

Adolph Zarovinsky



Adolph Zarovinsky, president, Tiffany Gate Fine Foods

Adolph Zarovinsky, founder and president of Tiffany Gate Fine Foods, is passionate about the food business. It all began in 1989, when he and his wife Mary saw an opportunity to offer consumers prepared meals that would rival restaurant food, but could be purchased in supermarkets. Their challenge was to come up with a product that was safe, adaptable to a grocery store setting, and fresh, as it would not remain in inventory for any length of time. In essence they had to “reinvent all of the components of traditional food manufacturing to ensure the quality and safety” of their products, says Zarovinsky. The small operation, which began in their home kitchen 17 years ago, has grown into a multimillion-dollar company selling innovative products throughout North America. Tiffany Gate Foods now operates from a state-of-the-art production facility in Toronto designed by Zarovinsky, and has over 200 employees.

Q&A

What do you love most about your job and why?

“Conceptually I love food. Food is so fundamental to our lives, and I’m glad I have an opportunity to participate in that. Tiffany Gate Foods is extremely innovative, as we created [a market] that wasn’t there before. We feed hundreds of thousands of people who enjoy our food, and they keep coming back even though we don’t really advertise.”

What is your management philosophy?

“People should go into business if they have something to contribute. I would be absolutely bored if I had to do the same as other people. We [at Tiffany Gate Foods] are obsessed with quality and safety. We always take an out-of-the box look at the market and come up with the most interesting and productive solution. And it shows.”

What is the most challenging part of your job?

“Finding good people. We really consider everybody equally important in our process. You need great people in the office, and you need great people in manufacturing. One would not work without the other.”

How would you describe your operational or management style?

“Basically [we give] a lot of freedom to think and to act. We empower our people to make decisions, to think for themselves, to be responsible for what they do.”

What are the issues your sector is facing?

“Two issues. One is food safety. As we have seen in the last

few months food safety has been front and centre everywhere, especially when you’re dealing with fresh foods. [Secondly], being innovative, making sure consumers have clear choices and that they have a reason to go and buy your food. As long as the focus remains on food – good-quality, safe food – consumers will come and spend money. If we can keep that focus I think the sector will grow tremendously. If we cannot get the consumer because we don’t have direct consumer connections through supermarket channels, it is going to be trouble.”

Where do you see the home meal replacement sector going?

“We prefer the terminology meal solutions or restaurant meal replacement (RMR). I think it can grow tremendously. We are only at the very beginning of this trend and we are only starting to understand and take advantage of the real potential of this kind of product by replacing a much bigger chunk of what restaurants are selling today.”

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First industry job: “I was an engineer for Unilever Monarch Fine Foods.”

Favourite food: “[I enjoy] food that is simple and carries the original flavour.”

Industry mentor: “The companies I did work for provided tremendous training. It is a very difficult industry and in terms of structure, discipline, attention to details, those things I learned elsewhere. We’ve tried to use all those factors and all that training to make Tiffany Gate Foods what it is today.”