

## **Peter Black Healthcare - Home of Vitamins and Mineral Supplements.**

The finale to the season brought members to Swadlincote in Derbyshire, the home of Peter Black Healthcare. Part of the Peter Black Group, the Healthcare Operation manufactures and packs about 30% of the vitamins, mineral supplements and herbal products sold in the UK.

Andrew Burbage, the Technical Director, began by explaining how the original company, English Grains, started its life selling grain and animal feed locally but diversified into manufacturing vitamins before being bought by Peter Black in 1989. As business increased it became clear that a new factory would be needed and in 1995 the present site was opened. Since then Peter Black acquired Ferrosan, its main competitor in 1997, as well as buying the Gerard House brand from Scholl.

The company employs around 350 people and has modern manufacturing and packing facilities which produce over 1100 different product lines for a wide customer base. Customers include the major retailers with a growing number of contract customers such as SB, who see the benefits of offering vitamin and herbal remedies alongside traditional OTC medicines. The company also has a wide range of branded products including Red Kooga, Healthcrafts, Gerard House and herbal remedies such as Natracalm and Natrasleep. Another aspect of their business is the growing Mail Order operation. The telesales call centre is based in Kent and can handle over 20,000 enquiries a day for their three brands. Two are competitively priced VMS brands whilst the third is a specialist range sold to doctors and pharmacies. Customer service is paramount and the call centre can provide specialist advice to their customers ensuring the correct advice is given. About to be launched is an online ordering service at [www.naturesbestonline.com](http://www.naturesbestonline.com).

The factory has to be able to rapidly respond to customer demand by quickly replenishing existing products and providing innovative new ones. A recent example is the development of a children's multivitamin tablet embossed with a train, to be launched in conjunction with the latest Thomas the Tank Engine movie.

At present the factory manufactures over 2000 million tablets a year, packing them into over 35 million containers. As part of the ongoing investment the company has recently ordered the new Bosspak machine from Australia capable of filling over 200 bottles a minute. The machine employs a rotary tablet filling turret which can accurately dispense tablets in a stream motion ensuring positive and accurate bottle filling.

Our thanks are extended to Andrew and his colleagues for providing such a fascinating insight into the world of vitamins and mineral supplements.

Ian Morris  
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