



AIME Success Story: Vitto Brand Foods Ltd., Sudbury, Ontario (2013)

Company Profile:

- **Country of Ownership:** Canada
- **Year Established:** 1978
- **Exporting:** No
- **Quality Certification:** HACCP
- **Primary Industry (NAICS):** Manufacturing Food Products
- **Primary Business Activity:** Sausages and Deli Meats
- **Industries Served:** Retail, Grocery, Restaurants
- **Total Sales (\$CDN):** \$5.3 mil
- **Products and Services:** Sausages, Meatballs, Patties, Schnitzels, Meatloaves, Smoked meats, Deli meats, Sauces, Stuffing, Perogies, and more.
- **Number of Employees:** 35-45
- **Clients:** Super markets, Restaurants, Grocers, Specialty Retailers
- **Geographic Markets:** National distribution (Canadian)
- **Previous Export Experience:** Bahamas

Background:

Located in Sudbury, Ontario, Vitto Brand Foods Ltd. began in 1978 with a very simple premise: to produce the finest traditional Italian sausages, sauces and meatballs utilizing old world recipes with modern meat preparation methods.

From the early years, Vitto Brand Foods had supplied a local restaurant chain exclusively. However, unexpected demand led the small company to increase production and distribution throughout Ontario. Today they have grown to supply their own brand through major grocery chains and many specialty items for private labels.

Ralph Kuhn, Owner of Vitto Brand Foods, has developed an accelerated commitment to modernization, efficiencies, strategic acquisitions and expansion of product lines which now include sausages, meatballs, patties, schnitzels, meatloaves, smoked meats and a full line of deli meats. Vitto Brand Foods now delivers over 200 quality products through a national distribution network that includes serving the specialized needs of private label customers from coast to coast. Twenty five years of experience has taught Vitto Brand Foods that quality relationships are built on great taste.

Vitto Brand Foods is achieving success through strong values for safety and accountability. Their ability to trace their supplies and products from their suppliers to the end consumers means that they can also provide a higher level of quality control. This is especially important with concerns regarding bacteria or food related illness. Vitto Brand Foods continues to keep a high regard in the industry for having not only tracking their processes, but providing high quality and healthy products. Vitto Brand Foods is looking forward to achieving their next level of accreditation through their original values and hard work.

Vitto Brand Foods believes that they had been working ahead of the major trends as they've been producing Gluten-free products since the 90's and they were the first Canadian user of MAP packaging in the 80's; this packaging has become the industry standard across the country, and the recognizing that reducing salt and providing all-natural products are how they are developing better products all the time. Kuhn stated, "If you're making something better, than it should be your new standard!"



Specific Opportunity/risk:

The constant objective for Vitto Brand Foods' is to become a leader in food manufacturing by improving traceability, safety standards, and reducing costs by managing wastes. In moving forward, Vitto Brand Foods decided to upgrade their consistency, operation standards, quality, and quality control practices through a customized training program. This is needed as one of their next steps to achieving overall improvement of their company as well as further accreditation in their industry.

Their current operations were up to standard but would not have allowed them to attain their goals for improvement and recognition for a higher accreditation. It was in developing their training program that they had learned the Yves Landry Foundation had the AIME Initiative North available to manufacturers in Northern Ontario in order to develop the skills of their staff.

Yves Landry Foundation Introduces AIME:

AIME North Initiative, which is made available through the Yves Landry Foundation, with funding provided by the Government of Canada (FedNor). This program assisted Vitto Brand Foods in funding the implementation of the training program and the professional development of their staff. The initiative has allowed them to modernize their processes, improve efficiencies, as well as develop a new position within their company to maintain quality assurance.

Vitto Brand Foods recognizes their expertise is producing quality foods and not in the development of training programs. They had outsourced this task to a company specializing in training programming to ensure that all employees could provide the same level of output in a consistent manner: this is detrimental to enhancing their traceability and safety standards. Considering that training activities can carry a heavy cost, it was beneficial to Vitto Brand Foods that the AIME North initiative assisted in funding their investment.

The Yves Landry Foundation was introduced to Vitto Brand Foods through their outsourced training firm and had discovered the guidelines aligned with their goals for timing and growth of Northern Ontario's national economic footprint. As the AIME North initiative was specifically developed to support Northern Ontario Manufacturers, Ralph had also mentioned that "there's no reason why guys in the maple syrup business can't get involved with it or the guys in the bakery business can't get into it either."

Future Outlook:

Since developing their training program, Vitto Brand Foods now believes that they can better understand their challenges and develop effective solutions to overcome them.

Vitto Brand Foods is looking to the future and will be attaining their accreditation by the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) so they can deliver a quality of standard above the requirements for their current markets. The AIME Initiative North has aided with their training program which develops employees to work safely and efficiently and prepares Vitto Brand Foods to become a well-respected leader in the food manufacturing industry.

For more information about the Yves Landry Foundation or the AIME program contact:

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