

Title:

Home and Office Bottled Water Delivery in Northern Virginia - 5 Valuable Tips for Selecting a Supplier

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Summary:

Throughout the United States many consumers and businesses are electing to purchase bottled drinking water instead of tap or well water. Many consumers are choosing bottled drinking water over tap or well water because of the level of contaminants and bad chlorine related taste.

Keywords:

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Article Body:

Throughout the United States many consumers and businesses are electing to purchase bottled drinking water instead of tap or well water. The trend is clearly on the rise. A recent study of the bottled water industry indicates that U.S. bottled water sales and consumption continue to multiply at double digit rates as consumers and businesses increasingly choose bottled water as a beverage of choice. (Source: International Bottle Water Association Press Release dated April 13, 2006, <http://www.bottledwater.org>) Many consumers are choosing bottled drinking water over tap or well water because of the level of contaminants and bad chlorine related taste.

This increase in demand is significant as bottled water has also gained considerable share from the Carbonated Soft Drink (CSD) market. The CSD market share was also reduced as a result of the recent program to ban the sale of CSD products in school systems.

Private label drinking water is the fastest growing segment of the total bottled water industry.

- Why the Strong Demand for Bottled Water?

The continued growth in bottled water consumption is mainly comprised of four elements, which are as follows:

- Good taste and quality of the product
- Convenience of delivery
- Supplier customer service
- A product line offering that meets the needs of the customer

Country-wide, the bottled water industry has moved quickly to respond to the needs of the market and customers, which results in the increase in bottled water demand and consumption. This trend has also proved evident in the heavily populated area of Northern Virginia in the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan area.

- The Northern Virginia Market for Bottled Water

Northern Virginia population has grown dramatically in the last ten years largely due to the massive homeland security build up after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. This huge influx of population stressed the existing water infrastructure for both tap and well water. Tap water, although tested against FDA standards, still contained a number of potentially hazardous minerals and chlorine additives to kill bacteria. Well water, subjected to chemical and organic pollution and not tested by any government agency, proved also to be undesirable and not beneficial to health.

The State of Virginia ranks among the highest in terms of violation of EPA maximum contaminant levels. The constant influx of population into Northern Virginia will continue to stress the water infrastructure. (Source: Water on Tap: What You Need to Know:

http://www.epa.gov/safewater/wot/pdfs/book_waterontap_full.pdf)

Many of the new arrivals in Northern Virginia are young urban professionals with young families. Most of these people seek healthy alternatives for their drinking water supplies.

Because of water quality problems in Northern Virginia, the growth in bottled water demand seen throughout the country is repeated locally. Strong demand for high-quality, good tasting water coupled with the convenience of local delivery resulted in the emergence of bottled water firms with product and service offerings of varying quality.

- 5 Valuable Tips for Selecting a Bottled Water Supplier

In Northern Virginia there are many choices facing the consumer that seek an alternative to tap and well water. It should be revealed, however, that the many suppliers in the market are diverse and not uniform in their product quality and

service offerings. The best suppliers meet the customer's expectations in 5 critical areas: Tips for the best choice in each area are listed below.

1. Quality and Taste of Water

Choose the purest, best tasting water. There are many types of water that vary in quality and taste. The United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) defines a number of water categories including Spring Water (water from an underground source) and Purified Water (including distilled water). Each category defines a specific type of bottled water with Purified Water containing no minerals or other contaminants.

In addition to quality, taste is an important consideration. The taste of bottled water should be light and refreshing without any hint of after taste. Not all bottled water products meet these criteria, but those that do are very popular. Take a taste test before deciding to purchase.

Purified Water removes all contaminants, which allows many experts to believe that the distilled/oxygenated Purified Water process produces the highest quality, best tasting bottled water.

2. Broad Product Offering

The consumer should look for a company that offers home delivery of high-quality coolers, 5 gallon jugs, small package (12 and 20 oz.), PET products and water accessories. All products should be user friendly and commercial grade with bottle handles, spill-proof caps and other features that ensure the water supply will be convenient and safe.

Since private label water is now available for corporate events, weddings, birthdays, anniversaries and other memorable occasions, a supplier that offers private label drinking water combined with high-quality private label design and production is a plus.

3. Total Customer Satisfaction

Many bottled water suppliers promise customer satisfaction, but few deliver on that promise. A good way to test whether a supplier can guarantee satisfaction is to place a telephone call to the supplier's customer service department. If you reach a human voice on your first call then probabilities are very high that you will receive customer satisfaction; if you receive voicemail or a recording however, then the supplier values cost cutting more than customer service.

Poor customer service will rapidly offset a seemingly low price. Consider total

value including customer service and product quality before agreeing to a "price only" offer.

4. Ease of Ordering

Ease of ordering should be a priority and long term contracts should be avoided. Frequently, some suppliers will quote a very low price but require an onerous one-sided long term contract. The best way to order is with a simple agreement that does not include penalties for cancellation and is customer oriented.

Ordering off the internet is very convenient if the site is truly interactive. Choose a supplier that has an interactive site where a customer can select the type and amount of water, establish delivery schedules, use a credit card for payment with guaranteed security and modify their account on demand.

A limited number of suppliers offer the ability to design private label drinking water on the internet through highly interactive e-commerce sites. The best sites offer multiple layered tools that provide for advanced graphic design and powerful label messages.

Those suppliers who have invested in a powerful, interactive site offer their customers added convenience and flexibility when creating brand messages on private label drinking water.

5. Complementary Products

Home and office delivery of bottled water also offers a distribution channel for other products like coffee and tea. Similar to bottled water, complementary products often vary greatly in quality and customer service satisfaction. The consumer should choose a supplier who offers products of high-quality supported by the best customer service.

Bottled water offers a healthy alternative to tap and well water in Northern Virginia; and home and office delivery offers convenience to consumers and businesses. The quality of product and service offerings in the marketplace differs significantly however. Therefore it is beneficial to the consumer to investigate any potential bottled water supplier with care.