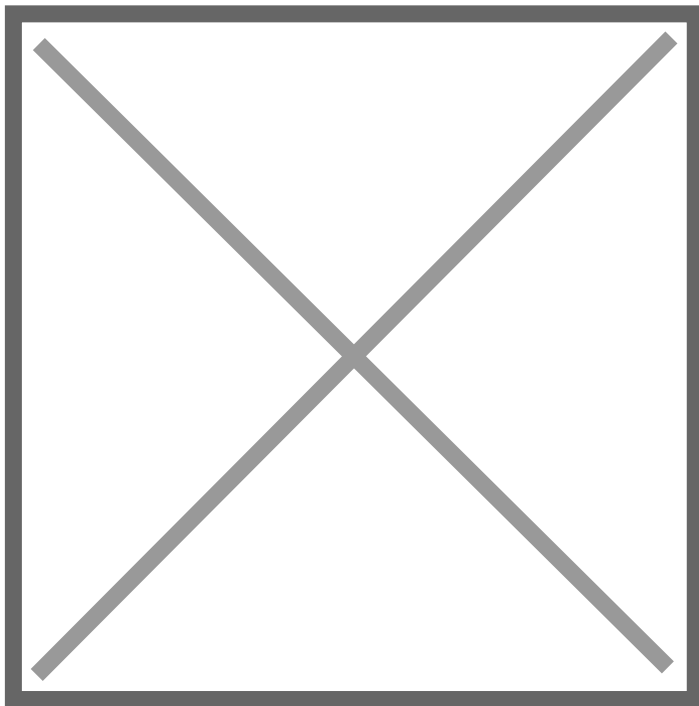


Unilever Food Solutions' innovation disrupts ~4.2Bn China soy sauce market

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Unilever Food Solutions has shaken up China's soy sauce market with a new premium product that ticks all the boxes for chefs. Here, look at how market insights and R&D expertise allowed Knorr Professional to gain an edge in this competitive market.

Dark. Light. Sweet. Seasoned. There are many types of soy sauce used in China, but until recently, there were nearly none made specifically for professional chefs.

Unilever Food Solutions (UFS) has filled this gap with a professional-grade premium product that offers a richer umami and a more pronounced soy flavour that 63 per cent of chefs in China said they needed.

Launched in China in March 2024, Knorr Professional Seasoned Soy Sauce has already set a UFS performance record for an innovation launch.

Valued at about ~4.2 billion, the soy sauce market in China is huge but also, unsurprisingly, mature, with consistent demand driven by its everyday use.

However, the fact that 99 per cent of soy sauce brands in China offer the same product for domestic and professional use presented UFS with an opportunity to step into a valuable white space with a whole new proposition.

“Our chefs-for-chefs business approach provides unique insight into what our customers were looking for,” says Joyce Zhou, UFS North Asia Lead, explaining that chefs were voicing a need for a premium soy sauce that would deliver the strong umami taste needed to enhance top dishes and generate consumer appeal.

“This demand from chefs offered us an opportunity to disrupt the highly competitive soy sauce market with a product that answered the needs of professional kitchens.”