

'GOOD FOOD, GOOD LIFE'

NESTLE PUSHES FOR HEALTHIER LIFESTYLE

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SWISS food and beverage giant Nestlé is aggressively pushing for healthier lifestyles among Malaysians. Hence, its tagline "Good Food, Good Life".

The tagline captures the very essence of Nestlé and the promise it commits itself to everyday, everywhere, as the world's leading nutrition, health and wellness company.

"This is not just a tagline, but something that we truly believe in," Nestle Malaysia Bhd chief executive officer Alois Hofbauer remarked.

Over the years, Nestle Malaysia has made adjustments to all its products, including the im-

mensely popular MILO, MAGGI and NESCAFE, where the company systematically reduces the amount of sugar and sodium used in the products.

Hofbauer was quick to stress that this commitment was not just to comply with the guidelines issued by the World Health Organisation and United National Sustainable Development Goals, but also part of the company's contribution to a healthier Malaysia.

Its aim is to provide products that help individuals and families have a healthy start to life, stay healthy and help address chronic medical conditions.

"The challenge is not just in getting the customers susceptible to healthy food.

"We also need to produce healthy food that tastes good



Alois Hofbauer says the group is working on introducing up to 15 new products every year that are healthy, tasty and affordable. PIX BY HALIMATON SAADIAH SULAIMAN

and is affordable."

Hofbauer explained that on top of making healthy adjustments to its existing products, the group was also working on introducing up to 15 new products every year that were healthy, tasty and affordable.

In other words, the company will continue to drive technological innovations that will enable further reduction of public health sensitive nutrients in its products, without compromising on safety, quality and affordability.

On top of that, Nestlé Malaysia also works with various ministries, ranging from the Sports Ministry to the Education Ministry to create awareness on the healthy lifestyle.

He drew on the Nestlé Healthy Kids Programme, which is undertaken in collaboration with the Nutrition Society of Malaysia.

The initiative is aimed at school children aged between 7 and 12 as well as parents and teachers. It includes an awareness campaign on nutrition and physical activity that is carried out in an interactive manner; and a longitudinal intervention programme with monitoring to improve knowledge, attitude and practices on nutrition and physical activity.

Collectively, this initiative has reached more than 10,000 schoolchildren in about 180 schools.

The "Program Cara Hidup Sihat", meanwhile, is a secondary school component that is run in collaboration with the Education Ministry and Universiti Putra Malaysia. Aimed at enhancing the knowledge and practice of healthy and active lifestyles, the programme is targeted at lower secondary school students from 100 day-boarding schools nation-

wide, their teachers and wardens, as well as the food operators who are responsible for preparing and serving their meals on a daily basis.

Nestle Malaysia is also very much committed to ensuring that locals are involved in every step of the way, from ingredients of all of its some 500 products in the market to working in the manufacturing plants and even education and awareness.

"We've been in the country for 108 years, while the global group is now 150 years old. We have been here even longer than the country has had its independence and we truly believe that we should give back to the people here.

"We have close to 5,500 people working for us and many of our employees are second and third generations.

"That means that the children and sometimes the grandchildren of our current employees come work with us and stay there for a very long time," said Hofbauer, while sharing that he himself has been with the global group for 25 years.

When asked how Nestlé Malaysia is able to retain talent over such a long period of time, he shrugged and just said: "It's because we are a great company and people like to be part of something great."

Nestlé Malaysia is currently one of the biggest companies listed on Bursa Malaysia with a market capitalisation of over RM19 billion (US\$4.5 billion).

For the first half ended June 30, 2017, the group recorded a turnover of RM2.7 billion, reflecting a 4.1 per cent increase from the previous year's corresponding period.

Nestle Malaysia does not see

any reasons for Malaysia to not play an even bigger role in its contribution to the global group in the future.

"Malaysia is the second biggest export hub in the global group, second just after the United States of America," Hofbauer said.

"In fact, our export contribution to the Malaysian operations is over RM1 billion and that's a huge amount and with all the work that we are putting in, we do expect to play a bigger role in the future."

The group had invested around RM1.5 billion in the last six years for the development of the existing eight manufacturing plants in Malaysia: four in Selangor and two each in Negeri Sembilan and Sarawak.

Hofbauer shared that the group was not looking at increasing the number of the plants anytime soon, but was currently in the midst of upgrading them instead.

"As of right now, there are no plans to add on another factory, but have invested some RM200 million in expanding and improving the capacity output of the existing ones," he said, adding that the eight Malaysian factories were also supported by two factories in Singapore.

Malaysia's strength in Nestlé's exporting business comes on the back of the group's ongoing collaboration with the Malaysia Islamic Development Department (Jakim), which has over the years built a very strong and trusted Halal brand.

"Malaysia was very smart to become the first country to come up with the halal certification. In fact, the Jakim Halal certification is now known and trusted worldwide," said Hofbauer.



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