



Legacy & Leadership

Dominique Delugeau is senior vice president of contract manufacturing and industrial sales for Saputo Dairy USA.

Prior to working for Saputo, he held sales and marketing roles at DCI Cheese Co. (later acquired by Saputo) and Arthur Schuman Inc. Delugeau also was vice president of sales and marketing at BelGioioso and was president of Bridel USA, now part of Lactalis North America.

Delugeau has an economical sciences degree from the University of Rennes, France, and an international business degree from the ISG business school in Paris, France. He also has an MBA in international business from EUA/University of San Francisco and completed management courses at IMUA in Tokyo, Japan.

Throughout his career in the dairy industry, Delugeau has been involved in leadership roles with the American Cheese Society, Wisconsin Specialty Cheese Institute, Cheese Importers Association of America, International Dairy Deli Bakery Association and Oldways Cheese Coalition. He currently is on the trade committee of the International Dairy Foods Association and is involved with the U.S. Dairy Export Council and Consortium for Common Food Names.

Delugeau in 2006 was recognized as an “ambassador” of French cheese in the United States by the *Guilde des Fromagers de St Uguzon*, and he also has served as a contest judge in major U.S. and international cheese competitions.

Q How is the dairy industry uniquely positioned as an essential industry to feed the nation and world during the COVID-19 crisis?

A In the U.S., cheese consumption and dairy production in general were on a very strong trajectory the last 10-15 years, including exports. COVID-19 only reinforced the consumer affinity for wholesome and nutritious dairy products. I can see lessons from the crisis and trends that will persist past COVID-19 such as a need for more flexibility in plants and more of a regional approach with contingencies in the supply chain. Customers are looking at just-in-time inventories differently now, and manufacturers need to be more agile in offering logistical solutions.

Q How is the coronavirus pandemic affecting marketing messaging and positioning for dairy products?

A Dairy products in a balanced diet are good for you. Our company has really focused its marketing around convenience for the retail shopper. A special emphasis on social media around brand awareness with easy recipes for family meals has been part of our marketing messaging. We have also answered the call for our customers who have a strong e-commerce presence.

Q How does being part of a leading global dairy company help your U.S. business better serve its customers?

A As a judge in the World Championship Cheese Contest for many years, it has

A Being on four continents with different specificities gives us a unique ability to collaborate and better leverage our international footprint through global learnings. For example, we have an innovation pipeline that includes the UK and Australian initiatives. Finally, it keeps us diversified and balanced.

I am currently on the trade committee with the International Dairy Foods Association and the MARA (Market Access and Regulatory Affairs) committee for the U.S. Dairy Export Council, and the subject of U.S. agility in the international supply chain is something that is of the greatest concern for all the members.

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

A Accepting differences in people and listening; what I call leadership side by side. At the end of the day, you must work hard with willpower and perspective but first you must lead with integrity.

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

A When I first came to the U.S. 35 years ago, cheese consumption was 10 pounds less than the current 38.6 pounds per capita. There are still plenty of opportunities, but what are the next sustainable trends that will be driving growth in the years to come?

In August 2020, I was fortunate enough to be asked to lead our Contract Manufacturing and Industrial Sales channel (CMI)

as a result of the merger of the two Saputo USA divisions. In our fluid division, the pipeline around innovation is deep, and I feel that we have not even touched the surface. So young people with creativity, please join our industry!

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

A It is okay to make mistakes. Discomfort in what we do not know can be challenging. Have the courage to realize that you have limitations. Don't be afraid to take risks.

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

A Learning every day from my industry peers and my work colleagues. Getting involved, giving back to the community and the industry. One of the favorite parts of my job is mentorship: developing people, coaching and training while listening.

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

A Get involved in associations, on boards and committees. In the world of COVID-19, there are many outstanding webinars you can join or advisory groups you can be part of. Listening to other industry issues makes you realize that you are not alone and opens your mind to different ways to tackle problems. It is an ever-changing environment that requires us to respond to the change, but more importantly, to get ahead of the change.

Q What has it been like to watch U.S. cheese's star rise in international competitions and become more competitive on a global scale? What role has your company played in this evolution?

A As a judge in the World Championship Cheese Contest for many years, it has

been a lot of fun to watch and taste the ever-improving quality of U.S.-made cheeses. We should be proud of the products we make in North America. Saputo has supported and won many awards with both its Canadian and U.S.-made products.

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

A Again, give back and share ideas among industry leaders. Sustainability discussions and animal welfare discussions are examples of how we can all work together for a better future.

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

A First, tell young people that yes, they must work hard, but our industry is a lot of fun! Cheese is a cool living food with history, provenance, character and offers unlimited learning opportunities. I also believe we must encourage diversity in our sector, diversity in people, diversity in thoughts. Being international has really helped Saputo to make smarter decisions, becoming more efficient with people engagement and inclusion. This is, I believe, the key to the success of a company.

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

A I learned from my father to always work hard and try to learn new things every day to share with the people I work with. I also believe that you must be authentic. Transparency is important in relationship-building at work and at home. Lead by example.

I believe I have been engaging in sponsoring the development of leaders throughout my career. I have taught them the capacity to do more with the goal of always keeping a balanced life. I have also told them to put in the time with a clear understanding of the task at hand.

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