

*Novus International celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary in June 2016. What follows are the remarks of Dr. Joe Privott, former president of Novus International, who spoke at an event commemorating the event.*



My **congratulations** to all Novus employees and your families. It's an honor to be with you this evening on your 25th. It's good to see some old friends, and to meet some Novus employees I had not known before. And, of course, I want to recognize and express **thanks to Mitsui and the Novus Board** for your great support over these first 25 years... we would not be here without your continuous support.

François [François Fraudeau, the current and third CEO] asked me to share with you a bit about "What it was like at the beginning of Novus 25 years ago." "Why did we do what we did when establishing Novus?"

1. Let me set the stage, by saying that, the real beginning of Novus was well before the official beginning of Novus... I think it is important to mention a few relevant facts about the Monsanto's Feed Ingredients Business before its divestiture:
  - Monsanto scientists had developed technology that had given Alimet what I called an unfair cost advantage over competition... and, we had been successful in developing a profitable and growing methionine business.
  - We were a part of Monsanto's Ag company... but not a part of their biotechnology thrust. So we turned in good numbers, kept a low profile, and stayed out of sight, out of mind. Even within corporate Monsanto, we had been able to develop a bit of our own unique culture.
  - An important example; we always knew we had a more noble purpose than to grow a profitable business. We reasoned that our real **purpose**, our raison d'être if you will, was to help feed the world affordable food, and we bonded together to serve that purpose.
2. That bonding—or "we're in this all together"—was solidified by the uncertainty during the divestiture process itself. The only thing that was not uncertain during that yearlong process was that we would soon not be a part of Monsanto. We thought that we would likely be absorbed into an existing operating unit of a large company,

and thus, have limited control of our destiny. The severance package from Monsanto looked pretty good at time.

3. But... we were indeed **fortunate**. Mitsui put together the buying entity, and they told us three things:
  - 1st that they would not fold us in to an existing operating group
  - 2nd that they wanted us to develop our own culture and our own Management System that best suited us, and
  - 3rd that they wanted us to take a long view.

#### **How fortunate could we be!**

4. So, with that encouragement from our new owners—to be an **independent operating unit with a long view**—we reasoned that **How we did things**—that is our **Values**—would be just as important as **What we achieved**. In fact, we reasoned that over the long haul, **Values and resulting Behaviors consistent with those Values**, would actually be **more important than our Achievements** in any given year.

Thus...

- Our Purpose was clear: We existed to help feed the world affordable food.
- And we identified Values that would drive our behavior and were very sure that we all clearly understood those Values and expected Behavior.
  - a. **Solid science that would result in Products with demonstrable value**
  - b. **Protection of our people, our communities, and the environment while making and handling those products**
  - c. **Meeting, or exceeding, customer expectations**
  - d. **Respect for—and expectation of—best efforts from every employee**
  - e. **And, in all things, at all times, Act with Integrity**

These were the **Values** that guided how we related to each other, to our customers, to our partners, and to the world at large... and we **held each other accountable** for living out those Values and Behaviors.

5. The next major building block of Novus was based on the fact that the path from **Strategy to Success goes straight through a company's employees...** to achieve our **Strategy**, which was to capture all the growth in the methionine market. Therefore, we had to...
- First, Structure ourselves—with clear roles and clearly articulated relationships among those roles.
  - Then, we had to Staff that Structure—with people whose behaviors and capabilities were consistent with the requirements of the roles. Let me add parenthetically here... that we believed that No organization deserves to have a person in a role who doesn't behave and perform consistent with expectations from that role... and, in fact, it's not fair to the person to leave them in a role that is not a match. So we developed a system to characterize individual capabilities and tried to match them with role requirements as best we could in staffing the organization.
  - And finally we needed a Novus Management System that encouraged and facilitated collective achievement... And to get that teamwork we reasoned we needed a management system that engendered
    - a. **Trust...** which required... **Clarity of communications.** So we developed the
    - b. **Key Accountabilities Document, that is, the KAD, as the centerpiece** of this communication of expectations of each other. The KAD includes our General Responsibilities related to our Role in the company and Specific Goals that we as individuals commit to and are accountable for achieving. And, finally, we burned in
    - c. **Coaching and Mentoring as the necessary processes to realize full potential from all Novus employees.**
6. So, that's it... the **launching of Novus was that simple, and it was that complex...**  
To summarize, 1) we tried to articulate **Novus MVVG** with clarity and be sure everyone understood them... 2) we developed a **NMS** [NOVUS management System] based on respect for, and trust of, each other... and 3) we tried to help every Novus **employee realize his or her full potential... that simple, and yet that complex.**
7. Now before Thad Simons [NOVUS's second CEO] gives you the next chapter in the history of Novus, let me respond to François's second specific request — to comment briefly on, "How I've used what I learned in Novus experience since retirement."

I've been fortunate to have the opportunity to help a number of organizations pursue their dreams

- Defense Industry companies
- Hospitals
- A Healthcare System
- Universities
- Churches
- And now, even a Seminary in Ukraine

8. In all these cases, across this wide spectrum of organizations, the same principles we applied at Novus, have proven to lead to success.

- **Clear and shared MVVG for the Organization as a whole**
- **Values that carry with them expectations, even demands, of specific Behaviors consistent with those Values**
- **KADs, in one format or another, as the glue that holds the Management System together, and**
- **Coaching and Mentoring to help all employees achieve their full potential**

9. It really does work. We really did develop something special... something durable. My encouragement to you, Novus employees, is to stay with it... Stay focused on **your MVVG, and on the Novus Management System.**

**Always remember... You are part of a very, very special organization! Don't take it for granted. Apply your full capabilities every day to make Novus even more effective.**

**Trust me... do that, and you'll be glad you did... In fact, continue do that, and you can make your plans now to attend the celebration of Novus's 50th Anniversary.**