



WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

Driving innovation and growth in cheese and dairy



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Q What do you think are the most important attributes of a leader?

A Some of the most important attributes a leader can have, in my opinion, are curiosity, humility and transparency. Curiosity fuels continuous learning and improvement by encouraging leaders to ask better questions and remain open to new ideas. In practice, that might look like pausing to approach a problem from a different angle, inviting input from someone who hasn't had the chance to contribute yet or taking time to reflect before making a decision. Those small moments can meaningfully shape both outcomes and team culture. Humility and active listening create space for diverse perspectives and stronger decision-making. Transparent communication and empathy help build trust, especially during times of change.

In my role, I focus on setting clear strategy, removing roadblocks, advocating for my team and developing the next generation of leaders. When people understand the "why" behind the work and feel supported in their growth, they are naturally more motivated, engaged and empowered.

Q How have some of the leaders or role models you've worked with in the past influenced your leadership strategy?

A Some of the best leaders I've worked with are continuous learners. They are willing to rethink past decisions, evolve their perspectives and intentionally make time for the people around them. They create environments where individuals feel seen and heard, which builds both trust and accountability across a team. And what stands out most is how intentional they were about investing in people, not just outcomes. I am grateful for the strong leaders I've had in both my professional and personal life; those experiences have strongly shaped how I lead today.

I've also learned valuable lessons from

leaders who were less effective. Experiences with micromanagement, limited availability or a reluctance to partner reinforced the importance of trust, empowerment and collaboration. Those experiences helped clarify what I strive to avoid in my own leadership style and reinforced the kind of leader I aim to be — one who prioritizes accessibility, encourages constructive conversation and creates space for collaboration. Both positive and challenging experiences have been equally impactful in shaping my leadership approach.



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Q How do you see technology shaping leadership in the dairy industry?

A Technology has fundamentally changed the way we work, and advances in automation, artificial intelligence (AI) and data-driven decision-making will continue to accelerate that shift. Leaders need to be open to embracing new technology, experimenting thoughtfully and identifying use cases that deliver meaningful value and return on investment. In the dairy industry specifically, that could mean everything from optimizing production processes to improving forecasting and gaining deeper insights into evolving consumer preferences. These capabilities ultimately help organizations respond more quickly to changing market dynamics.

At the same time, leaders must remain strong critical thinkers. Technology can inform decisions, but it still requires human judgment, industry context and strategic leadership to assess accuracy, in-

terpret insights and guide organizations forward responsibly. It's not just about adopting new tools; it's about integrating them thoughtfully into everyday decision-making in a way that supports both efficiency and innovation.

Q What are some non-negotiables you expect from your team?

A Honest and transparent communication is a non-negotiable for me. Trust and alignment are built when people are direct, respectful and open — especially when things aren't working as intended. Creating an environment where individuals feel comfortable raising concerns or sharing different perspectives is critical to building a strong, high-performing team.

When conflict arises, I believe in addressing it head-on. That starts with a direct conversation focused on what's working, what isn't and how we can improve together. Addressing issues directly with the person involved is almost always the most effective approach.

Q How do you balance authenticity with professionalism?

A I believe authenticity and professionalism should reinforce one another. Values are not situational — they don't change based on shifting priorities. I'm intentional about clearly communicating the values I hold and those we expect as an organization, and I hold myself and my team accountable to them.

I strive to lead in a way that is authentic to who I am while maintaining the professionalism required to guide teams, make thoughtful decisions and build a strong culture. That might mean being transparent about challenges, acknowledging when you don't have all the answers or sharing perspectives in a way that builds connection while still maintaining clarity and respect. When done well, authenticity strengthens credibility rather than detracts from it.

Q How do you navigate leading during times of disruption?

A We're no longer operating in cycles of disruption followed by stability — change is a constant. Because of that, leadership today requires less control and more curiosity, less rigid planning and more presence, and more dialogue. It also requires leaders to stay closely connected to their teams — understanding how change is impacting them and adjusting approaches as needed to support both performance and well-being.

I focus on being very clear about where we're going — the strategic endpoint — while recognizing that the path to get there will continue to shift. There are always new headwinds coming at you, whether from supply chain pressures, policy changes or evolving consumer expectations. The role of a leader is to help the organization navigate those winds without losing direction. That balance between clarity and adaptability is critical in maintaining momentum and confidence during uncertain times.

Q Please share a time when your insights presented a unique solution at a company or organization?

A I've found that the best insights often come from connecting disparate pieces of information and drawing connections across disciplines. By stepping back and synthesizing perspectives — from consumer insights to operational realities and strategic goals — challenges can often be reframed and addressed at their root.

For example, what may initially appear to be an operational issue can become a broader opportunity when you bring together perspectives from R&D, commercial teams and customer feedback. That cross-functional view can surface new ways of thinking about both the product and the approach, ultimately leading to more innovative and sustainable solutions.

Taking the time to connect insights in this way not only strengthens the solution itself but also builds alignment across teams. It ensures that strategies are practical, scalable and supported by a shared understanding of both the challenge and the opportunity. This approach reinforces the value of diverse perspectives and cross-functional partnership in solving complex problems and developing practical, high-value solutions. **CMN**