

A conversation with Shaheen Majeed,

Marketing Director, Sabinsa Corp.

Euro Cosmetics: *You have been a manufacturer and supplier of plant extracts, cosmeceuticals, minerals, and special fine chemicals for more than 25 years. Briefly describe your company's beginnings and the essential stages of its development.*

Shaheen Majeed: When Dr. Muhammed Majeed first started Sabinsa in the late 1980's, the business model was designed for off-patent generic pharmaceutical ingredients and to introduce them to the United States, a far cry from what we do today, however. While we kept ourselves occupied with formulation help to several large companies, we actually didn't offer a product, we provided services. But low and behold we started receiving requests for very traditional Indian herbal products, at this point, not as extracts but as plain powder. We started seeing a large community forming behind Ayurveda and the principals behind it. From there, we realized we needed to bring some more modern science to these Ayurvedic ingredients, thus began the research process for us. All along, we were sourcing materials from various places and people in India. We soon realized how effective it would be to provide some consistency to our supply chain. It was around 1991 when we decided to hire our own team to help source, verify and approve the vendors we were purchasing from. Today with computer communication it doesn't sound like a monumental task, but we were sitting in the USA and guiding folks by telefaxes; phone calls were expensive and everything was done with a quick understanding. By 1993, we made in-roads in the marketplace to supply standardized extracts and took the next inevitable step to build our own extraction facility, which is still operational today.

By the mid-90's we realized how important probiotics and enzymes would be in human health and dedicated another facility to produce LactoSpore® (bacillus coagu-



Shaheen Majeed, Marketing Director, Sabinsa Corp.

lans, formerly known as lactobacillus sporogenes) and DigeZyme® (a multi-enzyme complex).

As we continued to produce standardized extracts, we were looking for processes, compositions and unique uses and all of this we started patenting, because novel inventions should be protected to serve consumers a safe product and drive innovation further. Today we hold 87 patents globally, and an equal number pending with the various patent offices worldwide.

While we continued to grow our list of offerings, around 2004 we realized a critical issue that needed to be addressed concerned the farming aspects of where our material was coming from. We were hit with a massive drought situation on a key ingredient that we were delivering the world over. We suffered and learned a great deal from that experience. We undertook massive cultivation efforts throughout India and become directly involved in the agriculture of our key ingredients. Today, the buyback agreements and monetary compensations we offer go beyond what most publically held companies and govern-

ments do for their farmers. This is something we're carrying forward as we venture even outside of India for future supply of our ingredients.

Euro Cosmetics: *What are your company's strengths today and what can your customers expect?*

Shaheen Majeed: Without a doubt, the manufacturing and the manufacturability of our key ingredients stands among the best known attributes of Sabinsa. Many of our patents cover the processes in which we make our unique extracts. This is truly the scenario for when science matters, because what the product is effective for comes from how well we produced it. With regard to investments in science, Sabinsa's robust R&D is not only developing new ingredients but also developing new science for our existing portfolio of ingredients.

Take for example our Curcumin C3 Complex, the most clinically studied Curcumin brand in the marketplace today - recent studies include hypolipidemic activity, osteoarthritis of the knee, radiation dermatitis and schizophrenia. Look at our Saberry® ingredient, from amla (Indian gooseberry), this recent award winning ingredient (Panacea-Natural Product Expo India Best New Product Excellence Award in the Raw Material Category for Beauty and Cosmetics) has actually been in the marketplace for many years, but our Saberry is not standardized to the more conventional tannins or even vitamin C. Instead, our scientists discovered the two correct bio-markers, helping to validate amla's effectiveness (and published a paper to this effect), along with its' high ORAC value. The best part, though traditionally marketed as a supplement, Sabinsa's R&D staff also developed cosmeceutical applications for Saberry that include skin lightening, anti-aging, antioxidant, hair care, UV protectant, sun care and after sun care.

Today in the US, our Sabinsa Utah manufacturing facility is offering unprecedented services to our customers. We realized when we opened the western region office in Utah, and customers started asking us for the ingredients we sold them to be supplied as blends - there was a need for this type of service. Then came the eventual question, could we simply supply the material they're buying in a capsule or tablet? Sure, why not we thought. Who else could deliver Sabinsa ingredients in finished bulk form better than Sabinsa? So in 2006 we expanded our operations and became a full-fledged contract manufacturing facility, offering mixing, milling, blending, granulation, tableting, encapsulation, coating, and packaging in bottles as well.

