

# Vibi Plus: The Personal Journey that Lead to an Innovative Health Food Brand

TOBIAS ROBERTS <sup>1</sup>  KAREN PENDERGRASS <sup>2</sup> 

Roberts, T., Pendergrass, K. (2023). **Vibi Plus: The Personal Journey that Lead to an Innovative Health Food Brand.** Third Party Certification Research. The Paleo Foundation.

<sup>1</sup>Department of Community Research, The Paleo Foundation, El Salvador.

<sup>2</sup>Department of Standards, The Paleo Foundation, Encinitas, CA

## CONTACT



<sup>1</sup>Email: [tobias@paleofoundation.com](mailto:tobias@paleofoundation.com)

<sup>2</sup>Email: [karen@paleofoundation.com](mailto:karen@paleofoundation.com)

<sup>2</sup>Twitter: [@5wordsorlesskp](https://twitter.com/5wordsorlesskp)

## KEYWORDS

- Vibi Plus
- Third-party Certification
- Keto Certification
- Dietary Fiber
- Keto Diet
- Prebiotics
- Gut Microbiome
- Martin Ruetten

**THIRD-PARTY CERTIFICATION RESEARCH****Vibi Plus: The Personal Journey that Lead to an Innovative Health Food Brand****Tobias P. Roberts**<sup>1</sup>  | **Karen Pendergrass**<sup>2</sup> <sup>1</sup>Department of Community Research,  
The Paleo Foundation, El Salvador<sup>2</sup> Department of Standards, Paleo  
Foundation, Encinitas, CA**Correspondence**Tobias P. Roberts  
Department of Standards, Paleo  
Foundation, Encinitas, CA**Contact**<sup>1</sup>Email: [tobias@paleofoundation.com](mailto:tobias@paleofoundation.com)<sup>2</sup>Email: [karen@paleofoundation.com](mailto:karen@paleofoundation.com)<sup>2</sup>Twitter: [@5WordsorlessKP](https://twitter.com/5WordsorlessKP)**Keywords**Vibi Plus, Third-party Certification, Keto  
Certification, Dietary Fiber, Keto Diet,  
Prebiotics, Gut Microbiome, Martin  
Ruette**Abstract**

Many health food companies and brands originate due to the founder's personal struggles with some sort of debilitating health issue and their direct experience in how dietary and lifestyle changes can help respond to this health problem. It is this personal experience that is often the catalyst for the creation of the brand and provides the energy that fuels the first years of growth of the company. In the case of the high-fiber drink Vibi Plus, the combination of personal experience, entrepreneurial savvy, and the intelligent employment of different third party certifications helped the founder create a solid and successful health food brand.

**KEYWORDS**

Third-party Certification, Keto certification, Dietary Fiber, Keto Diet, Probiotics, Prebiotics, Vibi Plus, Health Food Brands, Personal Experience, Gut Microbiome, Martin Ruette, Digestive Health

**1 | INTRODUCTION**

In the rapidly evolving landscape of the health food industry, the intertwining of personal health struggles with brand creation has become a notable trend. This phenomenon is more than a mere business strategy; it reflects a deeper connection between individual health experiences and the pursuit of innovative solutions in the realm of nutrition and wellness. The story of Vibi Plus, a pioneering health beverage enriched with prebiotic fibers, exemplifies this link.

The inception of Vibi Plus can be traced back to the founder Martin Ruette's personal battle with a serious health condition, rooted in dietary deficiencies. This experience not only paved the way for a profound understanding of the pivotal role of dietary fiber in gut health but also ignited a quest to develop a product that addressed a widespread nutritional gap.

This introduction aims to explore the intricate relationship between personal health experiences and the development of successful health food brands. It delves into the challenges and insights gained from Ruette's journey, the scientific basis of prebiotic fibers in promoting gut health, and how Vibi Plus carved a niche in the market by addressing the specific needs of consumers, especially those adhering to dietary regimes like the Keto diet. Additionally, the role of certifications and consumer awareness in brand growth will be examined, highlighting how personal experiences and scientific understanding can converge to create products that not only fill market voids but also contribute significantly to public health and nutrition [EXHIBIT 1].

In this context, the narrative of Vibi Plus serves as a case study, shedding light on the broader implications of individual health journeys in the realm of health food

innovation and the potential impact on consumer well-being.

