

Bringing an innovative product to market: *Assure*®

Introduction

Corus provides steel and aluminium solutions for customers worldwide. Corus Colors is an international business manufacturing pre-finished steel for the building envelope, consumer products and manufactured goods markets. A key market for Corus Colors is Controlled Environmental Surfaces (CES). Markets include hospitals, food and lab work.

In 2000 Corus saw a new opportunity in this market. In the past, Corus produced the steel and then sold it to a company to be coated with an anti-bacterial coating. This wasted time and took income from Corus. Corus has now produced a steel with the anti-bacterial coating built in. The product's brand name is '*Assure*'.

The market

Assure can be used in:

- Walls, doors and ceilings in food processing, food preparation and cold storage facilities.



Distribution

The supply chain for steel products like can be quite long. There are many people involved, not just the end user. For instance, panel manufacturers, architects and building contractors. Corus must highlight the benefits of *Assure* to each group.

Promotion

Corus uses two types:

- Push – Corus highlights the benefits to the supply chain so that they can recommend *Assure* with their customers.
- Pull – Corus tells end users of *Assure* so that they can build into the specification.

Market growth

The market for pre-finished steel with anti-bacterial protection within the food sector is growing. This is due to:

- Increased demand for prepared foods.
- Tougher laws on health standards.
- Both the public and the press stressing food safety.
- Consumers being more likely to take legal action if they become ill from bad food.
- A greater focus on reducing health risks.

Research and development

New product ideas have to be tested to show that:

- The product can be made.
- It is safe.
- It will perform at the right level.
- The market wants it.
- It can make a profit.

Corus uses Total Quality Management that aims to "get it right first time".

Possible marketing strategies

These can be shown in the Ansoff matrix:

Product Market	Existing product	New product
Existing market	1. Market Penetration	2. New Product Development
New market	3. Market Development	4. Diversification

- Market penetration - selling more of a current product in the same market.
- Product development - selling a new product to a current market.
- Market development - selling more of an existing product in a new market.
- Diversification - selling a new product in a new market.

Assure is a new product for current customers in the food market. This is product development. Corus is now looking to target new sectors e.g. hospitals. This would be market development.

Conclusion

Assure is still a new technology for Corus. The company is confident of its success due to the nature and growth of the market. *Assure* has raised the profile of Corus and enhanced its reputation for innovation.

