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THE DIETARY SUPPLEMENT
INDUSTRY'S LEADING MAGAZINE

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Honoring The Industry's Best-Selling Products

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Back Talk

WITH JANET POVEROMO



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Question: Why did you decide to make this career move?

Answer: I really enjoy the innovation part of this industry and much of the innovation emanates from the raw ingredient side of the business. We work on developing new compounds, clinical trials, patents and branding on a daily basis. It's a lot of fun to create things! I also enjoy working with the different channels of distribution and a wide variety of brands, manufacturers and retailers, which is part of the process in the ingredient world. It's rewarding to bring new products to customers and help them build their business. That's what we do best.

THIS MONTH:

A former natural product retail executive, in 2016, Joseph J. Weiss was appointed president of functional ingredient supplier Nutrition 21 headquartered in Purchase, NY. In this position, his top priorities are to accelerate the company's growth with product innovation, science and branding. He is set to drive the Nutrition 21 business forward as the company develops and commercializes important new ingredients for supplements, functional foods and beverages. Prior to joining Nutrition 21, Weiss was vice president of corporate brands at Vitamin Shoppe, Inc., where he was responsible for product development, sourcing, quality and scientific and regulatory affairs. In addition, he was senior vice president of merchandising at GNC. Weiss holds a B.S. in economics from Pennsylvania State University, and an MBA in marketing from the University of Pittsburgh—Joseph M. Katz Graduate School of Business. Here, he discusses how his retail experience benefits his new role at Nutrition 21.

Question: What has the transition experience been like so far?

Answer: It's been great! I've been fortunate to have the opportunity to join a very experienced and talented team. Nutrition 21 is known as a leader in the industry and has a portfolio of superb products. In just a few years, we've become a key player in the sports nutrition space with our Nitrosigine bonded arginine silicate. It's the hottest pre-workout branded ingredient now and we have 19 studies that support a number of claims, such as increased energy, improved mental acuity and increased muscle volume.

Also, we've just launched Velositol, which is an amazing protein booster. Just add 2 grams to your daily serving of protein and it will double the muscle protein synthesis versus taking the protein alone.

Question: What skills have you taken from your retail experience to this new capacity at Nutrition 21?

Answer: There is no better place to learn this business than on the retail side. I've spent 17 years of my career at GNC and Vitamin Shoppe in a variety of merchandising, product development and manufacturing roles and I've learned so much by talking to customers in stores and working with suppliers of branded and private label products. I have also been fortunate to have some great mentors who guided me on how to become a better manager

and decision maker. It really helps to have a broad perspective on this industry and understand how a product is made and how the different parts of the supply chain work together to get a product to the shelf.

Question: How will the company build awareness with natural product retailers and consumers?

Answer: One of the interesting aspects of Nutrition 21 is that we are strong on innovation, but we also know how to brand and market the compounds that we invent. We invest heavily in trademarks and marketing programs to communicate the features and benefits of our products. We do this by working with experts in the field to present our research at scientific conferences and have these findings reported in industry trade media and mainstream consumer media, as well. Additionally, we advertise in sports nutrition magazines to create awareness for our products. All of this points the consumer to look for our logo on a product before making a buying decision.

Question: What are your goals for the company?

Answer: Well I'm now just starting my second year and year one flew by really fast! We want to focus on supporting our customers with continued innovation and also develop a stronger international business for our key products.