We have a three-phase laboratory on the second floor, covering analytical, chemical and microbiological analysis. Inclusive is the ability to perform in-house stability tests. Two other aspects of our Utah site that sets us apart is the ability to work with customers on low volume, or what we call "start-up volume" amounts. We understand that not everyone starts with a million tablet or capsule order. To test the market, they may just need a thousand; we're here to help with that. Then there's our award winning bi-layer tablet technology, the most recent award was by Frost & Sullivan for a synbiotic that we created in which one side of the tablet is purely a probiotic of high strength and the other side a fiber component, beautifully split in the middle, and can even be taken as a flavored chewable tablet. This bi-layer tablet technology, as I tell people, is limited only by our imagination. We're creating some exciting new bi-layer tablet SKU's for companies out there, but if they need a jumpstart, we have nearly a dozen ready-to-market formulas available.

Euro Cosmetics: *An important component of Sabinsa is sustainability. How do you handle sustainability and what does this mean for your company?*

Shaheen Majeed: This is a topic that hits right at home. Many of the products that we cultivate, extract and export to the world markets are those same ones we grew up

with in our food and in our culture as Indians. So with great pride and respect for the plants and herbs we manufacture, our cultivation efforts ensure a sustainable delivery for years to come. Our understanding with farmers, how they cultivate, the use of safer alternatives when it comes to pesticides, proper irrigation techniques and through our non-GMO practices safeguard a consistent and sustainable supply of our ingredients.

Euro Cosmetics: *What are your main activities in the personal care sector?*

Shaheen Majeed: We continue to be a primary supplier of high quality, high yielding actives for the personal care market. Interestingly, over the past few years companies have turned to our formulation expertise and have incorporated several actives in a single formula for multi-beneficial activity. This sparked a new area for us; to deliver blends based on distinctive and unique uses of the actives we're currently marketing. For example, anti-acne is a major area of concern and the two blends we offer have two unique vantage points and price points, depending on what the marketing company is looking to promote and for what they can afford in their product line. While we have several blends in the market today, especially in China, where we're experiencing the greatest growth for our blends, the clinical side is ramping up on testing the entire blend and not just the independent ingredients. This is a unique phase we're going through and one where we're receiving some great reviews by our customers.

Euro Cosmetics: *Innovation and research are the pillars of your company. In 1991 you established Sami Labs Ltd. What can you tell us about this?*

Shaheen Majeed: Going back to one of the basic things our customers would ask for, in those days, was simply to deliver the product consistently. Believe it or not, that was a problem for Sabinsa back then. We unfortunately see other companies struggling with this concept even today. Let's take color as an example; if the customer expects Sabinsa to deliver brown powder, then it's brown

powder that they'll expect each and every time, reasonably in a color range of brown. But if a completely different color is delivered, without going into any major testing, it would be rejected on the spot and this was something we saw difficult to control as we tried to source and have it manufactured elsewhere. We ultimately decided, for the products we wanted to deliver, we had to establish the specifications and we would deliver upon that and nothing less, hence the formation of Sami Labs in 1991. In 1993, our first extraction facility went live and we were a full-fledged manufacturing company delivering standardized extracts.

Euro Cosmetics: *Each year, you invest approximately \$ 6 million in research. What do you concentrate on in particular and what do you want to achieve?*

Shaheen Majeed: The investment we make in our products is a testament to our belief in them. To this end, we actually spend a majority of research dollars on existing ingredients, with a passion to discover more about them like no other company can. It's not enough for us to be just a supplier of an ingredient, but also an inventor and a market creator of that same ingredient - which we can proudly claim we are. Other areas include researching economical ways to streamline, standardize and manufacture the ingredients we're bringing out, including upgrading our facilities to handle such processes. Then of course, money is set aside to launch new, innovate ingredients and formulas on the world markets. This requires an immense amount of time invested into figuring out the various regulatory requirements, but we know that innovation drives markets, and so getting new and even improved versions of ingredients to the marketplace is critical. Each year we may focus on certain segments within the broad industries we deal with, for example, in the supplement side we may look at weight management and blood sugar support as these are areas of real concern, and on the personal care side, we recognize skin as the largest organ and therefore both care from the inside and outside for skin is taken into great consideration.

