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Enhancing beauty with Sea2O soft drinks

Seattle spa owner approaches energy-drinks with an inside-out approach

By Caitlin Hostetter



After years in the business of superficial appearances, former spa owner Nancy Yi is now focusing on beauty that is more than skin deep—beauty through better health. “We believe in starting on the inside,” she says.

Over the last two years, Yi has created a local entry into the booming \$3.2 billion energy-drink industry: Sea2O. The USDA-certified organic drink, she says, contains ingredients that support digestion, provide energy and come loaded with vitamins, including more than twice the daily recommended dosage of vitamin C.

The 10.5-ounce drink gets the “Sea” in its name from the ingredient bladderwrack seaweed, noted for being high in antioxidants. The 130-calorie beverage, which contains an organic sweetener called agave, is a “food, not a supplement,” Yi

insists.

Yi, who owned a spa in New York City for 17 years, first became interested in medical supplements soon after selling her spa in 2001. She later moved to Bellevue and, in 2003, created the BioSea Corp., a distributor of anti-aging and weight loss supplements. Around that time, she owned a Seattle beauty salon, which she sold earlier this year.

Market research by Sea2O’s first carrier, Costco, showed that mothers were drawn to the product as a choice for both themselves and their children because of the drink’s lack of caffeine and carbonation, she says.

Sea2O—already available at QFC, Whole Foods and Thriftway stores for \$2 to \$3 per can—scored its newest online partnerships this year with Amazon.com in March and Costco.com in May. These deals, Yi says, are expected to increase demand and help boost sales from nearly \$1 million last year to \$6 million in 2008.

Photo by Richard Darbonne