

Meet Sander van Ooij

Quality is embedded throughout the whole company

As Managing Director of Delinuts, Sander van Ooij thrives in a dynamic environment. We sat down with him to talk about why he chose food, what keeps his learning curve going, and why Acomo's structure is unique.

You joined Acomo in 2013. You've seen Acomo from both sides: holding and operations. What attracted you? And what made you stay?

Honestly, I didn't know Acomo before joining. I came from a consulting background (auditing and banking). The tangible world of food and the dynamic environment tempted me. I was the fourth employee in the holding. After 6 years I made the switch to Delinuts as the Financial Director.

What made me stay? Three things: the people, the products, and the entrepreneurial freedom. We're still working with largely the same team after all these years. We've more than doubled in size over the last 7 years, which means constant new challenges and opportunities for people to step up. It's like an adventure story; my learning curve has never stopped.

We're empowered to act as entrepreneurs whilst leveraging Acomo's scale and position in the market. Acomo's financial strength and market position enable



us to grow through acquisitions and seize opportunities that wouldn't be available to companies of our size operating independently.

Delinuts operates in a fast-moving and global market. What are the key priorities you focus on day-to-day?

Reliable delivery, despite all the unpredictability in the market. Our purchasing and sales teams discuss price developments multiple times a day for our 200 most important products. We adjust in real-time based on markets and exchange rates. Our open office helps information flow quickly.

Beyond operations, it's about the people and maintaining our informal but accountable culture as we grow to 50 people. Trusting people to grow into roles, to make decisions, to be part of building something bigger together.

Acomo's mission is 'Building Routes to Healthier Foods'. What does that mean to you and how you work at Delinuts?

Our full portfolio benefits from the transition to plant-based foods. This makes us future proof as a company. We have so many healthy products. I realize that even more when working on ESG. Acomo is the driving force that enables investments and helps us meet market demands.

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It means adding value beyond trading. The new facility in Ede, our acquisitions of Delinuts Nordics in Sweden and Manuzzi in Italy, create synergies and collaboration that strengthens our offer to customers.

It also means our SBTi (Science Based Target Initiative) commitment. That's about genuinely building sustainable supply chains for our customers by taking credible, science-based climate action and being ahead of where the market is going.

What's the most unpredictable part of running a nuts company? What keeps you up at night?

I used to lie awake because of supply chain interruptions, crop issues, transport problems, high prices. But I've realized that's where Acomo's structure matters. Acomo facilitates opportunities and solutions that allow for creating buffer stocks, having multiple suppliers, being amazingly agile. Acomo as our strong partner helps us to minimize risks and brings a competitive advantage.

That's why I've learned to trust our operating model, even though circumstances are so dynamic. Now we have stable and growing performance.

What makes the nuts supply chain unique compared to other food ingredients industries? And how do you ensure that these supply chains remain resilient?

Geographic concentration combined with quality sensitivity. You're dependent on specific regions, and weather events or political instability immediately impact global supply.

We ensure resilience in our supply chains through our knowledge and experience, buffer stocks, and multiple



certified suppliers. We only work with GFSI-certified partners. That limits our sourcing options but mitigates risk significantly.

Quality and food safety are essential in our sector. How do you ensure Delinuts maintains high standards while continuing to grow?

We live quality at Delinuts. It's not just owned by the Quality department; it's embedded across the whole company. We have a high internal food safety culture and awareness in each department. Regular training. Internal and external audits.

We only work with certified GFSI partners and comply with BRC certification requirements. We want good food in Europe, including products from outside Europe. To have the safest products, it's about both willingness and meeting regulations.

Sustainability is becoming increasingly important. What role does it play in Delinuts' strategy, and how are customer expectations evolving?

It's moved from nice-to-have to being a differentiator. The motivation comes from our customers. Major retailers want sustainable products at competitive prices. Our SBT I commitment distinguishes us from competitors.

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Customer expectations are evolving. We actively guide them in how to communicate about sustainable products to their consumers. This helps to develop the market for sustainable nuts overall.

Finally, what's a nut-related fact or misconception in your industry you wish more people knew?

That timing matters more than people think. Buyers often assume you can buy products anytime through the year at the same terms. That's not how it works. We advise our customers on the right moment to source the products based on harvests and market movements. When you buy at the right moment, you get better prices and quality.

For us at Delinuts, it's about market knowledge, quality, and relationships. We focus on higher margin concepts where adding value matters, not volume competition.

