



Emerging

Dallin Larsen

Chairman, President, Founder, MonaVie
South Jordan, Utah
Founded: 2005

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With his weight-loss company struggling, Dallin Larsen needed to reconsider his product offering. At the suggestion of a friend, he researched the acai berry, an obscure fruit grown in the rain forests of Brazil. Impressed by what he learned about the antioxidants and polynutrients it contains, he made the berry the centerpiece of a new nutritional juice blend called MonaVie.

But in order to launch the product and reinvent his company, renamed MonaVie, Larsen, already deeply in debt, had to secure another round of funding, raising the stakes even higher. As the poker pros would say, he was “all in.”

Larsen’s bold gamble has paid off. Since its formation in January 2005, MonaVie has doubled its revenue every year, as the product has become an international phenomenon. “Leaders adjust. They might not quit, but they definitely make adjustments,” Larsen says. “That’s

what my life has been about – a lot of adjustments.”

Hard work began early

Larsen has been honing his business acumen since grade school. Growing up in Rexburg, Idaho, he was the sixth of 10 children. His father owned a clothing business, while his mother ran the household. Both parents instilled a disciplined work ethic in their children.

By the age of 7, Larsen went out to his neighborhood selling a wagonload of zucchini grown in the family’s garden. “My mother told me not to come home until it was gone,” he recalls. Every summer, Larsen worked in the potato fields, getting up at 4 a.m. to move the irrigation pipes and going back out in the afternoon to do it again. “I worked for 7 cents a pipe and figured if I moved 100 pipes in the morning and 100 in the afternoon – that’s \$14 a day – I might get rich,” he says.



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Larsen worked his way through Brigham Young University by selling shaved ice. He and his brother had about 20 shaved-ice shacks scattered throughout Utah. After graduation, he talked his father into co-signing a \$12,000 loan so he could open a weight-loss franchise from Diet Center. It did pretty well, and he subsequently opened four more.

In the late 1980s, a friend introduced Larsen to the concept of network marketing, a sales model that allows distributors to basically run their own business and promote a product directly to consumers. He became a distributor for Usana, a company that sold nutritional products. “I fell in love with the concept,” he says. “I didn’t do great, but I learned more about the concept of helping people and leveraging your time and efforts.”

After 10 years with the company, he was looking for a new challenge. In 2003, Larsen partnered with his brother and a friend to start Monarch Health Sciences, a weight-loss company. After leaving Usana, he didn’t have a lot of money to fall back on. To complicate matters, the company wasn’t growing. Tight finances forced Larsen to get a second mortgage.

A powerful, profitable berry

Enter the acai berry. “We simplified the story with one bottle of juice with 19 fruits and began telling the story of the acai berry, the rain forest and antioxidants,” Larsen said, describing the company’s initial marketing push.

Larsen says a number of components lined up that contributed to MonaVie’s growth and success. At the time of the company’s launch, Dr. Nicholas Perricone had written a book in which he listed the acai berry as one of the world’s greatest super foods. For the first time, people were starting to hear about this little purple berry from the Amazon rain forest. From there, things started to steamroll, with other celebrities and athletes taking to the acai berry.

MonaVie’s products are available exclusively from independent distributors. “The distributors are the most important aspect of a direct selling company,” Larsen notes. “We’re fortunate to have built the solid, trusting relationships that we have.” After four years, MonaVie has more than 400 employees and approximately 700,000 distributors in the US and abroad.

Larsen is proud of the product, not only because he believes it has made a difference in people’s lives from a health aspect, but also for what its success has enabled him to do for the acai berry’s native region. The company partners with local workers, giving them an opportunity for increased income. It leaves the harvested trees in place and plants new trees to produce more crops and preserve the rain forest.

“I have traveled to more than 50 countries, but I’ve never seen poverty to the degree I’ve seen it in the slums

of Brazil,” Larsen says. “We’re making a difference; we’re making an impact down there. I am proud of that aspect of the company.”

Operation Rescue

Larsen has established the MORE Project (MonaVie Operation Rescue) to help the people of Brazil. Fundraising efforts have provided 1,500 meals per week to underprivileged children, and educated thousands of teens and adults, enabling them to find jobs. MonaVie covers all administrative costs, allowing 100% of donations to go directly to the care of the Brazilian people.

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Recent additions to the product line include MonaVie Active, which promotes joint health, and MonaVie Pulse to help promote a healthy heart. The latest addition is EMV (Energy to the power of MonaVie), marketed as an energy drink without the crash.

“Sometimes the more products you offer, the slower the business grows because you have to explain each and every piece of every product,” Larsen says. But the beauty of MonaVie lies in its simplicity. “You have a bottle of juice. You’re not getting enough fruits and vegetables. Here’s a convenient way to get your antioxidants. End of story.”