Euro Cosmetics: *Your company has put more than 100 standardized plant extracts onto the market since it was established. Which plant extracts were especially successful and which ones are especially worth mentioning?*

Shaheen Majeed: It was a dried fruit, called garcinia cambogia (trademarked Citrin®), also known in India as Malabar tamarind that first put us on the map. In the early 1990's when we launched this weight management ingredient for satiety with a simple human clinical trial, it was all the craze and interestingly, almost 25 years later, it is still going strong.

When we decided not to spend all our resources on marketing garcinia in the 90's, we instead took our research money and invested in developing the next new weight management ingredient, called coleus forskohlii (trademarked ForsLean®). This forever changed the conversation about weight management, and instead focused not on losing weight but about increasing our lean body mass. Several Sabinsa-sponsored clinical studies later and inclusion in notable products in the marketplace worldwide, ForsLean® has become an important dietary supplement for weight management solutions.

Boswellin® (boswellia serrata) is a popular item, both in the supplement sector for anti-inflammatory, particularly joint support products, and in the personal care sector as an anti-aging and topical anti-inflammatory active ingredient. This was one of the earliest ingredients Sabinsa introduced.

Gugulipid® (commiphora mukul) introduced by Sabinsa garnered one of our earliest patents, but it's not just the patent or the function of the product that makes this worth mentioning. It's the story of how competitors illegitimately supplied the generic version of this ingredient based on a substandard method of testing (UV vs HPLC), which confused customers and ultimately affected consumer confidence. It was at that time Sabinsa took a stand and spent resources on educating customers on the importance of properly testing such ingredients and ushered in a scientific rigor to our industry.

Black pepper, not the one sitting on your kitchen table, but a standardized extract of 95% piperine, and globally patented for increased absorption, trademarked BioPerine® for the supplement sector and Cosmoperine® for cosmetic use, is not just incredibly easy to formulate with but scientifically validated through some of the most rigorous clinicals worldwide.

Centellin® CG (centella asiatica) was many years in the making, till we targeted carefully on its' wound healing property. It finally clicked with a major pharmaceutical company for use as a cosmetic skin cream for pregnant woman, for using during and after pregnancy to minimize stretch marks.

Yet, today, one of the most fascinating and vibrant, literally, ingredients is Sabinsa's turmeric extract, yielding the three most popular Curcuminoids. We have a multitude of ingredients in this area, for both supplements and the personal care market. Our patented Curcumin C3 Complex®, used widely for joint care applications and now in brain health supplements, is the flagship ingredient on Sabinsa's nutraceutical side, manufactured and delivered since the mid-90's. By the turn of the century, we saw a place for turmeric extracts in the cosmetic area, but unlike how it is traditionally used in India, where brides often have the vivid yellow turmeric applied on their faces before their wedding day. Western women may not take to that idea easily, therefore we set out to remove the yellow-orange color but retained the principal actives that give Curcumin its ultimate functionality in skin lightening/brightening. That turned out to be our most extensively patented Tetrahydrocurcuminoids, marketed as such in the cosmetic industry by Sabinsa; the particular Tetrahydrocurcumin fraction is trademarked SabiWhite® (95% tetrahydrocurcumin). We went further to produce a 99% assay extract, calling it appropriately as TetraPure®.

This option of a non-color turmeric extract was of particular interest to us for the supplement industry, but it wasn't till conversations and wrongful assumptions on curcumin's bioavailability came into question, where we felt a proper response needed to be sent to

the marketplace. We came to understand from a major scientific breakthrough that curcumin's metabolite discovered in intestinal cytosol was tetrahydrocurcumin; this led us to invariably introduce Curcumin C3 Reduct® (95% Tetrahydrocurcuminoids): a non-color, photo-stable, with better absorption, better pH stability, and a more pharmacologically active ingredient to end all bioavailability qualms. Recently, Sabinsa was honored with Engredea's Functional Ingredients Editors' Choice Award recognizing the company's patented Curcumin C3 Reduct for Best Science.

Euro Cosmetics: *Sabinsa holds 87 patents recognized worldwide for the active ingredients of medicinal plants. Where can these be used in the personal care sector?*

Shaheen Majeed: Specifically in the personal care sector, we're happy to report over a quarter of the patents are dedicated to and invented for cosmetic applications. One of our earliest discoveries was an antimicrobial essential oil from coleus, simply named coleus oil. Remarkably, this product would have never come to market if it weren't our obsession to completely control our manufacturing process, which included waste management. This oil was actually waste from another project we were working on with coleus. But one day, out of curiosity we take this oil, test it and find some remarkable applications in terms of its' antimicrobial activity.

