

From the San Francisco Business Times:

<https://www.bizjournals.com/sanfrancisco/news/2017/07/25/nutiva-superfoods-whole-foods-organic-richmond.html>

Nutiva moves on from startup roots with new CEO

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Jul 25, 2017, 2:21pm PDT

Leading a company dealing in super foods requires some super dudes.

That's the thinking of Richmond-based Nutiva, who today swapped out founder John Roulac for new CEO Pankaj Talwar, who has 25 years of experience in consumer packaged goods. Roulac will remain at the company as chief visionary officer.

Nutiva, which sells organic food products like coconut oil, hemp and chia seed products at stores like Whole Foods, said the management changes will help it grow.

Nutiva's 2016 revenue was \$94.5 million and it has about 109 employees in the Bay Area.

In March, the company decided to expand its initial voluntary product recall of its Organic Plant Based Protein Superfood 30 Shake to include all lots of both vanilla and chocolate-flavored products after finding that it may contain trace amounts of peanuts.

The company's decision to install a new CEO is unrelated to the recall, a company spokesperson said.

Talwar previously served as the chief marketing officer for Goodman Fielder, a consumer foods company with \$2.3 billion in revenue across Australia, New Zealand and the Asia Pacific region. He also worked for Bimbo Bakeries from 2002 to 2010, where he helped grow Thomas English Muffins and Bagels from a \$400 million brand to a \$500 million brand.

Roulac will stay on as a board member and help ensure that Nutiva upholds its original mission.

"Operating the company as a startup is no longer working," Talwar said. "We need to evolve our approach internally (in a way) that adds a bit of systems, processing and (long-term) vision and strategy that everyone can rally around."

Talwar said he aims to place Nutiva products in more mainstream groceries and gain customers who aren't already conscious of what they put in their shopping cart.



NUTIVA

Nutiva's new CEO, Pankaj Talwar, has decades of experience in consumer goods.

"We have such strong fans. So how can we make them a part of our mission to revolutionize how we eat, so it's not just our team here in Richmond? That's something I'm going to work on."

Nutiva has come a long way from the company Roulac started in 1999 from the trunk of his car with 500 hemp bars.

Talwar said that history was part of what drew him to his new executive role at Nutiva.

"I saw that John Roulac had created here something very special. It's all about revolutionizing how the world eats," he said. "It instantly drew me in, because I really wanted to be a part of changing the way we deliver food."

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