

## **LINKING FARMERS TO MARKETS - SUSTAINABLE AND RELIABLE PARTNERSHIPS**

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Ineeka<sup>®</sup> is an environmentally and socially responsible producer of 100% organic and fair trade whole leaf teas using an innovative infusion method. Founded in 2004 by Shashank and Sumita Goel, Ineeka has shown great promise and achieved successes at every stage. In a very short time, the company has established distribution agreements and approvals from approximately 1500 stores in the United States including Whole Foods, Wild Oats, Target, Fresh Markets, A&P, Albertsons (Shaws and Acme) and HEB. The all-natural organic teas produced by Ineeka are sourced from developing countries, including India and Egypt, where Ineeka works with the most reliable and competent growers and manufacturers who share the same environmental and social responsibilities vision. The early stage has shown success not only as a business, but in bringing change and improved conditions to the sourcing regions through a high level of subsistence and sustainability and the guarantee of a secure marketplace.

Ineeka continues to grow and receive attention. Ineeka was recently awarded the Outstanding Beverage Gold award (This prestigious award is considered the Oscar of the Food and Beverage industry) at New York's 52<sup>nd</sup> Fancy Food Show for its Tréleela Spearmint Lavender Charm tea (the Spearmint in the tea was sourced from Egypt) and was the Finalist (Silver award winner) for Outstanding New Product and Outstanding Packaging and Design. This was the first time in the last decade that a tea was selected amongst thousands of products as the winner in the Outstanding Beverage category. It competed with all hot and cold beverages including chocolate drinks, juices, sodas etc. Within a year of its launch, Ineeka has already won 6 awards, including "Most Innovative Company in Illinois" presented by the State of Illinois in 2005.

Currently Ineeka's supply chain (from which products are sourced) include 8 certified organic, biodynamic and Fair Trade farms in India spread over 12,000 acres and supporting 25,000 people and 800 farmers in Egypt (from Aswan to Alexandria) cultivating 9,000 acres .

Through this market success case study, Shashank, the Founder of Ineeka along with other members of the panel which include the other significant participants in the supply chain will present to the audience a very compelling real life successful story of Ineeka linking Farmers to Markets and making a difference to the living conditions of thousands of people worldwide and thereby creating a sustainable future for them for generations to come. Members of the panel will include Sanjay Bansal of Ambootia in India, Helmy Abouleish of Sekem, Egypt and top management representation from a significant retailer in the USA.

The panel will focus on tracing the supply chain from farm to market and how these group of companies were able to revolutionize the traditional tea supply chain

(traditionally sold through multiple middlemen and auctions) and establish strategic partnerships with companies all over the world and establish direct supply chains, how they were able to eliminate the middlemen other than those who added value and how they were able to increase the net income to the farmers. Within the presentation these leaders will present how they were able to raise the socio economic standards of 25,000 people living on the farms in India and the impact on the 800 farmers in Egypt, how a sustainable environment was established at all levels, how the facilities and hence quality were upgraded to world standards, how with the assistance of the retail buyers Ineeka was able to penetrate at least 1500 retailers. Shashank will share with the audience how he and his company started working with partner communities in Egypt, India, New Zealand and Europe at the insistence of their customers who chose them to take on the task of training these communities and farms to meet international quality standards. Furthermore Shashank will discuss how Ineeka plans to mirror this success that these farmers have had in other countries including Morocco and Madagascar to establish further levels of sustainability for the farmers and secure their links to International markets and customers. How these same retailers are now approaching Ineeka to introduce additional products lines within the food categories which will further allow Ineeka to increase the variety of products that it will be sourcing from the Middle East and Africa amongst other regions – how this will help the communities understand International standards and logistics.