

# Direct Selling *News*

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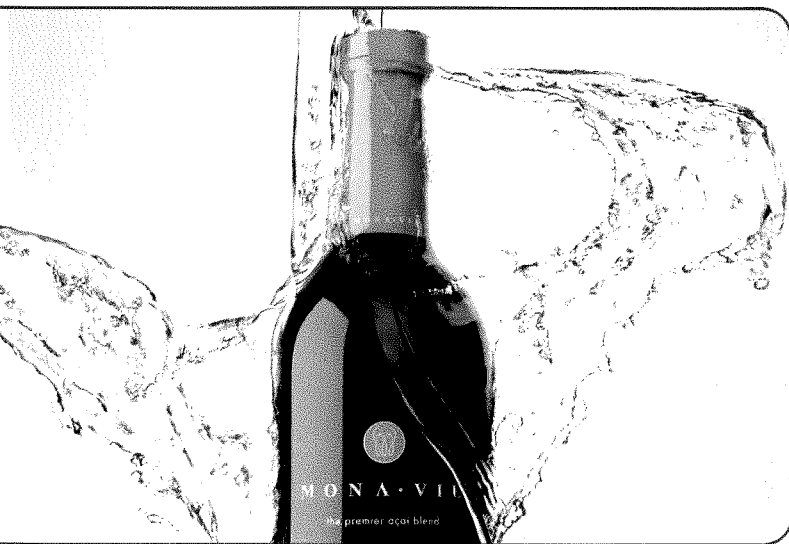
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Young Company Focus **MonaVie**

## Success with a SUPERFOOD

### How Brazil's Açai Berry Put MonaVie on the Map

by K. Shelby Skrhak



What connects the lush Amazon rain forest with the semi-arid climes of Salt Lake City's southern suburb of South Jordan? The answer is the açai (pronounced "ah-SIGH-ee") berry, a small black-purple fruit about the size of a grape that grows only on towering palm trees in the Brazilian jungle. More specifically, the açai berry is the crown jewel ingredient of the signature product of Utah-based MonaVie, a young network marketing company whose rapid growth is fueling greater awareness of the powerful antioxidant potential of this berry.

Within the açai berry are many vital nutrients, including immune-supporting antioxidants, glyconutrients, phytonutrients, vitamins and minerals. But what makes the açai berry unique is its concentration of antioxidants. It typically contains 10 times more antioxidants than red grapes and 10 to 30 times more anthocyanins than red wine; these compounds support heart health by reducing the risk associated with heart disease.

Anti-aging expert Dr. Nicholas Perricone recently reported on *The Oprah Winfrey Show* that the açai berry is the world's No.1 superfood, with a synergy of monounsaturated (healthy) fats, dietary fiber and phytosterols to help promote cardiovascular and digestive health. Perricone described it as, "An almost perfect essential amino acid complex in conjunction with valuable trace minerals, vital to proper muscle contraction and regeneration." Açai was listed among other age-defying superfoods such as barley, green vegetables, nuts, seeds and yogurt.

#### A Direct Selling Veteran Discovers Açai

MonaVie Founder, President and CEO Dallin Larsen wanted to share the wondrous açai berry with the world. The Brazilian people knew açai promoted their health and well-being, as it had for generations. The problem was, hardly anyone outside Brazil had heard of the health-promoting berry. That gave Larsen and his partners an idea.

As a 17-year veteran of the network marketing industry, Larsen knew word-of-mouth marketing was the best option for spreading the message. He had worked in sales and marketing for years and helped expand other successful companies to various parts of the world. "After many years, I decided that was enough for me," Larsen says. "I had a dream of starting my own company with people who were as passionate as I was about distributors."

Larsen saw an opportunity to share this wonder fruit with the rest of the world and allow distributors to create wealth for themselves at the same time. "We asked, 'Where in the world do we go to find a product that can improve the quality of life for people?'" Larsen says. "We found out about this little-known berry called açai." Larsen and his colleagues started looking at the research behind the berry and found it had antioxidant potential up to 30 times greater than that of red wine. The more they researched, the more they realized the fascinating science behind it. "Because it is a pure food, it is a whole food," Larsen says. "It has protein and carbohydrates, which can sustain people completely."

The scientists at MonaVie created a product with the açai berry. They augmented it with other fruits from various parts of the world. The team believed in the importance of balance, variety and moderation. "You can't just take one pill or one food and solve all your problems," Larsen says. "Too many people have tried to sing that song and failed."

Instead, they identified more than 130 fruits they considered including in the product. They narrowed that selection to a final 19. "Each was included for a specific purpose to provide what we believe to be the right balance," Larsen says. This combination of 19 fruits from around the world makes up the MonaVie formula. Soon thereafter, MonaVie's scientists went back to the lab to create an açai formula for individuals looking for a healthy way to ease their chronic joint pain. The MonaVie Active formula was born, and it includes glucosamine and other beneficial fatty acids to help promote joint health.

#### Bursting On the Direct Selling Scene

In January 2005, MonaVie launched its açai product into the marketplace. "It's an exceptional product, it's beautifully branded

