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Harmonising the industry

Brahim's revolutionising halal meals through innovation and global expansion

BY KHIRTINI K KUMARAN

BRAHIM'S Dewina Group of Companies (Brahim's), under the leadership of its founder and executive chairman, Dato' Seri Ibrahim Ahmad, is a model of halal excellence and innovation in the global ready-to-eat (RTE) food industry.

Brahim's has established itself as a trusted leader in the halal food industry, consistently delivering high-quality RTE meals that meet stringent halal standards.

As the demand for halal products grows worldwide, Brahimi's is capitalising on its strong foundation while exploring new markets and innovations, ensuring the company remains a significant player in the global halal food market.

UNWAVERING COMMITMENT

At the heart of Brahimi's operations is an uncompromising commitment to maintaining the highest standards of halal integrity across its diverse product range, beginning with its suppliers, whereby the company imposes strict standards on ingredient sourcing.

Ibrahim emphasised the company's commitment to food safety and halal requirements.

"In our case, we merge both food hygiene and safety standards with halal regulations. We only use halal-certified ingredients and source raw materials exclusively from HACCP-certified companies."

This commitment is rigorously applied, from ingredient sourcing to the final product, ensuring that every meal meets stringent halal requirements, both in Malaysia and internationally.

Brahim's has successfully navigated the complexities of obtaining halal certification in strict markets like Japan, where local regulations are particularly demanding. By adhering to these stringent standards, the company has fortified its reputation as a global leader in halal food production.

Ibrahim highlighted the example of traditional Japanese meals, which often use "mirin", a non-halal ingredient. Now, halal-certified "mirin" is available, enabling Brahimi's to offer authentic Japanese dishes without compromising its halal standards.

Similarly, Brahimi's works with producers who use microbial enzymes in cheese production, replacing animal-derived enzymes to meet halal requirements.

Brahim's

Dato' Seri Ibrahim Ahmad



DRIVING INNOVATION IN HALAL RTE PRODUCTS

Innovation is the cornerstone of Brahimi's success. The company's research and development (R&D) efforts have led to ground-breaking advancements in packaging and food preservation, including the development of flattened pouches for better heat penetration and sterilisation.



Brahim's has also introduced innovative cooking solutions, including self-heating travel meals that balance convenience with the preservation of halal integrity. These products have not only captured the imagination of consumers but have also set new benchmarks in the halal RTE market.

Over the years, the company has expanded its product line, from offerings like Ready-to-Eat Rice, Ready-to-Eat Dishes, Cooking Sauces and Pastes, and Simmer Sauces, catering to the evolving needs of modern consumers.

The introduction of pre-made spice packets and curry sauce packets, which simplify home cooking, exemplifies Brahimi's ability to blend tradition with innovation.

The company's focus on rice products, including basmati and RTE options, has been particularly successful in meeting the demand for convenient yet authentic meals. These products are available online through platforms like Shopee, reflecting Brahimi's adaptability in the digital age.

The introduction of Travelicious Meals, which feature self-heating elements using slaked lime, demonstrates Brahimi's creativity in meeting modern consumer needs.

"These meals are designed for convenience, whether you're travelling, hiking, or need a quick meal on the go," said Ibrahim.

The self-heating mechanism allows consumers to enjoy a hot meal without the need for kitchen facilities, enhancing the portability of the product.

AIRLINE PARTNERSHIPS

Brahim's is not only a leader in the RTE market but also industrial catering, particularly in the airline sector. Its in-flight kitchen is recognised as the world's largest 100 per cent halal-certified in-flight kitchen, serving multiple international airlines.

"Brahim's tailors its offerings to meet market expectations while strictly maintaining our halal priorities. We inform airlines and the specific airline's customers that we will only produce halal products, as this is the only way to maintain high standards of halal compliance," he explained.

The sensitivity required in preparing halal meals, especially for international airlines, underscores Brahimi's dedication to maintaining the purity of its products.

