

The UK's First Sports Nutrition Product for Youth Athletes, PRO-TEEN™

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Media:

Briefly describe what your business does and why you started it.

Youth Sport Nutrition® has created the worlds' first recovery shake specifically designed for adolescent athletes in the form of a pre-mix powder named PRO-TEEN™.

The company founder used to work within elite football academies and noticed that the application of sports nutrition was lacking in professional clubs and that young athletes had no specific dietary supplement specifically designed to aid them through this unique and critical phase of growth. This wasn't helped by young athletes tending to dislike vegetables and healthy foods in general, not only due to the cost, but also due to the availability, preparation time and specific insights into the correct application, timings and dosages, relative to their age, sport, level of participation, gender, maturation rate, etc.

The existing mass market supplements tend to portray overly muscular physiques in their marketing and can even contain substances that may be potentially harmful to youth development, so YSN® decided to collaborate with universities, nutritionists and dieticians to reverse-manufacture a recovery drink tailored to suit the unique demands of teenagers aged 13–19 for sports participation.

Youth athletes face unique nutritional demands as they transition through periods of advanced growth. Youths participating in high-level sport as well as the elderly are statistically more likely to be prone to illness and injury. Some of this is due to overtraining, but also the correct application of nutrition is rarely catered for and this can result in a weakened immune system and greater likelihood of illness or injury

Teenage athletes go through periods of rapid natural change as part of the growth process but at the same time they are beginning to condition their body towards specific movement patterns and forging the skeletal and muscular base for their adult platform. This is frequently compromised during adolescence in high-level sport via incorrect nutrition and overtraining, both of which, as aforementioned, heighten their susceptibility to injury and affect their performance potential, as well as leading to health problems in later life and potentially even ultimately forcing them to retire at a much earlier age than necessary.

PRO-TEEN™ is the first supplement of its kind nationally, and with its use we aim to aid and educate parents, coaches, clubs and players in the correct application of nutrition to aid their individual development. We want to assist in creating more robust, responsible athletes, and helping to lay sound nutritional foundations at an earlier age, thus reducing the likelihood of injury, drop-out rates and common health issues occurring in later life otherwise caused by nutritional deficiencies.

PRO-TEEN™ is available in 1 KG stand-up pouches in dry powder form, which can be easily mixed with water, milk or a smoothie after training. It is available at youthsportnutrition.co.uk and retails at £39.99 for 20 servings, which is roughly £1.99 per scoop.

How has your business grown since you started it? How do you plan to continue that growth moving forward?

From the proof-of-concept phase, Youth Sport Nutrition (or YSN®) has grown from idea, to dry market testing and will be very soon launched in the UK market, with online purchase available from 01 March 2017. YSN® have the aim of partnering with national, local and private academy facilities as well as Olympic youth teams and professional clubs in order to sustain, replenish, nourish and aid the development, lifestyle and recovery of junior athletes after intense training sessions or game play.

Describe one specific hurdle you overcame while growing your business

Creating a marketing proposal for a very 'taboo' audience. There are a lot of ethics surrounding teenagers given the unique transitional period they are entering through in their natural growth and development.

YSN® are very commercially sensitive in all of their marketing efforts to ensure they are not promoting ideal physiques, instead favouring conditioned athletes, relative to their age, gender and sport of choice.

Our key objective is to instil confidence in parents, guardians, coaches and academies that our unique



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powder mix is wholesome, drug tested (Via LGC Informed Sport) and scientifically validated. PRO-TEEN™ is formulated using solely natural ingredients, adopting the latest technology in plant and pea proteins, a specifically adapted vitamin and mineral mix and Omegas 3 and 6, all constituents that are safe for teen consumption. Furthermore, PRO-TEEN™ tastes amazing! These were all key requisites when designing our recovery shake and it took a while to get right!

YSN® have deliberately moved away from the mass market ideal of a 'bodybuilders' physique, which might imply steroid abuse, and that only being big and strong are important, in favour of instead promoting health, responsibility and fitness, and encouraging a fair and full participation in sport.

What sets your business or business story apart from others?

YSN® is the first to enter into the subpopulation niche of adolescent athletes. No sports nutritional brand has yet researched and provided a commercial solution for sporting adolescents due to the unique developmental and social ethics that surround this demographic.

YSN® have built their business from the ground up on core values that support and reinforce the themes of correct eating patterns and health over physique, which align with our sense of responsibility to our market. YSN® is also one of the very few sports nutrition firms to run with a strong social theme, partnering with UKActive to fulfil a wider mission of getting more people more active, more often. We also seek to sponsor athletes where other mass market brands would turn a blind eye due to a perceived lack of physicality and attractiveness to prospective customers, and we look to support or part fund developing athletes.

YSN® believe in and support youths, consistently adapting our products to understand their needs as we want to help them become the best they can be, including supporting them through the tough periods and helping them be an inspiration to generations to come.

What would you want other business owners to know about starting or running a business?

On this subject, CEO and Founder Lou Antonio Matera stated 'Become or be a member of your target market, and don't speculate about what they need or will be willing to buy. Run dry market testing, talk with your audience, find out what they really want and don't pretend that because you think it is right or good, that they will too. Being able to quit things that don't work, is integral to being a winner. Don't find a fault, find a remedy'.

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