

## Brazilian Market Grows with an Arab Zest

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Sunday, 23 January 2005

Ever since its inauguration in 1991, the Emporium São Paulo supermarket chain, founded by two Arab descendants, can only commemorate. Turned mainly to customers of the A and B class, the company opened its first store in the Moema neighborhood, in the city of São Paulo, Brazil.

They had just 12 employees. The chain currently includes 4 stores and 430 employees. Annual revenues grew 5% in 2004, when compared to the previous year, and 12% in 2003. For 2005, the forecast is growth of 10%.

Despite being small, Emporium does not stand behind large retail stores. The around 8,000 people who visit the stores every day each spend around US\$ 11 per purchase.

In the Pão de Açúcar supermarket chain, for example, which belongs to the Brazilian Distribution Company, the largest chain in the country, the average purchase is for around US\$ 8.50, according to a financial report published by the company.

"Different from what happens at larger chains, where the owners are far from the stores, we can provide services directly to our customers," stated Juliano Hannud, one of the owners of Emporium.

He and his partner, Marcos Maluf, try to solve the problems of each customer and hear their opinions about the supermarket.

### Arab Culture

"At our stores, we have preserved an important trace of the Arab culture, receiving people well and making them feel happy at our home. In the same way, we try to receive our customers at our establishment in the same way," stated Hannud, whose grandparents were born in Syria. Maluf, in turn, is a Lebanese descendant.

Sons of tradesmen in the garment sector, the partners who own Emporium also guarantee that they inherited the business ability of the Arabs.

As an example, they mention the purchase of the new counters for the bakery sector at one of their stores.

"We managed to pay in ten instalments, a form of payment that the supplier does not give anyone else," explained Hannud.

On the shelves at the stores it is also possible to find ingredients that are typical of Arab cuisine, such as tahini and halawi.

In addition to these items, you can add frozen kibbehs and sfihas, as well as fruit like nuts, dates and apricots. The presence of these products may be justified.

At their branch in Vila Nova Conceição, a noble neighborhood in the southern zone of the city of São Paulo, of every ten customers that enter the store, three are of Arab origin.

For this year, the partners already have plans. Two of their stores will have their sales area increased. The one on Jurema Avenue, in Moema, will grow from 1,000 square meters to 1,600 square meters.

In the case of the store in Vila Nova Conceição, it will grow to double the current 880 square meters.

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