

Brain Toniq – the smarter choice for mental clarity

by Paul Vincent

TrueToniqs, a Boulder, Colorado-based organic beverage startup is claiming to have created the world's first non-caffeinated nootropic (see Box) drink that increases mental focus and clarity.

Called Brain Toniq, the beverage has been positively received by consumers in its first two months on the market. Its creator, Scott Ohlgren, told *New Nutrition Business* that he has been convinced for years that Americans are hungry for a non-caffeinated cognitive-enhancing drink. "They want a company to honestly come out with a true functional beverage with efficacious amounts of effective herbs," he says. "They're smart enough now to get that 50mg of ginseng is nothing but window dressing."

Each 8.4oz./250ml can of Brain Toniq contains 1830mg of a proprietary blend of functional ingredients that includes:

- Rhodiola and Eleuthero root extracts which are "both known to improve the performance of mentally demanding tasks under extreme stress and fatigue", according to the company.
- Wild-grown bluegreen algae extract described as an antidepressant and cognition booster by TrueToniqs.
- Dimethylaminoethanol (DMAE), an antioxidant and precursor acetylcholine, a neurotransmitter.
- Alpha-glyceryl phosphoryl choline (A-GPC), the primary building block for acetylcholine.

Ohlgren is at pains to emphasise that Brain Toniq contains a larger-than-average quantity of active ingredients and writes the following on the product's website www.BrainToniq.com:

"Go check other so-called functional beverages. You'll see that they have between 40 and 300 milligrams of ingredients, most of which is caffeine. You can not make an effective cognitive drink on

300 milligrams."

Brain Toniq retails at \$2.59 (€1.78), a price point that's higher than those of most functional beverages available in the US. The company's website justifies the premium in the following way:

"We use 5 to 36 times more active ingredients than any of the 20 top-selling functional beverages. In many, there is only 50 or 100 milligrams. In Brain Toniq, there are over 1800 milligrams. Organic agave syrup is 3-18 times as expensive as other sweeteners (yes, even organic cane sugar)."

Ohlgren only took delivery of his first shipment on 18 October and therefore hasn't secured any major distribution deals yet. "We're obviously scrambling to get in Whole Foods, and other places; it just takes a few months for those distributor paths to be put in place," he told *NNB*. Brain Toniq has been available online since the beginning of October.

"We're getting swamped in internet sales. The minute we announced on the site that we were shipping, orders started coming in," says Ohlgren. "In the first two weeks we shipped throughout the US, but also Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and England."

THE ORIGINS OF BRAIN TONIQ

Ohlgren is "an outspoken proponent, lecturer, and author for a drug-free, pain-free, and disease-free life, using real food nutrition as one's main medicine cabinet". He is the author of a number of books on the diet/disease connection, including *The 28-Day Cleansing Program*, which is the focus of Ohlgren's personal website www.HowHealthWorks.com.

Two years ago Ohlgren was dining with an entrepreneur friend and mentioned his desire to create a drink that could increase cognitive function and allow people to think clearer during the parts of then day when what he calls "head fog" sets in. That evening, their beverage company, TrueToniqs, was conceived.



Nootropics, often referred to as "smart drugs", "smart nutrients", "cognitive enhancers" and "brain enhancers", are substances which claim to boost our cognitive abilities. Nootropics are alleged to work by increasing the brain's supply of neurochemicals (neurotransmitters, enzymes, and hormones), by improving the brain's oxygen supply, or by stimulating nerve growth.

The pair hired two formulation firms, Pro Liquitech and Yellow Emperor. "We went through some wicked formulas," Ohlgren recalls in the statement announcing the launch of Brain Toniq.

"Boxes of roots from Africa would arrive, and small bags of powder from the Amazon jungle. I'd be speaking on the phone in broken English with suppliers in upper Russia and China, and be getting packages from obscure small farms and herbalists throughout the world."

The ambitious nature of the project meant numerous combinations were explored, but however complex the formulation process got, Ohlgren did not lose sight of his goal: "To create a mixture of botanicals that created that vibe you get when all synapses are firing and you get in that zone where work becomes exciting and easy."

The final formulator of Brain Toniq, Andy Levine at Yellow Emperor, was the person who introduced Ohlgren to Chemi Nutra, the North American nutraceuticals industry arm of Chemi S.p.A.

"Up until then, we were only dealing with plant extracts," he explains. "It was Andy that convinced me to open up to the idea of using compounds created from plant sources, and after trying their alpha choline, and speaking at length with their owners, I knew it fit the profile of what I was after."

"No one, to this point, has ever put choline together with other ingredients. If I didn't believe in the concept of nutrient 'synergy' before this, I did after this combo. Each substance enhances the other." TrueToniqs plans to launch other novel functional drinks, incorporating "cutting-edge ingredients", in the near future.