



Brett and Wayne Tibbotts

House of Fine Foods

**CHANGE OF NAME,
BUT PERSONNEL AND SERVICE REMAIN THE SAME...**

Established in 1996, Confectionery House was started by Wayne and Karin Tibbotts. The company has grown steadily in recent years to become a key player in the FMCG industry in New Zealand.

"We started out by developing a range of confectionery, biscuits and bakery products. Our range now includes specialty products like ginger, Indian sauces and cordials," says general manager Brett Tibbotts. "We have since evolved to importing and distributing a range of fine food products. For that reason, we are changing our name to House of Fine Foods – an exciting step forward for us."

The company has grown steadily through their industry experience, expertise and the skills of their staff. "As we evolved, we received inquiries from our customers who wanted us to source other products for example, biscuits and seasonal items. As that area grew we contacted other food manufacturers, which gave us the opportunity to explore different areas and thus grow the business."

When Confectionery House started in 1996, it marketed a brand called The Natural Confectionery Company, which Brett attributed as the brand that grew the business. "Natural Confectionery taught us how to market a large brand in supermarkets and it became so popular it was purchased by Cadbury. The

experience was beneficial and most valuable for the future development of the company."

House of Fine Foods has three basic philosophies when looking at sourcing products. Brett says "Firstly, the product must look stunning on the shelves so that people are drawn to it. From there, when they open the product, it has to taste good. When we get a product in, we ensure that 90% of our staff want to eat another piece of it, because if they do not enjoy eating it, then the general consumer is probably not going to either. And thirdly, we look for a product which has some added functionality to it, (be it sugar-free, fat-free, gluten-free, full of antioxidants or any other health benefits) – a definite plus in today's market.

Consumers are looking for better quality foods, and also food that has functionality, so it not only tastes good, but is also good for them. "The obesity challenge that the country is currently facing is a big task, and more and more people are looking for products that have added functionality. The challenge here is that these products tend to cost a little more so if we can bring good quality, good tasting products at a reasonable price, then its only going to be better for everyone."

The business is currently split into 'Food for Entertaining', which includes the Waterthins range and

Passage to India sauces, 'Food for Health' and 'Food for Fun', which is where most of the confectionery comes in, such as Mr. Mallow. "Mr. Mallow is a marshmallow product that is fat-free and gluten-free, and we have plans to increase our distribution of this through TVCs and advertising as it is a great, functional product." Some of our other clients represented in the 'Food for Entertaining' category, include Ballantyne's chocolates, Patons Macadamia nuts and Queen Anne Chocolates.

The acquisition of well-known Darrell Lea Licorice three years ago has strengthened House of Fine Foods' presence in the FMCG area. Darrell Lea as a brand is highly recognised by licorice lovers throughout Australasia and is set to grow their market in New Zealand with new additions to the range.

Brett reveals plans to launch a range of healthy foods with a brand called Well, Naturally. The range will include sugar-free chocolates, health drinks and protein bars. "We won't be bringing in a lot of new brands, as we want to fully establish what we currently have. We're always looking for new opportunities, but we also want to put the same effort into building our existing brands."

In terms of goals, Brett says it's really about extending and expanding their distribution. "Most of the clients we represent will be launching new flavours, new additions to their range in the new year, and they're already good strong brands in the supermarkets. We're just looking to develop and promote those brands and build on the existing foundations."

Brett attributes the success of the company to the great people working for them. "It's a family business and we try to make everyone feel a part of the family. Everyone's important, from the staff within the company, to the people out in the field, to our customers, and I think that's what makes us a great company. Our people are our success story."



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Some of the staff and brands of House of Fine Foods