## 2 | THE IMPORTANCE OF PERSONAL EXPERIENCE IN DEVELOPING SUCCESSFUL HEALTH FOOD BRANDS

Many health food companies and brands originate due to the founder's personal struggles with some debilitating health issue and their direct experience in how dietary and lifestyle changes can help respond to that particular health food problem. This direct and personalized experience often plays a major role in the quality of product development and the authenticity of initial advertising and publicity campaigns.

In the case of Vibi Plus, a healthy beverage loaded with **prebiotic fibers**, the founder, Martin Ruetter, had suffered from a debilitating health issue that was caused in part by a lack of dietary fiber in his daily consumption. The combination of his "serial entrepreneur" nature and his direct experience with positive health outcomes that resulted from healthier eating habits with an emphasis on a fiber-rich diet eventually led to the development of a high-fiber drink that delivers 27 percent of one's daily fiber while also tasting great.

"For many years, I unknowingly struggled with a debilitating health condition. During this time, I experienced symptoms like depression, explosive behavior, constant irritability, and discomfort after meals, which only worsened my mood," Ruetter tells The Paleo Foundation. "I attributed these issues to eating out regularly due to my job. However, my life took a drastic turn when I woke up in the hospital one day, having no recollection of what had happened."

Ruetter suffered a four-day coma that was due to a severe diverticulitis crisis, which had led to the onset of peritonitis. This life-threatening situation required extensive treatment, and he eventually underwent

a 12-hour surgery to reconstruct his entire digestive system. During the extensive digestive surgery, his stomach, valves, and a significant portion of his intestine had to be rebuilt. The six-month recovery process was excruciating and convinced Ruetter that he needed to undergo important changes in his dietary routines to avoid similar health crises in the future.

"Upon leaving the hospital, my doctors advised me to adopt a high-fiber diet, and that's when I started trying various fiber supplements," Ruetter says.

"Unfortunately, most of them only aggravated my stomach or caused bloating and cramps, leaving me desperate for answers. Determined to understand and address my ongoing pain, I delved into researching my condition and fiber supplements extensively."

As Ruetter was recovering from his surgery and researching the best ways to respond to his health condition, he found a scarcity of relevant information about the role, function, and importance of prebiotic fibers. Though he did find increasing medical enquiry into the importance of the gut microbiome, he felt that the significance of prebiotic fibers was not receiving the same level of interest in the medical research community nor from the health food community.

"I started writing to companies that were testing prebiotics and asked for help. I wrote to labs from 44 countries and received samples from all of them," Ruetter recounts. "In my lab I started testing formulations and discovered that prebiotics were very sensitive and broke down very easily into sugar."

Due to the his lab limitations, Ruetter and the beginnings of his company Vibi Plus eventually partnered with four labs in Belgium, Germany, the USA, and Brazil. Together with these labs, they began searching for a stable prebiotic molecule that could be used on a ready-to-drink beverage that would effectively provide the important prebiotic fibers while also being accepted by consumers. "After a painstaking 12-year journey, we found a long chain Polidextrose that was net carb zero and had an



**EXHIBIT 1:** Vibi + Prebiotic Hydration™ in Lemon Lime, Orange Mango, Blueberry Pomegranate, and Strawberry Kiwi.

impressive 15-months stability,” Ruetter tells us. “We started group testing, and had a fantastic result.”

The end result was that **Vibi Plus** was born as a health food brand. The company was one of the first to provide a healthy beverage with an implicit focus on providing dietary prebiotic fiber to people. “We wanted to design a product that positively impacted the lives of those who, like me, had struggled with gut-related issues for far too long,” Ruetter relates. By combining essential vitamins with prebiotics in natural spring water, Vibi+® aims to offer a unique and effective solution that can improve overall well-being and digestive health for countless individuals.

### 3 | PREBIOTICS, PROBIOTICS, AND THE IMPORTANCE OF DIETARY FIBER

In recent years, millions of consumers worldwide have taken an increased interest in the role of the gut microbiome in keeping us healthy. More specifically, consumers are actively searching for health food products that claim to be filled with essential probiotics. According to one recent study, the global prebiotic ingredients market was valued at USD 7.15 billion in 2022 and it is predicted to be worth around USD 22.71 billion by 2032, with a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 12.30% from 2023 to 2032.

For Ruetter, though probiotics most certainly play an essential role in good health, most consumers do not understand that these beneficial bacteria require certain elements to thrive.

