

## The Uphill Adventures of Red Tomato

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An outline to guide the presenter (not necessarily to aid the general reader)

### **INTRO**

- personal intro: my people, in the blood, re: Poland
- story begins, not in New England, but in Peru (though it ends in Poland); who would have thought the simple task of growing/selling food...soooo much risk
- the fair trade formula: addressing human rights, survival through trade: price, credit, democratically-run co-ops, business transparency
- BRIDGE to the home turf: FSC; met Shirley Sherrod in 1999; civil rights work

### **(LOST IN) TRANSLATION: FROM COFFEE TO STRAWBERRIES**

- QUESTION: how to conduct business as if farmers mattered...a lot
- lost in translation: product stability (nonperishability) and the margin or profitability
- RT differences: nonprofit; product quality; social/enviroinmental benefits□icing vs. cake

### **FALSE PEAKS IN THE UPHILL ADVENTURES OF RED TOMATO**

- 1997 a marketing and promotion campaign (*limitation: no distribution*)
- 1998 distribution pilot (*limitation: no truck*)
- 1999 one truck; 1-man-show; FSC watermelons at S&S  
(*false peak: no infrastructure: QC, refrig, staging, database/technology*)

***enter: EE & Oxfam & indiv: infrastructure June 10***

- 2000 & 2001 significant growth; working systems; QC success; melons  
(*limitation: competition; customers morph into competition; labor costs*)
- 2002 new facility (*limitation: cost of distribution*)

***crash of June 2002***

- 2003 brokering/wo/ the overhead

## INTENTION--IN TENSION

- constant reinvention: slogan/way of life
- surrender□it\_the journey
- Is there a model here? new business□training/consulting/coaching
- financial health and sustainability

## FINAL CREDITS

- FSC: steady growth; **Shared Interest loan**; stable secondary supplier
- no reinvention: MISSING LINK□the brokerage direction; improved productivity
  - S&S 2003; one step forward, one step backward
  - SHAPIRO/ Donelan\_s/ Harvest
- TCC program to be launched
- END: back to Poland