

- 1- Do you have any numbers that show what happened in Faucet Queen from 1999 to May 2009 when you were hired? I need some numbers to show sales figures, growth rates, turnover rates, market share....some numbers like that to be able to compare them before and after. In my success story I want to show some charts maybe to display those figures before you were hired and then after to show the difference.

During those years we sustained modest growth and held market share – business was up single digit percentage points. We expect double digit growth in 2010.

In 2006 we had the following stats:

- 65% of US supermarkets
- 90% of US drug stores
- 20,000 retail outlets

- 2- When you were first hired, what were you officially asked to do? i.e. Was the main focus on increasing productivity or increasing market share or re-enforcing the brand name or what? Top priorities were: stop the sales decline; develop and quickly implement a growth strategy; and, ultimately build a meaningful increase in enterprise value by establishing continuous growth, increasing points of distribution, and building brand equity.
- 3- Based on your answer in 2- How did you achieve this goal? (supported by facts and numbers) Added resources in: marketing, external product development, sales, and sourcing. We added these things via subtraction by eliminating a significant number of fixed costs (building lease, eliminating multiple shipping points, commission structure change, etc.). Additionally, we created a three tiered brand strategy that enables us to approach additional channels of distribution.
- 4- In your improvement journey did you find it necessary to fire and replace any managers or supervisors because of lack of management skills? If yes, do you have some facts that show how these people harmed the business? I wouldn't go so far as to suggest that anyone harmed the business, simply that the core nucleus had been with the same business for a long time and didn't have the advantage of keeping up with innovations and structural

business changes that have evolved over the past dozen or so years. Despite these challenges, the business and the management team did a terrific job of supporting and serving their retail partners which sustained a platform poised for growth. The limitation was really in the company's ability to grow to new retail channels and to enter new product categories.

- 5- What strategy did you adopt to motivate the employees and bring the best out of them? Re-organized the organizational structure, truly empowered people to make significant decisions (and celebrated some failures to prove that we were going to embrace the 'fail fast, fix it faster' management mantra), brought in outside talent to marry with existing talent thereby creating a better overall team (great combination of legacy knowledge and fresh ideas) and tried to bring energy to the business each and every day.
- 6- What was the new strategy that you adopted to leverage the performance? Maintained the solid focus on delivering exceptional customer service to our key partners; added focus on product development with the consumer in forefront of all development.
- 7- How did the new e-commerce site help the business? 1. Got the organization focused on the consumer, 2. Began educating the consumer on our extensive and myriad product lines, 3. Directed consumer to our retail partners driving revenue, 4. Developed consumer intimacy which is impacting new product development and quality initiatives.
- 8- If you would put it in very few words, what do you think is the main reason that caused businesses to deteriorate and lose focus? And how far do you think management has an impact on an organization's performance. The business didn't lose focus; it just needed to do a better job of capitalizing on the great base of business that it had developed over the prior 75 years. Management can have a significant impact on an organization's performance as long as the players stay in touch with what made the organization the success that it already is and how to utilize that success to drive improved performance. Additionally, while it sounds cliché, management needs to make 'constant change' a part of the everyday culture...actively seek out new and better ways to approach the business regardless of current performance.

9- If you would give some hints and tips to anyone trying to leverage the performance of his company or give it a boost after a set-back, what would those be? Study the history that led to the original success and determine which of those factors need to be carried forward and which need to be destroyed (think, planned obsolescence and contrarian management); obsess with the consumer and the point of purchase – why is the consumer making the decisions that she’s making? Why are retail buyers making the decisions that they are making? Who’s doing the best job of communicating with each? etc.; be ready, willing and able to fail regularly and to learn quickly from those failures – the leadership team needs to embrace and have the edge to make unpopular, sometimes wildly unpopular, decisions.