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NestlÃ© Professional's Paul Nagelkerken unveils strategy behind new customer engagement centre role in elevating F&B businesses

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Exploring NestlÃ© Professional's commitment to transformation, sustainability, and innovation with Country Business Manager, Paul Nagelkerken, in conversation with Ankit Kankar of NUFFOODS Spectrum Asia



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In a dynamic and competitive F&B landscape, innovation and adaptability are paramount for success. NestlÃ© Professional, a leading provider of food and beverage solutions, has recently made headlines with the unveiling of its Customer Engagement Centre (CEC) in Singapore. This state-of-the-art facility aims to revolutionize the way the company engages with food service operators, offering comprehensive solutions and fostering collaboration within the industry. Join us as we explore the motivation behind the CEC and its strategic implications for the region's F&B sector.

What motivated NestlÃ© Professional to establish the Customer Engagement Centre (CEC) in Singapore, and how does it align with the company's overall strategy?

At NestlÃ© Professional we believe in â??Making More Possibleâ?? for our customers and the opening of NestlÃ© Professionalâ??s new CEC is our commitment to transform the way we engage with food-service operators by being a comprehensive solutions provider. It also marks a significant shift from selling products to actively contributing to the growth of F&B and hospitality businesses in Singapore.

Can you provide details on the offerings during CEC sessions, such as product training, menu development, and recipe ideas, and how these cater to unique business needs?

We provide product training where we educate our customers on how to utilise and apply our products to work best for them, we also help provide F&B businesses with menu development and creative recipe ideas based on their needs to help them meet their unique business needs. This usually comes in the form of either food solutions or coffee and beverage solutions.

At the food solutions front, our kitchen area in the CEC can facilitate menu innovation or diversification where we offer products such as stocks, seasonings, or even plant-based offerings and dessert solutions based on what the business needs. This includes assisting in menu development or coming up with new recipe ideas that are on trend in the industry. Businesses can also leverage our brand for creative collaborations in our â??Made Withâ?? concepts. We have come up with innovative recipes with Bob the Baker Boy, Joy Luck Teahouse, and The Hainan Story in the past.

At the coffee and beverage solutions front, we can create select coffee experiences while ensuring product quality consistency, keeping costs low, and addressing manpower bottlenecks. This can be in the form of fully automated solutions using Soluble Coffee and Bean2Cup Coffee machines that are often found in office pantries, co-working spaces, hospitals, schools, restaurants, etc or even handcrafted premium coffees with customisable tastes via the Roastelier solutions.

How does NestlÃ© Professional plan to address industry challenges like sustainability and manpower through the CEC, and what specific initiatives will be implemented?

Our Coffee and Beverage solution plays a key role in this. For example, we are addressing climate change issues by utilising regenerative agriculture to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 50% come 2030. We are also creating better social conditions and increasing farmersâ?? income by providing farmers with training, technical assistance, and high-yielding coffee plantlets to incorporate regenerative agriculture practices. Our fully automated solutions as mentioned in the previous question can address manpower bottlenecks as well.

The CECâ??s design resembles a cafÃ© with a professional kitchen and bar area. How does this layout enhance learning and collaboration within the food and beverage industry?

By simulating a cafÃ© setting, business partners who have made an appointment with us for tastings and demonstrations can easily have a clear overview of what NestlÃ© Professionals can provide to them. Our product and machine demonstrations can be conducted on both the food and coffee and beverage fronts easily, providing a fruitful and convenient consultation.

To add on, our CEC offers a comprehensive range of beverage machines, serving as a total hot and cold beverage solutions provider for various types of F&B establishments, showcasing soluble tin and spoon preparation, fully automated and semi-automated coffee machines, compact tabletop coffee roasters, and cold machines. Our kitchen area is equipped with professional-grade equipment that simulates or replicates the operational environment of our customers, ensuring a realistic and immersive experience.

What are NestlÃ© Professionalâ??s expansion plans in Singapore, and how does the CEC contribute to the companyâ??s growth in the region?

The opening of our CEC marks a significant milestone for NestlÃ© Professional as we aim to expand our reach to a wider audience in the F&B and hospitality industries. With our CEC, we can introduce our solutions to new customers while fostering stronger collaboration with our existing customers.

In today's fast-paced market, creating unique experiences is crucial. At the CEC, we leverage our customer's strengths, understand their needs and capabilities and propose concepts that fit their menus while offering enticing experiences that attract new and repeat customers. Our kitchen serves as a space for trend exchange, idea generation, testing, and learning, ensuring a constant flow of exciting concepts that delight Singaporeans and visitors alike.

NestlÃ© Professionalâ??s strength lies in mapping and understanding flavour and consumption trends worldwide and translating them into simple yet appealing menu concepts that cater to the Asian palate. With the CEC, we take a significant step forward in our ability to collaborate with the industry and drive our growth in the region as we grow with our customers.

In what ways does NestlÃ© Professional anticipate the CEC assisting local F&B businesses in improving productivity, gaining a competitive edge, and fostering sustainable innovations?

Our food and beverage concepts are always designed with consideration for staff and equipment capabilities, ensuring ease of execution. The Food & beverage concepts we develop always consider the capabilities of the staff and equipment for each unique customer. This means we try to create quality and tasty concepts that can be made in 1 or 2 simple steps.

For example, our coffee systems ensure consistent quality with fewer steps. Streamlining the coffee-making process, not only increases their operational efficiencies but allows businesses to focus on other needs. This not only enhances productivity but also allows them to maximise their potential in delivering exceptional customer experiences. Similarly, on the food solutions front, we understand the evolving sourcing and convenience requirements of businesses. To address this, we collaborate with OEMs and central kitchens to offer finished or semi-finished products developed in our CEC that maintain quality and

consistency while simplifying preparation.

Our CEC helps local F&B businesses gain a competitive edge by creating unique experiences for their consumers. We collaborate closely with them to deliver innovative, on-trend concepts. Through trend exchange, idea generation, testing, and learning, we ensure a constant flow of exciting concepts that appeal to their target audience.

Sustainability is a key focus for NestlÃ© as a whole, and the CEC dedicates space to explain our sustainability initiatives, supporting our customers on their sustainability journey. Additionally, we develop plant-based concepts using products from Harvest Gourmet, catering to the demand for healthier options. We also showcase collaborations with Grobrix for indoor hydroponic farming, promoting Singaporeâ??s vision 30/30 and encouraging local support. Furthermore, we intend to organise industry events to discuss topics such as sustainable sourcing, packaging, and food waste, fostering knowledge exchange and driving sustainable innovations in the F&B industry.