

# BUSINESS MEMBER PROFILE



## Humility, Integrity, Business Success

BY BOB GATTY

**N**early six decades ago, John Rudolph faced a challenge. The meat industry no longer smoked the rind on bacon, a product on which he had launched his company, Rudolph Foods.

He turned to his wife, Mary, and she put her home economics background to work and invented a revolutionary process the company still uses today to create its famous pork rinds. The combination of her recipe and his leadership turned Rudolph Foods, Lima, OH, into a snack industry success story, and since then, Mr. Rudolph, and then his sons, continued to dramatically expand their business and the family tradition.

Rich Rudolph, the company's president, has served as chairman of the Snack Food Association (SFA) and remains extremely active within SFA, recognizing the association's importance and value to the industry and company growth.

"After 58 years of involvement in SFA, it's part of our DNA," said Mark Singleton, vice-president, sales and marketing. "It's not only why we exist, but it's also one of the reasons we are the number one producer of pork rinds in the world."

Today, Rudolph Foods, with its brands that include Southern Recipe, Lee's and Pepe's, operates seven US manufacturing and three overseas.

Rudolph Foods today is a far cry from the 1950s when the company began. The manufacturing process has grown in sophistication, and the company's reach has dramatically expanded. But one thing has always remained constant: an unwavering set of core values.

"All of us recognize that Rudolph Foods is in the business of enriching and nourishing families around the world," reads a line on the company's website. "The core values of humility, caring, integrity, open and honest communication, personal responsibility and the respect of other humans will be the foundation on which we build our organization."

And build, it has.

"We opened our plant in Chapeco, Brazil about two years ago," Mr. Singleton explained, "because we believe it makes sense to leverage one of the world's largest hog farming populations."

Seeing a demand for pork-type snacks in Eastern Europe, the company opened a facility in Denmark. "We see that as a growing venture with plenty of upside potential," Mr. Singleton added.

"With our Brazilian facility, we are able to satisfy Latin America," he explained. "This facility is made up of great people, amazing customers working with us to grow pork rinds in their own country. Pellets are made in Latin America, so it's a win-win for all."

In 2014, Mr. Singleton said, Rudolph Foods is working in collaboration with celebrity chef Tim Byers to reach its Hispanic audience with flavors that include Fiery Chile Limon. Rudolph foods also supports various charities, including the Gridiron Greats organization, which provides financial and medical assistance to retired NFL players, and sponsors a competition for its drivers in celebration of National Truck Driver Appreciation. •