
ALEGRIA



ISSUE: Building on local entrepreneurship

ITINERARY 5C

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Location: Théâtre de la Première Scène

PROMOTER

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Presentation of the issue:

Continue the production of organic pasta, with seamless distribution, and re-market a declining product brand.

Project description:

Mrs. Gagné had always wanted to start a business, and her husband came from a family of grocers. She worked at Meunerie Milanaise, which produced biological pasta. This company was growing rapidly; they stopped manufacturing this product to focus on their core operations. Knowing the product and its potential, Mrs. Gagné decided to resume production in Stornoway. The challenge was to re-market a declining brand. The actions taken were to: revamp the image with the support of a specialized firm, obtain certifications (organic and others), create a website and recipe cards, participate in various events, use the direct networks and buying groups, develop a fundraising program.

There were pitfalls, the distributor let them down, and they had to find others.

When they received a very specific request for the production of high-protein pasta, the company seized the opportunity. A new production line required the hiring of 12 people. A new alternative is explored, the production of gluten-free pasta.

The key elements to remember according to the promoter:

- have the entrepreneurial spirit and a strong knowledge about the product;
- be prepared to devote many hours to the project;
- surround yourself with skilled people;
- build a good team;
- ensure ongoing product development (adding new products or services, such as the fundraising program).

QUESTION PERIOD

Q.: Have you put any thought on succession?

A.: Yes, we addressed this point through our mentoring cell. Our daughter has always been involved in the business.

Q.: Do you have competitors?

A.: Yes we do, but we are not targeting the scope of a Catelli; however, within the manufacturing and distribution niche of organic pasta, there are very few companies.

Q.: You offer an "upscale" product; what defines the term "upscale"?

A.: We work with ancient grains, and their properties are preserved. We also produce vegetable pasta with natural powder; our products are certified organic.

Q.: Do you have any supply problems?

A.: No, we source 100% of our flours from Meunerie Milanaise.

Q.: Would it be easy to replace your subcontractor?

A.: No, it would be very difficult.