



FOCUS: BUSINESS/STRATEGY

Business Growth: critical to continued success



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Harvest is under way in the U.S.; a culmination of planning, operations and time resulting in growth. Fortunately, in business, we're not limited by a specific growing season. But all too often, business executives preclude or ignore growth opportunities in their businesses. There are countless reasons for this conundrum, but few excuses that justify the losses caused by ignored growth opportunity exploration.

In the Fall 2010 issue of *Thinking in Context*, we talk about business growth. It can be achieved in many ways; through people, through product marketing and through acquisition to name a few means.

At Context, we feel it is important to practice what we preach. We share a couple of announcements of growth within our own firm. Adding Partners Mark Holland and Mark Nelson allows us to focus efforts toward even greater service and practical support to our clientele. The addition of Ken Rinkenberger and Ronnie De La Cruz punctuates our commitment to provide clients with the highest level of executive expertise.

The vast and rapid growth under way in the fresh produce segment is highly enlightening for all in our industry. It offers perspective into a market in which large retailers are dramatically reshaping fresh produce supply chains. Mark Nelson asks us to think critically about developing systems to deliver on the benefits of two major sourcing trends and how their ability to manage the risks will determine which retailers are successful in the fresh produce supply chain of the future.

Growth doesn't just happen in our businesses. It requires that we "think big ideas" and create new and unique market opportunities. Mike Borel explains that it means focusing on marketing strategy and considering our competition to maintain value in a technologically converging market as it approaches competitive equilibrium.

We also introduce you to Context's acquisition of SeedMatrix™, a unique web-based application that enables users to analyze seed test plot data in a simple format with powerful sorting and comparison tools. With roughly \$3B spent annually on seed research and development, field trials shape the R&D agenda and guide commercialization pipeline decisions. Field trials help focus those significant R&D investments to drive toward commercialization. SeedMatrix allows practical tools to manage data and assemble actionable conclusions and strategies from what would otherwise be reams of test plot data.

Context will continue to seek out innovative applications and resources that best benefit our clients. Through continued growth and exploration, we look forward to providing you the support you need to achieve actionable solutions for your business growth.

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The Context Network provides business management and strategy consulting services to the world's leading agriculture, biotechnology and food companies and government agencies and institutions. Major areas of expertise include strategy, merger and acquisition support, valuation of new technologies, formation of alliances, and market research. The West Des Moines-based firm is composed of a core of professional consultants that is complemented by a network of hundreds of industry and subject-area experts.

