

innocent innocent by name, innocent by nature



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CoolBrands



Who says that you can't be successful, do some good and have fun along the way? All it takes is one great idea.

In 1998 three friends came up with just that; the idea of crushing fruit into a small bottle to sell. That summer, armed with £500 worth of fruit, Richard Reed, Adam Balon and Jon Wright set up a stall at a music festival in London, with a sign asking people if they should give up their jobs to make smoothies instead. The answer – a resounding yes – prompted them to return to work the following day, and resign.

Since these auspicious beginnings innocent has grown rapidly: from three people in a bedroom to over 100 people in five offices across Europe. Currently the number one smoothie brand in the UK, with a market share of 62% (Source: IRI Infoscanner sales 2006, w/e April 25th 2006) and a turnover of £38 million in 2005, over 6,000 retailers in the UK, Ireland, France, Holland and Belgium now stock innocent drinks.

The focus, at innocent, has always been to make drinks that taste good, and do you good – simple, given that the ingredients are 100% natural. Recipe development and product innovation are brand priorities. New recipes are continually introduced throughout the year, using new ingredients. This kind of innovation has gained accolades for the brand such as 'Best UK Soft Drink', for four years running, at the Quality Food and Drinks Awards – the Oscars of the food world.

In March 2005, in response to growing concern over children's diets, the company launched innocent smoothie for kids, made from 100% fruit and, ingeniously,

containing 'no bits'. The product has proved phenomenally popular, with sales expected to exceed £15 million in 2006, showing that innocent creates the drinks that people want – it marketed the right product at the right time.

But being natural isn't just about the drinks. At innocent there is an emphasis on making communication – whether internally or with consumers – as down-to-earth as possible. While the 'bananaphone' may sound like a gimmick, there's always a real person at the other end. This personal courtesy extends to staff, as shown by the regular 'start-the-week' staff meeting, held every Monday morning. Meanwhile, new employees are welcomed into the company with flowers and a plethora of lunch-mates, to help them settle into Fruit Towers, innocent's London headquarters.

Sustainability is big business at innocent: whether it's sourcing ethical fruit suppliers, planting forests in deprived urban areas across the UK, having carbon neutral offices or giving away excess stock to the homeless; every stage of production is monitored for its environmental impact. innocent is the first smoothie company to use biodegradable polylactic acid bottles – made from cornstarch – that can be thrown onto the compost heap. It also gives 10% of all profits annually to the innocent foundation – a charity that works with Non Government Organisations in the countries where its fruit is sourced.

innocent believe that 'doing good' can be fun. Every year it hosts Fruitstock, a free music festival in Regent's Park, as a thank you to its drinkers. Its popularity has made it a staple part of the summer social calendar – voted third best event of 2005 by Time Out – and last year over 110,000 people turned up to enjoy the music and the sunshine.



Most of innocent's market is currently in the UK, but this may soon change. Setting its sights firmly on Europe, innocent plans to become the continent's favourite little juice company over the next five to ten years. Their mums must be proud.

