

# Usana reports healthy sales in Singapore

By **CHEN HUIFEN**

**NUTRITION** company Usana Health Sciences is on the way to achieving US\$10 million in sales from Singapore this year — despite having entered the market just about a year ago.

According to Usana Singapore general manager Ng Keng Hean, the performance is “wonderful”, considering the company uses a multi-level marketing (MLM) framework to distribute its products.

“The MLM, or the network marketing industry, has had a lot of bad press; and still many people, in their first impression, when they hear that Usana is a network marketing company, they get put off,” said Mr Ng.

“But that does not mean that, when more and more Singaporeans get to know the quality of our products and the honest way that we do our business, they would not change their mind.”

Headquartered in Salt Lake City in the US, Usana produces a range of nutritional supplements and skincare products that are developed from its proprietary technologies.

The Nasdaq-listed company, with a market capitalisation of about US\$567 million, was founded in 1992 by Myron Wentz, a specialist in human cell cultures.

In Singapore, Usana supplies 14 types of nutritional supplements and eight skincare products to about 9,000 members here. Of that, 6,000 are active members who buy regularly. This is about 15 per cent of the 41,000 active members in the company’s Asia-Pacific markets, which include Japan, Hong Kong and Australia.

Although a relatively new market, Singapore has been contributing to Usana’s growth in the Asia-Pacific region. Sales here grew quarter on quarter, hitting US\$7.3 million for the first nine months of this year.

But Mr Ng said there is still room to grow, especially after the relaunch of Usana’s skincare product line Sense. The new range of products is said to be the world’s first skincare line not to contain parabens preservative, a common ingredient used in cosmetics to extend their lifespan.

“While some products claim they are preservative-free, most of these come in ampoules, sachets or other small-serving packages which are often inconvenient because any unused portions need to be refrigerated,” explained Mr Ng. “Sense comes in bottles or tubes and has a two-year shelf life.”

Expansion in Singapore need not be limited to prod-

uct sales, as founder and chairman Dr Wentz told BT. Singapore is also a “likely location” for its next health services facility.

The company already has a Sanoviv Medical Institute on the Baja Coast of Mexico, which is a toxin-free facility for people seeking holistic treatment for their illnesses or who simply want a professional detoxification programme.

For the next facility, Dr Wentz has several criteria.

“I want it to be at sea level to achieve maximum oxygen levels,” he said.

“I want it to have clean air, prevailing ocean breezes, sea water (for detoxifying the body), availability of competent and conscientious workers, close to people who are health-educated, knowledgeable of the benefits of nutrition and detoxification and access to qualified, holistic medical people. I think Singapore meets all those requirements.”



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