

# Superbrands

Sri Lanka

AN INSIGHT INTO SOME OF SRI LANKA'S STRONGEST BRANDS 2007

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## Market

When most people think of herbal products, they think of old wives' tales and unproven, unscientific remedies. But in a country like Sri Lanka, which has a well-developed medical and pharmaceuticals industry, the existence of a strong herbal industry is not surprising. Cultural practices involving traditional remedies and natural products go back many centuries, whether this be for managing pain, curing disease or personal hygiene.

From ancient times, traditional societies have found medicinal, spiritual and physical rejuvenation from herbs and natural products. The stresses of modern lifestyles have caused people to look for alternative means of stress relief. A growing environmental consciousness in the country has influenced many people to turn to natural and herbal products – especially those that do not use additives, dyes, preservatives or other artificial ingredients.

Brand Siddhalepa is a perfect fit in this evolving market. It has responded to these growing needs by blending a centuries-old tradition of preventative and curative health care – known as Ayurveda – with products that rely exclusively on natural ingredients.

This indigenous market has not been confined to Sri Lanka. In the past 25 years, it has become a viable export product, reaching over 25 countries. Today, Siddhalepa is a global brand, with new markets emerging every year. Globally, the natural-products market is now worth around US\$ 40 billion. While its initial focus was on the Sri Lankan market, Siddhalepa is gradually moving into the global arena.

## Achievements

Siddhalepa's most obvious achievement has been the fusion of an age-old tradition of healing with modern manufacturing processes. It has adopted aggressive marketing strategies and state-of-the-art business practices to dominate the Sri Lankan market for herbal and natural products. In Sri Lanka alone, the brand has captured over 85% of the natural pain-relief market.

Siddhalepa is among the top ten brands in retail penetration and it has become a must-have product in virtually every household. But this is not the sum total of its achievements. Beyond natural balms for instant pain relief, it has moved into food supplements, rejuvenating teas and even a modern hospital that offers ancient healing practices, with a modern spa using entirely natural products and ancient restorative techniques.

## History

The company commenced operations in 1971, when Ayurvedic Doctor Victor Hettigoda received a sum of Rs. 2,500 from a relative, enabling him to commence manufacturing Siddhalepa balm, which is a household name in Sri Lanka today. His initial marketing strategy was to travel to different parts of the country to convince boutique owners and small retailers that his product was genuine – and that it was an all-natural instant remedy for body aches and pains.

Centuries of Ayurveda Heritage of Hettigoda Family



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Hettigoda had spent twelve years under his father's tutelage, learning the finer points of the ancient art of Ayurveda. His father, in turn, had learnt of Ayurvedic traditions from Hettigoda's grandfather. This ancient wisdom, passed down from generation to generation, has today been converted into one of Sri Lanka's best-known brands.

Ayurveda itself has a history that goes back some 5,000 years. The term Ayurveda is rooted in Sanskrit, where ayur means life and veda means knowledge. The aim of Ayurveda throughout the ages has been to use this knowledge of life to prevent disease and to promote a sense of general well-being. Its treatments have provided a restorative spirit at mental, physical and spiritual levels.

The company's first offering was the Siddhalepa balm, a herbal product based on a formula that is over 4,000 years old. It was first developed in Sri Lanka in 1934, but it was not until 1971 that the balm was systematically marketed, positioning the company as the foremost Ayurvedic company in the country.

## Product

Today, people – irrespective of their age – are searching for natural and herbal products to prevent disease and to live healthy lifestyles. Many are also searching for products that promote a sense of well-being and help them lead balanced lives.



Siddhalepa's initial product, a herbal balm, has found new markets and delivery methods – it is now marketed as an oil and an inhaler. Made from citronella, cinnamon, eucalyptus oils, pine, menthol and camphor, its aroma and essential oils have provided relief for a variety of conditions: runny noses, sneezing, headaches and respiratory discomforts.

While Siddhalepa's brand is strongly associated with the herbal balm, it has also moved into other products which are gaining wide appeal. Its organically grown herbal teas are also part of an ancient Ayurvedic tradition containing natural herbs, roots and leaves.

Siddhalepa caused a sensation in the toothpaste market when it launched the brown herbal toothpaste, Supirivicky, a product now firmly placed in number three position in the local market. It has been a market leader in toothpaste exports for over a decade. Unlike modern Western toothpastes, Supirivicky does not use artificial sweeteners, dyes or chemical preservatives – it helps in restoring gums, teeth, the throat and the tongue. Another recently launched brand of toothpaste, Sumudu, is positioned as an oral-hygiene product fighting infectious micro-organisms that cause tooth decay and swollen gums.

Then there are shampoos and soaps, also prepared in accordance with Ayurvedic traditions. These traditional products are among Siddhalepa's newer product line. And the first medicinal soap, Visaka, was introduced in 1983 and has resulted in the Department of Customs introducing a new classification for this product category.

