Franco Fonseca

Smokehouse Jerky Company

Dba: Tender Heifer Snack Company

**Response to a specific section of an article written about doing business with beef jerky manufacturers/wholesalers:**

As a beef jerky manufacturer, I see Tommy raises some valid things to consider and I think overall his article was well-written for the times. Sixteen years was a long time ago and some things have changed but even if they haven't, there is always other ways to look at it.  
  
The answer to his third question about 'special consideration' is 99% spot on. I too believe you should not even consider working with a manufacturer who does not treat you well. If they treat you bad it's just who they are and thus they treat everyone this way, so it's not good to be in business with someone who doesn't appreciate others. And it doesn't matter why they treat others badly...the reasons are irrelevant.  
  
As a gourmet beef jerky manufacturer, my priority is a quality product that stands up to any other on the market. It starts with the best Brisket beef from California, the best recipes and ingredients and the best crew who makes it every day. No compromise should ever be made at the cost of your clients.  
  
Volume discounts: You should always ask about discounts and incentives, however, do not be offended when none are forthcoming because what most people outside of the industry are not aware of is the cost of beef, ingredients, labor, packaging, labeling, USDA inspections, employees, Workers Comp, taxes, research and insurance which make up the manufacturing process. An honest manufacturer will give you a great price to be begin with knowing that competition is strong and margins will determine your success. However, with all of that said, beef jerky at the wholesale level is relatively inexpensive.  
  
So yes, ask about the discounts but be ready to see the big picture and know that if you are dealing with a reputable manufacturer the margins you need to be successful will be there from the start.  
  
Suggested Retail Pricing: I would never tell you how much to sell your jerky to your clients for, but I will provide you with solid data which will help you make an informed decision as to what your price should be to stay competitive.   
  
Brochures/Literature: We provide you with the necessary artwork to help you hit the ground running. If you aren't prepared to market the product you might as well not try to sell it.  
  
And last, I wholeheartedly disagree with Tommy's comment that working with direct with a manufacturer who 'does it all' is will disappoint you. Personally, I would always choose to be in business with someone who can help me grow my business because they have been where I want to go. Working with a manufacturer who produces top quality jerky and can help you get off the ground with valuable experience, knowledge and a proven track record is much more appealing and beneficial than working with one who sells you jerky and tells you to sink or swim. After all, where do you turn to gather and utilize the level of experience your manufacturer has?