



# BARILLA REFORMULATION CASE STUDY



MASTERS OF PASTA

## WHO:

**The Barilla Group** is a fourth-generation, family-owned Italian food company, headquartered in Parma, Italy, where it was founded in 1877. Today, with close to 8,500 employees in over 100 countries around the world, it is a global leader in pasta, with products also in the pasta sauce, pesto, sweet

biscuit, bread and crispbread categories.

**Product range:** Barilla pasta (Classic Blue Box, Collezione, Gluten Free, Wholegrain); Barilla pasta sauces: tomato sauces; pesto sauces.

## COMMITMENT TO FOOD & NUTRITION:

Barilla takes inspiration from the Mediterranean lifestyle, for both the nutritional value of the Mediterranean Diet, and for the relevance given to a healthy lifestyle, including regular physical exercise and the convivial consumption of food.

Barilla is committed to continuously improving the nutritional profile of all of its products - existing and new - as well as ensuring they are tasty, safe and contribute to a balanced diet. All Barilla products are GMO-free, contain no hydrogenated fats or oils, nor artificial colourings or preservatives. Strict criteria are applied in selecting ingredients to ensure both nutritional quality and food safety.

The rules of this commitment have been formalized over the years into the Barilla Nutritional Guidelines with thresholds for total and saturated fats, salt, sugar and fibre. These Guidelines were defined in 2009 in collaboration with Barilla's Health and Wellbeing Advisory Board, and international dietary guidelines (World Health Organization), and now underpin the continuous nutritional improvement of existing and new products. The Barilla Nutritional Guidelines are mandatory for all new products launched since 2014 and are applied retrospectively for the reformulation of existing products.

## COMMITMENT TO SALT REDUCTION:

Barilla's commitment to salt reduction is based on the scientific evidence that salt levels in certain prepared foods could significantly contribute to the overall dietary intake of salt, and that average levels of intake (estimated between 9-12g/day)

can contribute to increased blood pressure and cardiovascular health issues. As such, a daily intake of 5g salt maximum is recommended by the World Health Organization.

## PROGRESS SO FAR WITH SALT REDUCTION:

The reformulation program started in 2010, targeting gradual reductions in sodium, total and saturated fat, and sugar and improvements in wholegrains and fibre. So far, 487 recipes have been reformulated across the sauces, filled pasta, dry bread, soft bakery and biscuits categories. A significant part of the portfolio is undergoing sodium reduction including sauces, filled pasta, soft bread, dry bread, and crispbread.

**All reductions are mainly achieved by cutting salt levels and rebalancing the recipe to ensure the same levels of consumer acceptability. The reductions are made using a step-by-step approach, monitored through quantitative sensory research and qualitative consumer sessions. Since 2010, 128 recipes have been reformulated to reduce the salt content.**

Specific to pasta sauces, Barilla has set a sodium content target for its tomato-based sauces of 0.4g sodium per 100g of product as the maximum. The calculation of 0.4g of sodium per 100g of product is based on the following:

- The main meal should account for about 1/3 of daily energy, therefore, applying the same criteria to sodium intake it means 800mg of sodium.
- A regular portion of 85g of pasta has an average contribution of 230mg sodium. A regular portion of a tomato-based sauce is recommended at 85g, which would contribute an average of 340mg sodium.
- A total of 570mg of sodium would be reached, leaving 230mg of sodium available for the addition of other meal components containing sodium.

# ONGOING SALT REDUCTION PROGRAM:

Barilla produces over 35 tomato-based sauces and 12 pesto sauces that reach consumer tables all over the world. The objective is to reduce the salt content of all its red sauces below 1% of NaCl or 400mg of sodium per 100g of product by 2020. To date, Barilla has:

## 16 recipes of tomato-based sauce

- 13 with a salt content already below 1% salt
- 3 with a salt content above 1% and between 1-1.25%
- Olive sauce, with salt content reduced in two steps:
  1. from 1.88 to 1.20g/100g in Q1, 2018
  2. from 1.20 to 1.05g/100g in Q3, 2019

## 4 recipes of salse

- with a salt content already below 1% salt

## 11 recipes of bolognese and protein-based sauces

- with a salt content already below 1% salt

## 12 recipes of pesto & pestati

- Pesto Genovese and Pesto Genovese without garlic achieved a salt reduction respectively by 4% and 7%

## \*Note on Olive Sauce

The improvement of the Olive sauce recipe has been carried out in two steps. The first step was completed at the beginning of 2018 with a salt content reduction starting from 1.88 to 1.20g/100g, while reducing the added sugar from 1.23% to 0.60% in the recipe (from 5.0g/100g to 4.5g/100g). This new Olive sauce recipe is already available in Australia. In 2019, a second step has been completed to reduce the salt level further, down to 1.05g/100g. This recipe will be available in Australia by the end of 2019 with the goal to further reduce the salt content to 1.00g salt per 100g; currently on track to be achieved in 2020.

# BEST APPROACH TO SALT REDUCTION & KEY LEARNINGS:

**Barilla's experience in nutritional improvement over the last 10 years across the entire portfolio, and specifically on pasta sauces, has demonstrated that the winning way to bring nutritionally improved and consumer-preferred products to market is via a step-approach that progressively reduces the salt content of each product.**

This leaves time for consumers to adjust to the new taste profile and adapt through successive stages to a lower salt level.

This progressive approach to salt reduction and to nutritional improvement is what drives the company, both on red sauces as well as on pesto, where the challenge is even more ambitious given the crucial role played by salt as a natural stabilizer of this product. Nonetheless, Barilla is fully committed to continuously improve the nutritional profile, and specifically reduce the salt content, of the whole sauce portfolio in the years to come.

This commitment is perfectly summarized by Company Chairman, Mr Guido Barilla, who says,

***“We consider the company’s position not as a personal privilege, but as a responsibility for the transmission of values, behaviours and skills that must be nurtured over time for generations to come.”***

## CONTACT

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