Siddhalepa was the first to launch an Ayurvedic range of products for babies and children. The Kekulu range of baby soap, toothpaste, cologne and foam bath, all using natural products, has provided consumers with an option. Today, it has over 90 herbal-based products which are sold in Sri Lanka and exported to over 25 countries. These include herbal-based digestive supplements, face creams and massage oils. Moreover, the Siddhalepa Ayurveda Hospital, in Mount Lavinia, provides a range of treatments for its patients.

## Recent Developments

In 2005, Siddhalepa opened an Ayurveda Spa in Frankfurt, Germany. The spa provides a range of treatments that compare favourably with any modern spa; but it is different, in that all its treatments are inspired by natural creams and oils. In addition, the company supplies Ayurvedic products and services to several other resorts around the world, including One & Only Kanahura, Soneva Resorts, the Raffles Grand Hotel d'Angkor, Villa Hotels, Duniye Spa, Laguna Beach Resort, Embuda Village, Meedhupparu Island Resort, Halaveli Holiday Village and Hauvafen Fushi Resort, where natural products are used to rejuvenate the mind and body.

From an initial focus on first providing relief and then preventing disease, Siddhalepa has moved to offering products that are aimed at a supreme state of physical, mental and spiritual well-being.





In 1998, the company launched a range of food supplements based on the Ayurvedic tradition of improving the body's metabolism and providing a defence mechanism for healthy bodies using natural products.

Its Ayurveda Health Resort in Wadduwa combines all the luxuries of a modern seaside resort with the facilities of a modern Ayurvedic centre. Six specialists and 30 therapists administer a range of treatments which include detoxification, rejuvenation, cleansing, stress relief and weight control.

In 1996, the company launched Suraya, an organic fertiliser that provides nutrients for plants. Through a process of recycling waste, it provides plant life with a balanced diet by fortifying soil structures with nutrients in their natural form. It was the first company to obtain a NASAA (National Association for Sustainable Agriculture, Australia) certificate for organic fertilisers.

In 2005, Siddhalepa was invited by SriLankan Airlines to operate a spa at its business class lounge at the Bandaranaike International Airport. This was the first ayurvedic spa at any international airport.

### Promotion

Siddhalepa invests prudently in promoting its brand, both within the country and outside. The brand has adopted the personality of a traditional Ayurvedic doctor who has great respect for and acceptance in society, thanks to his knowledge and wisdom. Siddhalepa uses the slogan, 'The Ayurvedic doctor that should be in every household.'

In Sri Lanka, the brand has invested more than Rs. 300 million over the past few years to market Siddhalepa as the leading natural pain-relief product in the country. In Germany, it has invested over €1 million to launch its natural spa and promote its brand image.

The focus of its promotional campaigns has been on the natural value of its products. Its manufacturing processes are driven by the ancient art of Ayurveda. Yet, these processes are regulated by utilising the most modern techniques of ensuring hygiene and quality.

While using traditional methods of promotion, the company is also known for its use of innovative marketing strategies. Twenty seven years ago, the company set up a camp to service pilgrims making their way up Adam's Peak. It was a non-intrusive means of creating

brand awareness for Ayurvedic products, in an appropriate setting. Every year, thousands of devotees who climb the holy mountain are provided with a free cup of the ginger-coriander drink, Lak Peyawa, and Siddhalepa balm for

relieving aches and pains that arise during the climb. Likewise, in other pilgrimage cities such as Kataragama, Seenigama, Getabaruwa and Mahiyanganaya, a 24-hour free medical-service camp has been set up.



### Brand Values

Siddhalepa has a long and distinguished history of using natural products to provide preventive and curative health care. It has succeeded in blending an indigenous heritage with modern technology and business practices to create a unique Sri Lankan brand. The company has used the concept of the vedamahathmaya, or village doctor, to create a strong brand recognition.

Although it is a market leader in herbal and natural-based products, Siddhalepa maintains a fine balance between the traditional and modern. This unique balance has created a strong brand that appeals to a wide cross-section of consumers. Its alternative appeal attracts consumers from all age groups and social classes. This is its strength. It appeals to the traditional Sri Lankan consumer, but also attracts the modern, ultra-ambitious, upwardly mobile client.

[www.siddhalepa.com](http://www.siddhalepa.com)

### THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT

#### SIDDHALEPA.

- The Siddhalepa balm, which is a household name today, was launched in 1934.
- Its spa at the SriLankan Airlines business-class lounge at the Bandaranaike International Airport is the only one of its kind in the world.
- It was the first company in the world to obtain an international patent for its Ayurvedic remedy for diabetes.
- Hettigoda Industries is the first Ayurvedic drug-manufacturing company in Asia to have received the prestigious International Standards Quality Systems certificate for its preparations; ISO 9002 certification in 1994 and ISO 9001 in October 2000; a Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) certificate from the Sri Lankan health authorities; and ISO 14001 environmental certification from the relevant authorities in 2003.