“Probiotics are good, live bacteria that compose our gut microbiome. Those live bacteria are responsible for our digestion and our gut health,” Ruetter explains. “However, like anything alive, probiotic bacteria also need food and hydration to flourish and stay healthy.

The food for our probiotic bacteria are called prebiotics and we can find prebiotics in vegetables, cereals, fruits, etc.” Put another way, prebiotic fiber is responsible for feeding the good bacteria in your gut thus helping probiotic bacteria thrive through a balanced digestive system.

According to the World Health Organization, an adult needs to consume around 30 grams of prebiotic fiber per day to maintain a healthy microbiome. Unfortunately, most people do not receive anywhere near that amount. “Consuming 30 grams a day of prebiotic fiber per day is not easy for the average consumer,” Ruetter believes. For example, a person would have to eat 22 plums in order to consume an average of 8 grams of prebiotic fiber, which is less than one-third of the recommended amount. On the other hand, that amount of prebiotic fiber can be found in one bottle of Vibi’s health food beverages.

Vibi’s beverages also are unique in that they are specifically designed to nourish the healthy probiotic bacteria in our microbiome throughout the entire digestive system, all the way to the colon. “Unlike most fiber supplements that primarily consist of short-chain prebiotic fiber molecules which are quickly broken down and absorbed in the early stages of the digestive system, Vibi employs long-chain prebiotic fiber,” Ruetter explains. “This unique feature allows for slow absorption, ensuring that the probiotics in our gut receive a sustained source of nourishment and hydration throughout the entire digestive tract.”

As a result, Vibi promotes a healthier gut and helps alleviate common issues such as cramps and bloating that often affect people suffering from a lack of prebiotic fiber in their diet. For people who struggle to consume the recommended amount of prebiotic fiber, Vibi offers a convenient, refreshing, and delicious way to help provide hydration and health to your microbiome.

Vibi's refreshing, prebiotic-packed beverages also fill an important void in certain health food circles. One of the predominant criticisms that many medical professionals, nutritionists, and other individuals make towards low-carb diets like the Keto Diet is that it may be hard for people to get sufficient amounts of fiber into their diet. For people who gravitate towards the Paleo or Keto lifestyles, getting the fiber they need for their digestive health is often one of the most difficult aspects of following this diet.

According to the prestigious Mayo Health Clinic, "dietary fiber increases the weight and size of your stool and softens it. A bulky stool is easier to pass, decreasing your chance of constipation. If you have loose, watery stools, fiber may help to solidify the stool because it absorbs water and adds bulk to stool." Dietary fiber then plays an essential role in maintaining overall bowel health. Similarly, prebiotic fibers, as we have seen above, are also essential for feeding the millions of bacteria that keep our gut healthy.

"Doctors are not wrong (about the importance of dietary fiber)," Ruetter believes. "The Paleo and Ketogenic diets are low-carbohydrate diets for weight control. The focus of those diets is protein and animal products. Prebiotics are mainly found in vegetables, fruits, and cereals. Therefore, people who strictly follow Ketogenic diets most likely don't consume enough prebiotic fiber."

The four flavors of the Vibi Plus beverages are all made with natural ingredients, including prebiotic fiber that is 100% plant-based. By packing 27 percent of your daily fiber needs into one 16.9 fluid ounce bottle, Vibi helps provide the necessary prebiotic fiber to people following Keto and other low-carb diets in order to maintain a healthy microbiome.

#### **4 | THE ROLE OF THIRD-PARTY CERTIFICATIONS IN GROWING THE BRAND**

Given the fact that the Keto Diet has long been one of the most popular diets around the world, Ruetter and the team at Vibi Plus decided early on in the development process that connecting with the Keto community would be a great strategy for reaching out to health-conscious consumers. Many people who religiously follow the Keto diet or other low carb diets for weight loss goals or other positive health outcomes are beginning to understand the importance of finding fiber supplements to complement that dietary plan.

"Getting the Keto certification was important to help consumers identify Vibi as a Keto-friendly and good source of prebiotic fiber," Ruetter states. "Consumers that are on the Keto diet are generally looking for products to help them with their overall gut health. Identifying Vibi as a Keto certified product can help consumers to plan a proper diet."

