



Blue Book Services TRADING MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



A few words from Harris Cutler



Philip G. Ball
Company



Race-West
Company



Sparky's
Transportation

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*Setting the table for the future
of fresh fruits and vegetables*

Explosive growth in the fresh produce industry, along with many technological advances, have heavily impacted our family of businesses: Philip G. Ball Company, Race-West Company, and Sparky's Transportation Corporation.

The fourth generation of our company is composed of Generation Y, having been born between 1983 and 1992. Our millennials are tech savvy, and like their cohorts, want information delivered quickly and in a format they prefer. This generation is results-driven and constantly sets goals to improve and expand our business.

Individual associates have always been a key focus of our company. We work to identify skills, passions, and available opportunities to match people with tasks for which they have an aptitude and appetite.

Our fourth generation has selected areas of interest and opportunity on their own, without interfering with other company team members. This has worked out in a very special way for us.

Preparing for the generations to come, we can see that food safety, continuing education, new items, flavor, and great value are essential to continuing success in the fresh fruit and vegetable business.

The vast opportunities available today through the internet allow us to see product, share information, teleconference, quickly research companies, product, and weather, and so much more.

We're working hard to understand and master social media. Our customers and trading partners want to know what's happening with us to ensure they're with the right partners during these exciting—and challenging—times.

Here's our take on some of the controllable and uncontrollable factors in our business.

Weather...

Weather is unpredictable and appears to be the ultimate challenge. One of the successful strategies we use is having multiple production areas in play at the same time to allow for options during weather events and the days that follow.



"Have regard for your name, for it will continue longer than a thousand treasures of gold. The days of a good life are numbered, but a good name lasts forever." - Ben Sira

Food safety...

Products must become safer, and we have to learn how to take the necessary steps to minimize chances of deterioration and eliminate potential contamination as much as possible. This is a combination of good planning and science.

The continued move towards safer produce will take commodities without a kill step through more and more strenuous regulations and procedures as time goes on.

Social media...

We're just seeing the beginnings of this phenomenon and the most exciting aspect is that small, independent companies can promote themselves alongside monstrous companies and effectively compete. We now have the ability to communicate directly to customers.

As we learn and watch these rapidly changing channels of communication develop, we must have great content and credibility to continue.

These days, we're only as good as our last delivery. My father's expression, "yesterday's hero is today's bum," was a warning to always be at our best.

Culinary...

The search for what's amazing will take charge of kitchens, grills, and everyday snacks and meals. Finding flavor in better varieties, different preparations, and the addition of spices and flavors will have a dramatic effect on the future of our business.

Everyone spends time in the kitchen preparing old favorites and trying new things. Food these days is all about presentation, flavors, and the constant battle between technique and time.

International...

As our world shrinks, we've discovered that the answers to many of our questions and the path to greatness comes via learning from other cultures and countries about how to do what we do better.

Sharing our problems and our dreams with those from other parts of the world is amazing in and of itself—but learning and sharing business techniques and approaches to success is tremendous.

Plant science...

Researchers around the world are studying the strengths and weaknesses of plants to improve productivity and resistance to disease. We all eat a wonderful nut called cashews. We know every cashew is attached to a delicious fruit, but no one I know has ever tasted that fruit—even though it is said to be flavorful and very tender.

As plant scientists and breeders continue their work, issues with GMOs (genetically modified organisms) have come to the forefront of the industry, and companies must decide if they will be involved with these items.

As a company, we made the decision to avoid the new russet potato variety that was genetically modified to not turn brown or black after cutting.



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Our position is that it's too soon to determine the effects and potential aftereffects of genetically modified plant material.

The grafting that has taken place since the early years of farming is slow and steady and has borne great results over many years; GMOs are a shortcut to careful breeding but may turn out to be valued in years to come.

Family business...

The next generations are starting to decide whether the opportunity to work with family in a time-tried vocation is better than starting from scratch and carving out a unique place for themselves.

Most young people today look at their parents and watch carefully as they ask these questions: Do you love your work? Are you happy in your work life? Are you doing the best you can do? Are you challenged and doing well in that challenge?

Many contemporaries complain to their spouses and children about their work, then wonder why their children want to go elsewhere.

My father loved his work, even under extreme and sometimes challenging situations, and this taught me that even though he struggled to feed and clothe us, his work was noble and something we, the next generation, could take on and enjoy as well.

His struggle became a roadmap for how to build something special and to succeed—at times greatly where many others failed.

Our children knew that I loved going to work and even when challenged to the maximum, never complained, only sought solutions to the short-term problems at hand.

Industry ratings and reputation...

Having achieved Trading Member status as identified by Blue Book Services, we must continue to be worthy of the high ratings we've worked so hard to achieve.

Generation Four is appreciative and understanding of the requirements to maintain and improve our Blue Book credit profile.

At the base of any rating is pay practice. We are fast pay and constantly



Geoffrey, Charlotte, and Joseph Cutler, representing Race-West Company at the Rungis Market in Paris, France. In the center, Parisian veg distributor Frederick, and holding the Romanesco broccoli is Marion, star salesperson at Hermès, Paris.

work to improve our ability to pay for goods on delivery.

Our company is constantly looking for the best in the industry, to make connections with excellent operators and provide more product for our customer base, while making new connections to increase our distribution.

Always crafting a vision of the best potential outcome for every transaction is essential to generating the type of business worthy of appreciation and recognition. Generation Four will continue our story and prepare the company for generations to come.

Helping others...

Within all of our businesses are opportunities to help feed the growing number of people who need help. It is hard to imagine the billions of pounds of food discarded every year. Channeling that food into feeding the hungry can be rewarding and helpful.

No one should be hungry in this country. Everyone can do a little and we can accomplish a lot together.

We are learning as a family and as an industry that the early years of fighting and yelling between trading partners was a way for everyone to clearly understand the needs of their partners.

Working towards identifiable goals with everyone succeeding together is

the best way to do business—and Blue Book Services has led the way with suggestions, dispute resolution, and identification of good trading practices.

The constant in our business will always be change. Be ready to change, look forward to it, embrace it, find it exhilarating. We have the greatest product on earth in the history of mankind. It is in our fields, in our buildings, on our stands, and in our hands. Let's always be worthy of this great opportunity.

In conclusion, we are so honored and humbled to be celebrating our 75th anniversary in the produce business. We look back and say thank you to everyone who has helped us along the way.

We have made multigenerational friendships and assisted in providing healthy and reasonably priced food to people across our great nation, and to the world at large. The produce business in 2019 is changing so rapidly, before all of our eyes.

Our mission in business is to continue to treat people with honor, honesty, and respect. Our fourth generation is committed to continuing our legacy of hard work, integrity in dealing, and family values. 