

BUSINESS KNOW-HOW

Anniversary Showcases Strength Of Family Values

(NAPSA)—Commitment to employees and long-held family values is central to the 50-year success of Sargento Foods Inc., one of the largest privately held cheese companies in America.

Sargento's prosperity as a third-generation family-owned company is a testament to the family and the company's commitment to traditions and values over business acumen. In the United States, less than one-third of family-owned businesses (currently about 18 million) survive to the second generation. Out of those, only 50 percent extend family ownership to a third generation.

According to Dean Fowler, Ph.D., a Certified Management Consultant and family business advisor, Sargento has taken the time and energy to clearly define the core values of its founder, Leonard Gentine Sr. These values have been the cornerstone of Sargento business practices.

"The Gentine family has made commitments to their customers and employees based on their specific family business ethics," says Fowler. "Their reputation is on the line, so it makes upholding their values personal—and not just a marketing maneuver. That spirit of family connection adds to the growing appeal of family-owned companies like Sargento."

Family businesses typically prescribe and adhere to a long-term plan with steady leadership, according to Fowler, making them more committed to consumers over the "long haul." The average tenure for the president of a family-owned company is 25 years versus publicly traded companies that often change presidents according to quarterly performance and short-term shareholder portfolios.



Say cheese: For three generations, a popular manufacturer has kept it all in the family.

In addition to a strong commitment to employees, customers and consumers, Sargento is proud to be a niche specialist, which is characteristic of family-owned businesses. The Sargento reputation for providing superior quality cheese, available in shredded, sliced and snack varieties, is unsurpassed by larger competitors that do not boast the same dedicated focus to cheese—and only cheese.

"Since my father started the company in 1953, we've focused on giving consumers what they want—the best-tasting cheese for making meals and snacks their families will enjoy," says Sargento CEO Lou Gentine, third son of founder Leonard Gentine Sr. "We've never wavered from our commitment to providing the finest products in the most convenient, safe packaging available. That's why we're so incredibly proud to celebrate our 50th anniversary this year."

Sargento Foods Inc., based in Plymouth, Wis., is a leading manufacturer, packager and marketer of natural shredded, sliced and snack cheeses, cheese appetizers, ingredients and sauces. A family-owned company, Sargento has net sales of \$534 million.