

Chapter 28

Albanese Confectionery: The “Sweetest” Place on Earth! – Case Study

Raj Selladurai

Indiana University Northwest, USA

In 1984, Scott Albanese opened Albanese Confectionery Group in Northwest Indiana with a \$10,000 investment and a strong vision. What started as a small bulk candy retailer has grown into a 225,000 square foot facility that manufac-

tures the World’s Best gummies and chocolates, shipping weekly over 1.5 million pounds of the absolute best food products to various parts of the world. In 2013, more than two (2) million visitors have visited the Albanese Factory Outlet

Figure 1. Albanese Confectionery Group



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Albanese Confectionery

store making it the 2nd most visited candy store in the US. Not bad for a factory in the middle of a soybean field in Indiana!

Today Scott's company is worth over 130 million dollars. To put this into perspective, if you had invested that same \$10,000 with Apple Computers in a similar fashion, you would be exponentially poorer than if you had invested in Albanese Confectionery Group. What makes this information more important is that Scott never set out to make money, nor does he measure his success by it. Instead he believes, "When making money or becoming rich is your goal you will never reach it. When helping other people -- your customers and employees -- is your goal the money will eventually come. Business is not about you, it's about other people" (Scott Albanese, email communication, Dec. 2013).

Ranking as the best in class in quality worldwide and receiving many industry awards on gummy quality and innovation, Albanese Confectionery is also the most sought after company for nutraceutical products. Literally hundreds of stories about this company have been seen on CNN, FOX, ABC, CBS, NBC, *Business Week Magazine*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and the company has been featured on the Food Network over three times.

Scott Albanese, always the minimalist, follows two main leadership principles that he says have attributed to his success:

- **Sharing your story with passion:** This involves telling the story of your vision, mission, and strategy with everybody, inside and outside the company. Open communication and sharing information, a strong servant leadership principle, with all your stakeholders would promote trustworthiness between leadership and various groups of people from customers to employee associates, managers, staff, partners, and others. "We humans even think in stories," says Albanese. "And if we do not commu-

nicate, the human brain tends to fill in the missing information and create a story that may not be the story you want to share." Albanese goes on to explain that, "it's not enough to just tell your story, you have to do it with passion. Passion is what sells the story, it's what makes the listener buy in to your mission. Without others' buy-in -- lenders, customers, and employees -- your vision will not reach its full potential. He believes that nothing is more important or more powerful than your customers telling your story. And there was no greater story teller than Jesus."

- **Helping others:** The second servant leadership principle is another simple but powerful one -- helping others with emphasis on strong customer-oriented, customer satisfaction principles. Helping someone is not limited to a surgeon performing a life-saving heart operation or bringing your elderly neighbor her mail. Let's move past the definition of help in the traditional sense. Helping your customers is providing them with a superior product that increases their turns significantly or a service that makes their business or life more profitable. You best help your employees by creating a stable work environment where there is a clear path to achievement so they can support their families. Scott Albanese summarizes this by saying, "At Albanese, we focus on helping people. We make the best food products to help our customers be successful. After we've helped our customers be successful, we are able to offer opportunities to help our employees be successful. And always in that order." He adds, "Jesus, as the perfect example of a servant leader, made the ultimate sacrifice in his mission to help others."

For more information, check out www.albaneseconfectionery.com.

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