeding days and avoid breast feeding it will affect their ability to produce milk leading to their forced dependency on the substitute, which

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would mean they will be forced to buy the breast milk substitute products. Those who might not afford it could harm the normal growth of a child, which is a justifiable cause to be concerned about.

Therefore, there are very limited channels the marketing team could be promoting through and spotting those channels is very important. In addition, it is important the marketing team as well as the company should know that their new product should aim at those that are four months old and higher in normal circumstances and the only exception is when the mothers are not in a position to do breast-feeding for various reasons, there are no wet nurses, and at times access to breast milk banks might not be available since there are some of them in some communities.

This would mean their marketing interaction is severely limited to interacting with health care personnel only and it is through them their would be customers will be educated to use their product as advertising to the general public is not allowed. Marketers do not have permission to show their existence at the point of sale, put posters, or any other means of advertising to promote their products.

They cannot solicit mothers directly or indirectly or cannot give them gift nor free samples. Even if the health care system has the discretion of recommending the use of breast milk substitutes, they cannot allow their workplace for promoting any kind of such products. Nor any of the staff of such establishments have permission to accept any money from distributors and manufacturers of such products.

But at least if the authorities see it beneficial they can make arrangement where pregnant women and mothers of young children to be educated or to be informed by a sales team, but the purpose of the meeting is far from pitching a product and it will be educational, where they will always be advised there is nothing better than breast-feeding for the newborn children. The labels on the products should not display a child's picture and labels should clearly describe what the ingredients are, how to prepare it, and at what kind of temperature to store the product.

In addition, they have to testify that the substitute does not come near to breast-feeding and the message will have to be to the point, without idealizing the breast milk substitute. The overall scenario when promoting baby food formula resembles medicine where there are go between who are the health officials and the authorities, and manufacturers of medicine target physicians when it comes to promoting their product since they are the ones who would subscribe it to their patients.

Furthermore, almost no medicines are available without prescription, even if there are a few over-the-counter products. With the same token, even if the breast milk substitutes could find their way into grocery stores or even drug stores where anyone can pick them off the shelf without prescription, the consumers of such products could get their information from health workers only or from the labels that are required to follow some procedures, and marketers should not try to reach the direct consumers who are mothers of young born children or expectant mothers.

Therefore, the team only had to approach a given number of institutions, mostly health establishments, where they are allowed to distribute their

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samples, gifts, and educational material so that the health officers will be informed about the benefit of their products and pass it on to the mothers of the young children.

Due to this restriction the cost and the effort involved in marketing a baby food brand is not very high since they are not allowed to put billboards on the highways of several comminutes, or they do not have to advertise on TV, print, or are not allowed to print brochures and distribute them to the public, but they can pass such material to the health officials to help them with their educating the mothers. Hence, the undertaking would not be expensive since doing it in a continuous basis until the product becomes popular is not required as the case is when promoting other products.

Instead, what is involved here is arranging an appointment with the involved officials or at times, all it might take is visiting these establishments in person that might number less than hundred. Since such officials are not allowed to ask any payment directly or indirectly that also saves the company a lot of money and it can focus only on samples and at times gifts, to be given to the mothers through the health officials in a form of utensils and the like. Nevertheless, giving physicians bonus is a common practice in the pharmaceutical industry since it is through them all the manufactures are selling their products.

When it comes to baby food market it is not allowed, yet the sales team had started taking note to see if there will be some that will qualify in the long run for a preferential treatment and if there is a possibility of getting around the restriction to introduce a bonus even if the code prohibits it, but since it is a marketing scheme there has to be some way of compensating some of

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the health care workers who would choose to recommend the particular Nestle product for their clients when there are other competing products, because even if Functional Piltti is new in the market, it might not take more than three months for the other manufactures to come up with similar products.

Consequently, the job of the sales team is cut out for them where they have made a list of the establishments that are responsible for advising mothers and expectant women what kind of breast milk substitute to use. The job of the establishments that are medical and health care centers, hospitals and private pediatricians is to educate the mothers when to start mixing the breast milk substitute with their breast-feeding and what quantity and frequency to use, a knowledge they would acquire from the manufacturers and from their own experience as a health care officials.

There is always a department at the bigger institution that will deal with the various marketers and when the need arises it is possible to arrange a one-on-one appointment and the promoting and the education process could take any form and any length of time. But the anticipated end result is in due time the company will start selling its products, either through the drug stores of big hospitals and health centers that can arrange to receive a shipment or the mothers will have to go and buy it from outside market once it is recommended to them by the health officers. And here the other job of the sales team will kick in because they have to go around to talk with the retail establishment, big and small, in the cities they are operating, which will require an extended travel as sometimes they have to cover the outskirts of the city as well as the outlying regions.

There is a huge competition to get space in the crowded shelves of retailers that will have to be convinced that the product is worth their recommendation and meets all the legal requirements to be sold for the public, which is part of the job of the sales team to furnish proof and explanation. This is also a very crucial part of their job, although at times it could be done through the distributors. However, the smaller retailers that are not chain stores might have to be approached individually or it might be the job of the distributors to convince them to carry the new product that should attract many buyers because of what it is offering, which is not only unique but functional foods are new even for the general food market that is catering for the adult buyers.

After doing that, the particular brand depending on its popularity might start to sell itself, where distributors and retailers would want to put it in their stock and on their shelves because it is selling well, and when that point is reached the sales team could say their job is partially done, but they can still search for new locations and retailers in the same regions or in other regions. The conclusion is the baby food market is a highly regulated market and it is similar to the pharmaceutical market where manufacturers do not have a direct access to the buyers and users of their products, because of the sensitive nature of what is involved, which is the life of young children whose growth could be harmed irreversibly if they are not given what they exactly need for their normal growth from the beginning.

Even if there is no outright opposition to the existence of the breast milk substitutes, the authorities and other concerned groups would have preferred if mothers start using it between four and five months, but since

that might not be possible because of the nature of the life of the mothers themselves who could be working outside of the home, which will result in their being time strapped, and instead of preparing food for their children at home it will be easier for them to pick the substitutes from the various stores and mix the feeding process with their own breast-feeding since it is proven to be vital for the children.

Similarly, the existence of the breast milk substitutes will become handy for children whose mothers cannot breast-feed them for various reasons that were mentioned earlier, and in their case the breast milk substitute will come close to breast milk and they will grow up healthy as there are sources that are saying even if people simply wanted to believe that breast milk is better for the child and it will create some kind of bondage between mother and child, in reality the substitutes are proven scientifically to be as good as the breast milk if not better. Therefore, any company that is selling baby food, which has a global market of close to \$21 billion a year will have to go over many hurdles to put the substitute on the hands of the mothers that will use it to feed their baby properly and everyone will be benefited at the end of the day.