

## Meeting Customer Needs in a Changing Industry

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## Why Me?

- Who knows your customers best- YOU!
- Who knows your environment best – YOU!
- Who knows your goals best – YOU!
  
- Who is in the best position to challenge your current way of thinking – NOT YOU!

## Change Happens



## Changing Forces

- Its easy to see the **BIG** changes
- What about the little ones????

## “How Snapple Got its Juice Back” HBR: Jan 2002

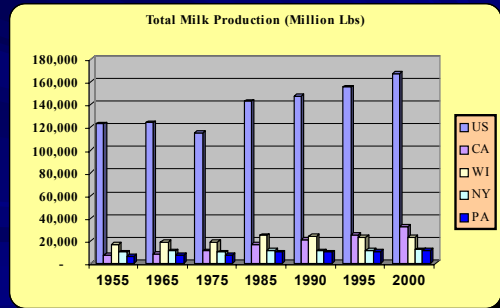
- 1993: Quaker Oats, \$1.7 billion
- 1997: Triarc Beverages, \$300 million
  
- 2000: Sold for about \$1 billion
  
- What does it take to **MAKE** or **BREAK** a dairy?



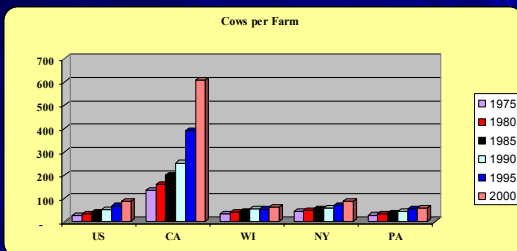
## Changes: Dairy Industry

- Geographic shift in milk production
- Increasing herd size
- Increasing productivity (milk, crops)
- Declining cows and farm numbers
  
- Increased consumer awareness
- Global community concerns

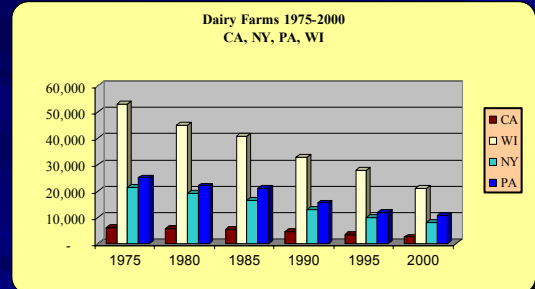
## Geographic Shifts and Increasing Productivity



## Herd Size is Increasing



## Declining Dairy Farm Numbers



## BIG Changes

- From 1980 to 2000
- Farms 300,000+ to 100,000
- Production per cow 11,891 to 18,204
- Total production 128 to 167 billion pounds

## Northeast Dairy Industry

- More stability in farm numbers, more stable infrastructure
- Slower change in herd size – more opportunity for diversity
- Less than US average in per cow production – LOTS OF OPPORTUNITY



## What about the not so big changes?

- Information overload for individuals
  - Need: Information packaging, training
- Small steps, slow changes, traditional culture.
  - Need: Innovative ideas and implementation
- Lack of business systems
  - Need: Strategic, business planning, workforce development.

## Some Laws of the Fifth Discipline

- Today's problems come from yesterday's "solutions".
- The harder you push, the harder the system pushes back.
- Dividing an elephant does not lead to two small elephants.

Senge, 1990

“The only true competitive advantage is the ability to learn faster than your competition.”

Arie de Geus

## How do YOU compete?

- Company support structure
- Independent entrepreneur
- Technical knowledge, confidence, savvy, sales ability, relationship building skills.
- Is it enough?
- What needs are going unmet?

## Challenge the Process

- Ask questions.
- Ask more questions.
- How do you, why do you, why don't you??
- What do you think would happen if?
- Show them!



## Challenge the People

- Teach them HOW
- Teach them WHY
- Ask THEM
- Build communication
- Know their names
- Show them!



## Bridge the Gaps

- Study groups
- On-farm training
- Email info nuggets
- Pictures, features, and employee recognition
- Invest time where the return is greatest.



## Idea Practitioner

- Scouting – Networks, conferences, text
- Packaging – What, how, why
- Advocating – If, then
- Implementing – Step by step

Davenport et al. 2003

## Help the Best Get Better!!

- Encourage Risk
- Build Trust
- Lead and Inspire
  - Pay attention to the younger generation.
  - They have big shoes to fill.



## Meeting the needs for tomorrow

- Be a change agent
- Build communication
- Work within the system
- Be an idea practitioner
- Encourage risk



Everyone thinks of  
changing the world,  
but no one thinks of  
changing himself.

- Leo Tolstoy