Whether catering to Muslim or non-Muslim airlines, the company ensures that

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halal standards are meticulously followed, extending even to the cleaning of cutlery and crockery.

"We are proud of our Halal Sertu Cleansing Machine, which ensures that non-halal products do not contaminate crockery and cutlery," Ibrahim pointed out, adding that this level of attention to detail sets Brahim's apart as a halal producer.

Brahim's has established itself as a trusted partner for some of the world's top international airlines, including British Airways. The company's collaboration with LSG Sky Chefs to certify 21 kitchens globally is a testament to its expertise and commitment to halal food preparation.

Each kitchen operates under strict guidelines, ensuring that all meals maintain the integrity that Brahim's is known for.

INTERNATIONAL MARKETS

Expanding into international markets has not been without challenges. Brahim's has faced stringent compliance requirements in countries like Australia and Japan. However, through strategic partnerships and the adoption of advanced technologies, the company has overcome these hurdles.

In Japan, Brahim's has established a successful presence, including a joint venture that led to the creation of a state-of-the-art factory.

The company also operates a popular halal restaurant in Shibuya, Tokyo, called Malay Asian Cuisine, which serves authentic Malay dishes, further promoting Malaysian culture abroad. Currently, they are running three restaurants.

Brahim's has made significant inroads into the Japanese market, where the demand for halal products is growing.

The company organised Japan's first halal conference, collaborating with authorities such as JAKIM (Department of Islamic Development Malaysia), HDC (Halal Development Corporation), and IIU (Institute of Islamic Understanding) to ensure a comprehensive understanding of halal practices.

The response has been overwhelmingly positive, with Malay Asian Cuisine restaurants gaining popularity and the company partnering with MUJI to produce OEM halal products.

Despite its success in established markets, Brahim's remains focused on maximising its efforts in the still-underdeveloped halal market, which currently accounts for only 30 per cent of actual production capacity. This presents a significant growth opportunity for the company.

By promoting its products as Malaysian cuisine rather than emphasising the halal aspect, Brahim's has successfully penetrated markets where the halal label might be less familiar or even a deterrent.

FUTURE OF HALAL RTE MARKET

The global halal market, valued at US\$2.3 trillion, presents a significant growth opportunity for Brahim's. The company is

committed to capturing a larger share of this market through continuous innovation by expanding its factory capacity and forming joint ventures in both Muslim and non-Muslim countries.

"We are actively promoting our airline food and packaged food, and there is a growing demand for halal options as the global Muslim population continues to rise," added Ibrahim.

Looking ahead, Brahim's has several exciting projects in the pipeline. The company is involved in catering for the Saudi Haramain High-Speed Train Service, luxury locomotive journeys, offshore catering, and a collaboration with a Japanese hotel chain to establish halal restaurants.

Ibrahim envisions sustained growth for Brahim's in the halal food market. "There will always be a global demand for halal food, and so far, this market has been largely underserved.

"We plan to sustain growth and remain a leader in this sector by being both creative and innovative, identifying specific needs, and maintaining our high reputation as a producer of halal meals and services."

PROMOTING MALAYSIAN CUISINE

Beyond its commercial success, Brahim's is also a cultural ambassador, promoting Malaysian cuisine on the global stage.

The company's efforts have been recognised with numerous awards, including the prestigious 'Taste of Malaysia' award and the 'Malaysia Tourism Award Industry Night 2024' for the Best International Promotion of Malaysian Cuisine.

By providing traditional food for international airlines, Brahim's continues to introduce the world to the rich flavours of Malaysian cuisine. Brahim's Dewina Group of Companies exemplifies the perfect blend of tradition, innovation, and halal integrity.

With its unwavering commitment to quality and its forward-looking approach to product development, Brahim's is poised to continue leading the global halal RTE market, setting new standards and opening new markets for halal products worldwide. - (b)



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