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Building Our Brand

We chose to build a master BLUE brand with a strong identity on top and different product lines underneath with distinct benefits and personalities, instead of following a brand portfolio approach like most of our major competitors. We engage pet parents with our brand story, mission and our shared love for pets. We want to build a relationship with our consumers by having them understand what we do and why we do it, rather than just sell them a product. With our transparent approach, we strive to educate them on pet nutrition and ingredients so they can make their own informed choices. Our mantra is “Love them like family. Feed them like family.” We carry this message across all our touch points with pet parents – from our advertising to the one-on-one conversations our Pet Detectives have with tens of thousands of pet parents at stores around the United States and Canada every week.

In order to reach a broad cross-section of consumers, we started out in national pet superstore chains with large stores around the country. As our brand has grown, we have continued to broaden our distribution within the specialty channels to include, among others, regional and neighborhood pet stores, farm and feed stores and online retailers. Today BLUE is sold at over 10,000 stores across the United States and Canada.

Since we started in national pet superstore chains, which have more shelf space dedicated to pet food than either the FDM channel or neighborhood pet stores, we were able to offer a broad portfolio of products at an early stage in our brand development. As our brand grew and our retail sales surpassed even well-known brands, we gained scale and now offer even more tailored product offerings. Today, we have the broadest portfolio of products of any natural pet food brand in the United States. Our goal remains to offer pet parents a no-compromise product solution for their needs. We believe this leads to higher levels of satisfaction, a higher share of their spending and increased brand loyalty.

We started with an ambitious vision to build our brand, and we followed a deliberate strategy, investing in brand communication at the level of the major brands when the Wholesome Natural market segment and the size of our business alone were too small to financially support that spending. Our results continue to reinforce our belief in our strategy and execution.

Our Marketing Engine and Strong Brand Equity

We believe we have an effective new user acquisition strategy: a powerful, authentic brand with significant, ongoing investment in proven marketing elements and a broad product portfolio with tailored specialty formulas.

We believe we have a highly engaged consumer base of passionate pet parents, who connect with our authentic story of a pet food brand that is “by pet parents for pet parents.” Our goal is for the buffalo icon and the BLUE shield featured on our products to symbolize quality and project a certain attitude that pet parents feel good associating with. We actively support pet cancer awareness and research, promote animal welfare and engage our pet parents in these important causes with special events such as the Pet Cancer Awareness Month during May of every year. We believe our consumers are strong advocates of our brand and are major contributors to our success in the marketplace.

Our master brand strategy, combined with significant cumulative investments in highly effective marketing and brand-building of over \$400 million since 2003, has resulted in what we believe to be one of the strongest brand equities in the pet food industry. We have a full-service in-house advertising and marketing agency which enables us to maintain the authenticity of our communications, whether through marketing or packaging, and allows us to build a cohesive brand. This integrated approach gives us a significant advantage in speed-to-market from product development to advertising, increases our marketing effectiveness and creates marketing efficiencies.