Other areas that our patents broadly cover include skin-lightening, protection against UVB rays, anti-acne properties, tissue nourishment, dipeptides, management of hyperproliferative dermatological conditions, protective compositions for dermal papilla cells, and increasing bioavailability.

A notable and recent patent covered a natural preservative blend called SabiLize® which was found to be significantly effective against gram positive bacteria Staphylococcus aureus, Escherichia coli, as well as Candida albicans and Aspergillus niger. In laymen's terms, these natural ingredients effectively keep commonly problematic bacteria from growing. Additionally, the active ingredients function as antioxidants

and prevent the oxidation of oils and fats in cosmetic and personal care formulations.

Euro Cosmetics: *Your motto is "Research is the foundation of Sabinsa's success." What does this really mean?*

Shaheen Majeed: My father once told me a story about a company he used to work for: their business was going great, and to improve upon that success they brought in a consultant. That consultant group recommended the company cut back on R&D, as it was the only division that showed money going in but not really coming out. Long story short, a few years later, they closed shop. What happened? Luck turned around? Maybe, but more likely they didn't have new products, or new research to support and maintain interest in their existing products. Fortunately, my father left that company before the downfall. This example stuck with me from day one at Sabinsa; I share this passionately throughout the organization. Our solid foundation allows us to stand firm on matters of integrity and helps discipline us where we need to perform better. Having research as one of those foundations certainly steers us in the right direction in terms of product development, for the benefit of industry and for consumers alike.

Euro Cosmetics: *On which world markets are you most heavily represented and with which products?*

Shaheen Majeed: By far we're more heavily concentrated in the United States, with Europe and Japan next. Australia is a growing market and we're excited to see how South Africa is coming up for us. We have not ignored the very market from which we get our ingredients and for the last few years have aggressively pursued business in India and the South Asian markets. Our success in other world markets creates a market opportunity for those who want to enter the industry in Asia. Yet, we're learning at the same time, from the use of our supplements in beverages to the convergence that is occurring in cosmetics throughout the world, where before there was a distinct line differentiating what you would find in the United States, for exam-

ple, compared to what you may find in the Philippines. Skin lightening or brightening was a category you normally wouldn't see in western nations, however renamed as skin radiance, it's now a major seller. No matter what you call it, in Asia this is a big money making sector and we have the clinically studied ingredients to deliver in this marketplace.

In Russia, the acceptance of antioxidants is very high and we see that with their purchasing habits targeted at our richest antioxidant ingredients such as Curcumin and Saberry. In South Africa, our ingredients in the sports nutrition area are the strong hold for that marketplace. Australia is experiencing a high use of our weight management ingredients, and in Japan, our enzymes are keeping everyone healthy.

In China, we heavily emphasize our unique cosmetic blends and work with companies directly in formulating our blends into their final formulas. This creates a unique bond, as supplier/customer relations are closer than ever there.

Euro Cosmetics: *What are your next goals and where do you believe there are opportunities to develop?*

Shaheen Majeed: The future looks bright. We're looking forward to increasing our presence in markets where we're currently not being represented or are represented very little. Our focus on Latin America will give our cosmetic ingredients some good scope, as that marketplace for beauty products is thriving there. In our group of companies, our flavor and fragrance division is delivering some very unique ingredients that companies are incorporating into various product categories, from foods to cosmetics. Back in the USA, we're revamping our finished line of supplements, called America's Finest, and giving some new life into that division by way of a more robust number of new SKU's, a competitive pricing strategy and tactically focusing on creating a value chain for retailers to consider carrying our line of supplements.

Euro Cosmetics: *Thank you very much for the conversation.* ■



Rossow Cosmétique
Specialty Cosmetic Ingredients

**Cosmetic ingredients
your formulas can trust.**

Sun Care



Toiletries



Makeup

Skin Care



Baby Care



Hair Care

Europe
Rossow Cosmétique
92 Avenue du Général De Gaulle
92635 Gennevilliers Cedex
FRANCE

Phone: +33 (0) 1 41 21 87 87
Fax: +33 (0) 1 41 21 87 97

Email: contact@rossow-cosmetiques.com
www.rossow-cosmetiques.com



ISO 9001



Responsible Care



Rossow Group
Specialty Ingredients since 1955