



Legacy & Leadership

Ron Dunford was named president and CEO of Schreiber Foods in 2019. He is Schreiber's eighth president and CEO.

Dunford has more than 35 years of experience in the dairy industry with roles in operations, sales/marketing and general management. He joined Schreiber Foods in 1996 at the Green Bay, Wisconsin, home office. He was named a vice president in 2000, senior vice president in 2002, president and chief operating officer of Schreiber chain sales in 2003, president and chief operating officer, operations, in 2006, and president Schreiber US in 2014. Additionally, he was elected to the Schreiber Foods board of directors in 2003.

During his tenure, Dunford has helped set the vision and execute the strategy that has resulted in company records for revenue, volume, profit, product quality and safety. He also led the implementation of process excellence, lean manufacturing, the utilization of risk management tools and the integration of new product categories into the company.

Dunford earned a bachelor's degree in Geology from Utah State University in Logan, Utah.

He and his wife Dana have two grown sons and three grandchildren. They are also heavily involved in the community and church activities, and enjoy sporting activities of all kinds.

should articulate what those values are. However, it's more than words on a plaque or statements on a wall; our "core values" are represented and communicated by our actions. Others will calibrate the appropriateness of their own behavior based on the actions of the leader.

adapt to evolving consumers but do so in a well-coordinated fashion so we're not just chasing fads. Additionally, never believe in "good enough," and always be looking to solve the customer's problem, not yours.

Q They say "you learn from your mistakes" please share an example where this was relevant for you?

A My mistakes have been TNTC (too numerous to count). I'll simply share that meaningful lessons, change and growth have come from the mistakes I've made. The key is to not "waste the mistake" by not learning the lesson.

Q What would you cite as an example of a time where your company showed innovation and leadership in the dairy marketplace?

A We were on the leading edge of the industrywide food safety initiative to ensure the dairy industry worked together to protect the consumer. We've hosted industry food safety workshops and shared our key learnings and best practices.

Q What advice would you give someone going into a leadership position for the first time?

A Leadership isn't a title, it's the ability to influence. You have to earn the trust and respect of your team every day. Listen and learn from everyone you meet. No one becomes a great leader by chance; like any other skill, you have to practice daily. Be the kind of leader you want to be led by.

Q What are the most important decisions you made/have made as a leader of your company?

A Two of the most importance decisions for me have always been about strategy and talent. Strategy is knowing where, with what and how the organization will win. Talent is about getting the right people, doing the right things, at the right time. Get the strategy and talent right, and you greatly increase your odds of success.

Q What has been your favorite thing about working in the cheese and dairy industry?

A This is a simple one ... it's the people! From dairy farmers through the supply chain all the way to the customers, I've had the honor of working with some truly amazing people.

Q Please discuss the benefits of collaboration among industry leaders versus the need to "protect your brand."

A This is a great industry, and when we work together on a "pre-competitive" basis to solve common challenges, we all win. Examples are food safety, health and nutrition communication and animal welfare.

Q What is one characteristic that you believe every leader should possess?

A Integrity. People will follow leaders they trust. Trust is the foundation upon which everything is built (partnerships, relationships, great companies, etc.). The best way to establish trust is through consistency of your actions and by doing what you say you will do.

Q How do you encourage creative thinking within your organization?

A I encourage our team to come to work every day with a belief that there is a better way of doing our work. We may not find a better way every day, but if we look hard enough, sooner or later, we'll discover new approaches. I also encourage "simplicity" and to get creative in finding simple solutions to complex problems.

Q What are some of the key concepts that supported the long-term success of your company?

A This is our 75th year as a company, and we've certainly had challenges throughout the journey; however, we've also had our share of success. Among the key concepts contributing to our success are having passionate partners with an ownership mentality, being customer obsessed and continually looking for a better way of doing things.

Q What, in your opinion, does the dairy industry need to do to attract the next generation of leaders?

A The industry should be known as innovative, fun and for making a positive impact in the world. The next generation wants to be part of something bigger than themselves. Also, we should be known for being a great developer of leadership talent.

Q What is the biggest challenge facing the dairy industry today?

A Consumer preference changes, other products competing for share-of-stomach and geo-political challenges. Much of the challenge comes from misinformation about the benefits and nutritional value of dairy products. By the way, not much has changed with this list during the last 35 years.

Q How do you communicate your company's "core values" and encourage others to do the same?

A First, it's important to be "intentional" about the values we want, and we

Q What advice do you have for adapting in an ever-evolving marketplace?

A Have organizational agility. The word agility is defined as "quick and well-coordinated movement." We have to be quick to

Q Have you fostered certain habits throughout your career that have encouraged/promoted your company's success?

A I often teach my five personal success principles: (1) dream big (2) expect success (3) take action (4) play fair and (5) have fun. If you have a habit of doing these things, you're on the right path toward success. CMN