

Unexpected Innovation and Market ‘Norms’

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Innovation is a result of how we see the world around us and how we perceive problems needing a solution. Some forms of innovation are unexpected because the market being served was not demanding a solution. One example of this is the invention of the shopping cart.

In 1936, Sylvan Goldman owned multiple Piggly Wiggly grocery stores in Oklahoma City. He saw a problem with his shoppers – they tended to stop shopping when their standard hand-carried baskets filled up with groceries. Shoppers didn’t see this as a problem as it had become a normal way to buy groceries. It was accepted. But Mr. Goldman saw an opportunity to get his shoppers to buy more groceries – he affixed two baskets on a platform with wheels and added a handle. The first shopping cart. But when he rolled it out (pun intended), the new method of shopping was unexpected by shoppers.

It was not in line with what was considered normal and no one used the new carts. To solve for this, Mr. Goldman hired people to use the carts so that others would understand what was expected. This is an example of social proof, a term coined by Robert Cialdini in his 1984 book *Influence*. The idea is that we get our cues on all forms of behavior from those around us. Once other shoppers saw that using the new shopping carts was an acceptable behavior, they began to use them as well.

Sweet Bran®, RAMP® and OneTrak® are part of the Branded Feed group at Cargill. Like the shopping cart, these innovations were not expected and challenged what was considered normal in the fed beef and dairy industries, but we saw a solution to a problem of cyclical feeding that wasn’t considered a problem...yet. We saw a way to apply our technology to displace part of the energy in the diet from starch with digestible fiber and steep that resulted in a more stable and healthier rumen, and in the end, increased energy intake. It took a long time to sell these new innovations against what was considered normal but our customers saw the advantage and chose to accept this unexpected innovation along with the unexpected brand promises of reliable supply and quality.

Cargill Branded Feed creates proprietary feed ingredients to improve digestive health and performance for production animals in the beef, dairy, aquaculture and pet food markets. Branded Feed is a segment of

Cargill Starches, Sweeteners & Texturizers (CSST).

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