

The Big Little Squeeze

The Gerber baby—the face that launched a brand. The tousled hair, the bright eyes, the round, pursed lips...it was a home run for the company that still, to this day, holds 75% of the market share in conventional baby food sales. But the baby food industry has definitely changed in recent years with the increase in the demand from parents for optimal nutrition for their babies, in other words “organic”. The X Generation of health-conscious parents has decided that Gerber isn’t good enough and just like them, their babies need the “organic approach” to a diet rich in nutrients and superfoods. But what came first...the demand from parents for a healthier, organic option or the mega-marketing and branding behind the plethora of companies touting organic superfoods for babies?



According to the consumer market research firm Mintel, organic baby food made up about 10 percent of the \$1.4 billion U.S. baby food and snacks market in 2011. But studies show that parents who are aiming to buy the best food for their infants may not need to spring for the expensive organics. “The variety of foods and nutrients that babies take in will have a much larger impact on their health than whether they’re fed organic or not,” says Tiffani Hays, the director of pediatric nutrition at the Johns Hopkins Children’s Center. “Vitamins, minerals and fiber have much better research and documented health benefits than does choosing organic.” Just like the advertising geniuses that came up with the adorable and iconic “Gerber” baby to sell their brand, the “organic” baby food market has come up with the “buzz” behind brand loyalty these days, convenience. The ultimate in convenience and affordability for Mom’s on the go

in these busy times...organic, nutrient dense baby food packaged in a quick, easy, screw-top squeeze pouch. Grab & go...no mess, no fuss...just pop the top and squeeze!



The “pouch” that launched a brand

One company that stands apart from the rest is Happy Family Organic Superfoods. <http://happyfamilybrands.com> It began on a whim, during a conversation between Shazi Visram, founder, CEO and Chief Mom of Happy Family, and a friend about the inability to provide her baby with a healthy homemade meal that was fast, easy and affordable. She didn't have the time to prepare a pureed, healthy, organic meal from her kitchen and there wasn't a store-bought option in the supermarkets. That's when Shazi found herself in a “aha moment”. What was just a talk between friends ten years ago has turned into a multimillion dollar, award winning company, appropriately named, Happy Family.

But success in the baby food market didn't happen overnight for Shazi Visram. This self-proclaimed health-nut was still single and attending Columbia University for a degree in Business, when she came up with a business plan and developed a recipe for a frozen, organic baby food that Mom's could prep in a blender. Launched out of her tiny Brooklyn kitchen on Mother's Day in 2006, Happybabies hit the shelves of five New York City stores. But as it turns out; the demand wasn't in the frozen food aisle and soon she

developed a cereal line called Happybellies and after that the first ever organic puff snack for babies, Happypuffs. But she was still struggling to make her brand of “optimal organic baby food” profitable. Pregnant with her first child and taking the subway home, she “had barely enough money in her bank account to swipe for a subway ticket home”. But this all changed in 2008, when browsing her local supermarket she came upon applesauce packaged in a pouch...then came her second “aha” moment!



Happy Family lovingly devotes a mother’s care to crafting premium organic meals & snacks that nourish the most important parts of our lives. From babies to grownups and community to environment, we take great joy putting a healthy smile on all that we touch.

In 2009, Happy Family brand launched the Happytots squeeze pouch and within two weeks it was in the Top Ten selling items at Target stores. That’s when Shazi knew they hit a home run in the baby food aisle. And did they ever, with revenues of \$13.3 million in 2010 and \$62 million in 2012. The business exploded with the help of the super-convenient squeeze pouch packaging...and a little luck from American Express. Happy Family and Visram were featured during a Super Bowl pre-game spot and as her Columbia University professor and advisor, Cliff Schoerer said, “that was the WOW moment, he thought to himself, this is gonna be big”.

Happy Family Organic Superfood is definitely “happy” these days! Shazi and her company have won numerous awards for leading the industry in the premium, organic baby food market and have been recognized by Forbes, Ernest & Young, Fast

Company as “Rockstar of the new Economy” and most recently won the Stevie Awards with a Gold Stevie for “Management Team of the Year”. As stated in a press release, “Shazi Visram, Founder, CEO and Chief Mom of Happy Family, a leading premium organic food brand, has been lauded by Forbes as among the “Women Who Started Amazing Companies” for creating one of the fastest-growing private businesses in the United States.” As well as being recognized by the President of the United States at the White House as a “Rockstar of the new economy” as a leading entrepreneur and visionary.

Then came the biggest home run for this fast growing company. On Mothers Day, 2013, seven years to the day in which it launched, Happy Family partnered with the Danone Group, known as Dannon in the US. The French, multi-national group purchased more than 90% of the Happy Family brand for a an unknown amount, although reports are in the multi-millions of dollars, and began a partnership to change the world through nutrition. “We are a passionate and committed company, looking to leave a lasting legacy of health and wellness for our children” says Visram emphatically. “Our partnership with Groupe Danone allows us the opportunity to do this. We are truly a match made in heaven, as Danone’s fundamental ideals and mission are uncannily similar to ours. They approach product development in the same way that we do: creating products specifically targeted to the children they are feeding; and they are socially responsible like us, both giving back to those in need and minimizing environmental impact at every level possible. It’s a dream come true.”

If you’re a mom on the go looking for a quick, easy, tidy little package of organic, nutrient dense fruits and veggies for your baby or toddler, look no further than the tiny squeezable pouches in the organic aisle...and if you’re famished and in need of a snack...I can attest, they are delicious!

Jane Ford

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