



Food & Beverage

SUERO ORAL Flavor Enhancer Concentrate with Electrolytes

Suero Oral® is a functional beverage containing electrolytes that replenish the body's fluids lost either through exertion or through fever or vomiting due to illness. It is based on a traditional Latin American home remedy used by generations of mothers to treat their children who are losing fluids due to illness, as its name, which translates as "oral serum," suggests.

Since 1999, Suero Oral Inc. has sold this product across the United States, targeting the Hispanic market through small bodegas and grocery stores. It is still popular for its traditional medicinal use for children, but is also used extensively by agricultural and construction workers and other laborers who work in heat-intensive conditions and become dehydrated. Today, Suero Oral products are sold in all 50 states and are also exported throughout the Caribbean and Asia.

In recent years, the company has found that the product also appeals to a newer market segment: a younger, more urban population of athletes and exercise enthusiasts who deplete body fluids and critical electrolytes fluids while playing in sports events or working out.

Going smaller

Recognizing this diverging market appeal is one factor that led Suero Oral Inc., which has sold its thirteen flavors of the product in 1 liter and

500ml bottles since its founding, to evaluate the potential impact of adding beverage concentrate packaging to its product mix.

"We have seen this category of packaging explode into the beverage market in the past three years," says Chief Operating Officer Marc Perez. "We were initially concerned that we would be cannibalizing our larger package sales by introducing this new type of packaging, but our market research indicated that the concentrate package would have a strong appeal to our new category of younger, mobile customers without significantly affecting our existing customer base."

The smaller packaging would also offer Suero Oral the opportunity to place its products in locations that would not accept the larger bottles, such as on store countertops and in convenience stores that were ideal locations to reach these younger, on-the-go customers. It would also let workers carry the restorative supplement more easily and let younger users individualize the amount they dispensed to meet their personal taste and need, which would appeal to that group.

The new package

As it was evaluating the new package concept, Suero Oral also consulted with

TricorBraun, which sources its traditional bottles and has also done its own research into the new concentrate packaging. Suero Oral's market research had involved talking with distributors and retailers. TricorBraun had conducted consumer focus groups in which it explored consumers' preferences regarding the new packaging. It then used those results – including preferences for convenient size, dispensing functionality, and leak resistance – to create unique beverage additive package designs.

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—Marc Perez, COO, Suero Oral Inc.

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“This was an important decision for us,” Perez says. “In all, it was a 16-month process of evaluating the market and the package, re-formulating products to deliver the same result in a concentrated form, etc.”

From the concentrate bottle designs that TricorBraun had created, Suero Oral chose a fluid, subtly asymmetrical two-ounce squeeze bottle with a flip-top closure for its convenient size and dispensing functionality. Each bottle is decorated with a full body shrink sleeve label carrying an image that reflects the image on the larger bottle of the product.

The new concentrate packages were shipped to distributors in early May for placement in Suero Oral’s retail outlets. In response to suggestions from its retailers, who viewed the new product packaging, it is being introduced in Hispanic retail outlets in a countertop display unit in addition to being available on shelves. While it is too early for retail sales results, Perez reports that both distributors and retailers were very positive about the new package and its prospect for success.

TricorBraun Design & Engineering Group is a business unit of TricorBraun, one of North America’s leading providers of rigid, corrugated and flexible packaging. Our team’s primary mission is to design, engineer and manage the development, production and commercialization of custom packaging solutions for personal care, cosmetics, healthcare, food and beverage, industrial household chemical and animal health products. It is supported by TricorBraun’s more than 40 offices globally, holding one of the largest inventories of rigid packaging components worldwide. For more information about TricorBraun Design & Engineering Group, contact Charmaine Laine, Marketing Communications Manager, at claine@tricorbraun.com or 630-645-1208.