When starting out as a brand, Ruetter and his team at Vibi Plus decided to employ specific marketing strategies that focused on using their Keto certification to help the brand stand out from the competition. "We placed the Keto certification on our labels, communications, merchandising, and on our presentations to retail buyers," he says. "The main focus of our communication is to bring prebiotic awareness to consumers. However we believe it is extremely important to include the Keto certification for those on a low carb diet."

The decision to seek out Keto certification through The Paleo Foundation was reinforced by the number of people in the Keto community who were specifically looking for sources of fiber that didn't increase their overall carbohydrate intake. "During our sampling in stores, we noticed a great number of people on a Ketogenic diet asking questions and interested in Vibi's ability to provide prebiotic fiber without the carbohydrates," Ruetter narrates. "We also noted that consumers on a Keto diet were more aware of the need to maintain a healthy microbiome and generally showed a greater understanding about the role of probiotics and prebiotics in overall health. Those consumers are also more aware of how important their diet is to their overall health."

Ruette and his team also utilize their Keto certification from The Paleo Foundation to attract the attention of retail buyers. "We always present our Keto certification to retailers," he says. "In every initial form we fill out for retailers, there is a place to make note of your Keto certification. Retailers are very aware of Keto products and their growth on their overall sales. Thus, our Keto certification has helped us during all our presentations to retail buyers."

Creating a successful brand that carves out an underserved niche in the health food industry is never easy. The experience of Vibi Plus showcases how this can be done successfully and how third-party certification programs can play an essential role in bringing awareness to consumers and helping connect consumers to companies that respond to those underserved niches.

## 5 | DISCUSSION

**Personal Struggles as a Catalyst for Innovation:** The journey of Martin Ruette and Vibi Plus is emblematic of how personal health struggles can become a powerful catalyst for innovation in the health food sector. Ruette's own debilitating health issues, stemming from a lack of dietary fiber, led him to recognize a significant gap in the market for fiber-rich health beverages. This personal connection to the problem he aimed to solve endowed his product development with a unique authenticity and a deeper understanding of consumer needs, particularly those struggling with similar health issues. Such personal experiences often result in products that are not only commercially viable but also deeply resonant with a specific consumer segment.

**The Scientific Foundation of Dietary Fiber:** The emphasis on dietary fiber in Vibi Plus's product line highlights the growing recognition of the role of gut microbiome in overall health. Ruette's exploration into prebiotic fibers, driven by his own health journey, aligns with current scientific understanding of the importance of these fibers in nurturing gut bacteria.

The development of Vibi Plus illustrates how personal health experiences can dovetail with scientific research to create products that are both innovative and beneficial from a health standpoint.

**Addressing Nutritional Gaps in Specific Diets:** Vibi Plus's success also sheds light on the importance of addressing nutritional gaps in popular diets such as Keto and Paleo. These diets, while effective for certain health goals, often overlook the necessity of adequate fiber intake. Vibi Plus's product, by offering a substantial amount of prebiotic fiber in a convenient form, caters to this specific need, highlighting how health food brands can play a crucial role in enhancing the nutritional balance of contemporary dietary trends.

**The Role of Certifications in Brand Growth:** The pursuit of Keto certification by Vibi Plus underscores the strategic role of third-party certifications in health food branding. These certifications not only provide a mark of trust and quality to consumers but also aid in aligning the product with specific consumer lifestyles and diets. For Vibi Plus, the Keto certification was not just a label, but a strategic tool to connect with a target audience deeply invested in their dietary choices and health.

**Consumer Awareness and Education:** The emergence of brands like Vibi Plus also points to the evolving role of health food companies in consumer education. By highlighting the importance of prebiotic fibers and addressing common misconceptions about dietary fiber, Vibi Plus and similar brands contribute to a broader understanding of nutritional science among consumers. This educational aspect is critical in an industry often clouded by misinformation and marketing hype.

## 6 | CONCLUSION

The case of Vibi Plus is a testament to the profound impact that personal health experiences can have on the development of successful health food brands. It



illustrates the intersection of personal insight, scientific research, and market needs, resulting in products that are not only innovative but also deeply rooted in enhancing consumer health. As the health food industry continues to evolve, the synergy between personal experiences and brand development is likely to remain a significant driver of innovation and market responsiveness.

## 7 | CERTIFICATIONS

- KETO Certified
- GMO-Free

## 8 | CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors report no conflicts of interest.

## 9 | REFERENCES

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