

Werner Bauer

Dr. Werner Bauer is *Executive Vice President, Technical, Production, Environment, Research and Development at Nestlé*. After completing his education in Chemical Engineering with a PhD from the University of Erlangen-Nürnberg, Mr. Werner Bauer began his career as a Professor at the Universities of Hamburg and Munich. Between 1986 and 1990 he was Head of the Fraunhofer-Institute for Food Technology. His interest in nutrition led him to accept the position of Head of the Nestlé Research Centre in 1990, a position he held for 7 years. Mr. Bauer was then promoted to Head of Research and Development at Nestlé Headquarters in Vevey. He moved to take over Technical Management of Nestlé South Africa and subsequently the management of Nestlé Southern and Eastern region. Since May 1, 2002 he has been in charge of Corporate Technical, Production, Environment and R&D. In this position and amongst his other responsibilities, he oversees the numerous factories and product development centres of the Nestlé Group.

ISO Focus: As today's largest food and beverage company in the world, Nestlé produces a wide range of products from meals to chocolate, and from mineral water to coffee. How does Nestlé manage to maintain a worldwide consumer base when traditions and tastes vary from one country to the next? What is the key ingredient to its success?

Werner Bauer: There is no single ingredient to our success but many! The key is certainly our conviction that there is no such thing as a global consumer, but that consumers everywhere make their decisions in a given



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cultural and ethnic context, which a global marketer has to understand and respect. Nestlé was founded by a German (Henri Nestlé) in Switzerland, a small country, and expanding meant going abroad. This could only be done by relying on the experience and knowledge of local staff and by adapting the products to local tastes, traditions and ways of doing business. This is why there is not one Nescafé but 200 and this explains why very many consumers perceive Nestlé as a trusted local supplier of high quality food and beverage products. Maintaining that trust also means listening to consumers: today we have some 80 consumer services worldwide, dealing with about 7 million spontaneous contacts per year. We encourage our consumers to comment, criticize and

suggest and we make it easy for them by providing them with an address, a telephone number or a Web site on each of our products.

ISO Focus: A number of Nestlé employees provide expert advice to the work of ISO technical committees. How important is it for Nestlé to contribute to the development of International Standards?

Werner Bauer: International Standards are important for a good and efficient business environment. When applied to entire fields of activity, they contribute very effectively to enhance fair competition and – in many cases – to raise the overall level of quality. On the other hand, such International Standards, if developed only by people outside the industry, might either impose too many restrictions on the company's ability to develop and expand and could, in some cases, impose excessive costs. We therefore believe that by providing expert advice to ISO technical committees and participating in the establishment of rules, the major companies, knowing best the prevailing conditions in their industry, render an important service both to ISO and to themselves.

ISO Focus: To what extent does Nestlé use an environmental management system based on ISO 14001? How do you think acting sustainably positively affects the bottom line of companies?

Werner Bauer: Nestlé, having actively contributed to the establishment of ISO 14001, has been one of the first companies to implement a Group-wide environmental management system, based on the principles of ISO 14001, even before its official publication. Today, all our factories worldwide use the



Photo: A. Diglas

“Nestlé Environmental Management System” (internally known as NEMS) to improve constantly on their environmental performance. External bodies have certified some 30 of our sites worldwide according to ISO 14001, but we also verify compliance with our NEMS through internal procedures. As all have been able to see the effect on our eco efficiency, this system has been embraced by employees at all levels.

But we have gone further and have invested significantly – way over what is legally required – into environmental technologies. We are fully aware that such investments increase our costs compared to our competitors and we know that we might, therefore, lose some market share in the short term, especially in developing countries. But Nestlé, a company almost 140 years old, has never been too keen on short term views and we are convinced that in the long run, our policy will enhance our reputation as a socially and environmen-

The Nestlé Research Center near Lausanne, Switzerland, provides the basic knowledge in food science which is applied in the whole Nestlé Group. The Nestlé plant science unit in Tours, France, studies plant species such as coffee, cocoa and chicory.



Photo: Nestlé Research Center

tally responsible company. This is and undoubtedly will be an asset for our company, our brands, our staff and our customers.

ISO Focus: *ISO is currently in the process of developing a Food safety management systems standard (ISO 22000) for all organizations, which produce, manufacture, handle or supply food. What benefit do you see here in terms of safety, communication and trade?*

Werner Bauer: We believe that ISO 22000 could contribute to reducing the number of individual, non-official food safety standards currently appearing on the market. Their variety and ever-increasing number is creating complexity and confusion in the food chain, thus raising costs without bringing consistent reliability.

Certificates delivered on the basis of an internationally agreed standard would improve the relationship between suppliers and customers throughout the food chain. Customers could concentrate their efforts on their specific requirements which may not be covered by the standard, and suppliers would have better harmonized requirements to follow, which should limit and rationalize the number and

Guest View

scope of the assessments requested by their customers.

If ISO 22000 fulfils our expectations, Nestlé would integrate such a standard in its Supplier Management System. As part of our supplier and co-manufacturer requirements, it should simplify our relationship with them and it should allow us to reallocate some of the assessment and monitoring resources from the scope covered by ISO 22000 to more Nestlé-specific expectations.

All partners in the food chain could derive benefit from the implementation of ISO 22000, no matter the size or activity of the certified operation or which kind of product is considered. Therefore, we are actively collaborating with our partners to ensure that this standard is reliable and takes into account all common food safety requirements.

We are especially keen to obtain an action-oriented tool without useless administrative or paperwork requirements. Moreover, it will be essential



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to prevent misleading communication about the certificates; it is the food safety management system that will be certified by a third party and not the safety of the product.

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***ISO Focus:** At a recently concluded ISO conference on social responsibility, Mr. Khaled Abu Osbeh, representative of the United Nations Global Compact, said that ISO can be a key force in helping to realize the Global Compact Office’s hope that CSR initiatives will ultimately converge. What are your thoughts on the issue?*

Werner Bauer: A clearer definition of some of the terms used in the Global Compact might well benefit the application of these principles and secure a broader following. But one should keep in mind that the Global Compact covers a very broad range of situations and that its practical application needs to take into account diverse starting points as well as social and economic differences and priorities. It is therefore vital to avoid simply designing rigid checklists that might well be irrelevant to some industries or regions, but that would allow self-appointed critics of corporations to launch their campaigns based on their own interpretation of some specific point. The Global Compact is a means for corporations to freely and publicly express their commitment to social responsibility. Turning it into an enforceable body of law, over and beyond national legislation and international conventions, raises entirely different issues. ■

Nestlé International Headquarters in Vevey, Switzerland.



Photo: Nestlé