Hella Cocktail Co. Triples In-Store Growth Thanks to Meijer Partnership

When Jomaree Pinkard connected with our Meijer Supplier Inclusion team, he was set up for success from the very beginning. The relationship gave his team the guidance needed to successfully pitch their company, Hella Cocktail Co., to Meijer merchants, which resulted in Hella landing a spot on our shelves. Since then, the premium, non-alcoholic mixer, soda and bitters brand, continues to have a strong relationship with Meijer, elevating its presence while giving customers a unique experience.

His company began casually, hanging out with friends Tobin Ludwig and Eddie Simeon in New York City, where they all lived at the time. As avid sports fans, they regularly elevated their game-watching experience by making homespun pizza and concocting homemade bitters.

Soon they were giving those homemade bitters to friends and family during the holidays. In 2012, they transitioned into a company, and by 2016, they escalated to a full-time operation as they developed a following in the bartending community.

“We’re creators who value sharing. Our narrative revolves around evolving a hobby into a thriving company,” Jomaree said.

Their cocktail bitters are a flavorful, non-alcoholic infusion of spices, fruit peel, and bitter roots that share their origin with herbal remedies found today in alternative medicine. Behind the bar, they are a go-to for bartenders and used creatively to counterbalance notes of tart and sweet.

“When we connected with Meijer, they guided our team through their strategic approach to supplier inclusion and category buyer preferences,” said Jomaree.

That advice helped during the product review process, resulting in some of Hella Cocktail Co.’s non-alcoholic Margarita mixes and their more recent one-of-a-kind botanical beverage, Bitters & Sodas, a sparkling non-alcoholic aperitif made with craft bitters, to be offered on our shelves. Carried in about 35 Meijer stores, Hella Cocktail Co. has now tripled their visibility within Meijer in just the last few years.

Although Hella Bitter products are carried by other retailers, the relationship with Meijer is different because of the extra support from our Supplier Inclusion team.

“We’re in constant communication, fostering a fantastic relationship that goes beyond business. We collaborate to identify other minority suppliers that could be beneficial to Meijer. As a Minority-Owned business, one of our many goals is to address under-representation on a broader scale and we couldn’t be prouder of the connections we’ve made along the way," revealed Jomaree.

The company name was inspired by Eddie’s hometown and passion for describing a delicious beverage concoction as “hella,” reflecting the lingo he picked up growing up in Oakland, Calif. His phrase stuck as the trio created their cocktail products because it summed up their appeal.

“It encapsulates intense flavors, and we proudly stand by it. We’re not crafting mundane, forgettable concoctions,” Jomaree said. “We’re not boring, like the unflavored rice pilaf at a wedding. We’re creating flavors that provoke opinions and make a statement.”

Today, Hella Cocktail Co. products are used in more than 20,000 bars and restaurants nationwide, in addition to its Meijer presence.

Additional assets available online: Photos (2)

https://meijercommunity.com/Hella-Cocktail-Co-Triples-In-Store-Growth-Thanks-to-Meijer-Partnership