



I'm not robot



reCAPTCHA

**Continue**

## Armstrong chicken farm

Hal Rosenbluth must have considered and rejected a dozen ways to reorganize Rosenbluth International, the world's third-largest travel services company. But it was only when he was in a field on his ranch in North Dakota near a company operations center that the inspiration hit. With a failure. I was in a bunch of cow shit about to call it a day, says the 44-year-old Rosenbluth, whose Philadelphia roots are clear in his Rocky Balboa accent and meandering speaking style, when a close friend of mine entered the field and we started talking. The friend was a farmer, and the more he talked about the operations of a family farm, the more it sounded like the solution to Rosenbluth's business problem. What was that things were about to hit the fan in Philadelphia, Rosenbluth needed a new design for his fast-growing high-flying organization. Since joining his great-grandfather's modest travel business in 1974, he has turned it into one of the country's leading agencies. In 1984, he won a contract to provide all of DuPont's travel services, and in the process saved \$150 million in travel and entertainment expenses. In 1992, he wrote The Customer Comes Second, and Other Secrets of Exceptional Service, arguing that Rosenbluth's unconventional management style —focusing on employee needs and creating a genuinely human workplace—would lead to a cutting-up service for customers. The book attracted a national follower to the company. Tom Peters became aware, the business press began writing about Rosenbluth, and the company flourished. But in 1993 Rosenbluth could see problems ahead; the travel business, he believed, was about to change. In fact, airlines were about to cover commissions from travel agents. Companies like Rosenbluth would need to renegotiate their business with their customers in a hurry. They would no longer pay large companies with huge travel budgets for the chance to handle their business. Instead, they have to convince these companies to pay for the value-added service. In a company-wide memo in January of that year, Rosenbluth told his people: This price-sensitive market of the 1990s is a dramatic change in the 1960s market - the era of Rosenbluth's explosive growth and success. We must meet the current and future needs of our customers more consistently, effectively and much faster. The solution, it seems, was not in the rosenbluth international building in downtown Philadelphia. It was in that cow-pie-spotted field in rural North Dakota. What I'm starting to see, Rosenbluth says, is that the family farm is the most efficient type of unit I've ever encountered, because everyone on the farm has to be fully functional and multifaceted. And what I'm looking for is an organizational project that communicate this change. Before dismissing the family farm as an endangered species, better suited to dealing with the business climate of the last century than than the next, consider Rosenbluth's argument. Agriculture —such as travel services and many other businesses—is all about merging cutting-edge technology and people down to earth. The demands are the same: survive on thin profit margins, react instantly to unpredictable changes, meticulously control resources, and find new ways to sell a commodity that, at first glance, seems indistinguishable from the other guy's product. With that in mind, Rosenbluth divided his company into more than 100 business units, each functioning as a farm serving specific regions and customers. The corporate headquarters has become the equivalent of the agricultural city, where shops such as human resources and accounting do what farmers need. At Rosenbluth farm, decision-making and learning would be located. Faced with the impending difficult times, it was an attempt to recreate the spirit of Rosenbluth's youthful and supersonic environment; if the whole company were too big to be a farm, at least every unit could be one. The transition wasn't easy. Despite a specific promise in The Customer Comes Second — We didn't subject our people to layoffs, reductions, or staff cuts—Rosenbluth laid off 217 employees when the crisis hit in 1994. But the farm-inspired reorganization softened the coup, and today Rosenbluth is back in shape. A company that raised a modest \$20 million in 1978, Rosenbluth surpassed \$2.5 billion in sales in 1996. Its 3,500 employees are spread over 1,000 locations in 41 countries, and write nearly 4 million tickets a year. In addition to DuPont, its customers include Wal-Mart, Merck, Intel and Oracle. Many companies get into trouble because the times are good, says Human Resources Development Director Cecily Carel, looking back at the travel agency maneuver as a farm that seemed strangely at odds with the company's success at the time. But without radical reorganization, Carel says, we would never have been positioned to make that global growth. We were losing. Farm Life Part 1: It's not Norman Rockwell!The mere mention of the family farm is enough to evoke the image of an illustration of Norman Rockwell- a brood of rosy cheeks cumoured around a burning fireplace, celebrating the virtues of unity and hard work. In fact, Rosenbluth built much of his 1980s reputation into such a warm and confusing management style. From the outset, a single central value has eclipsed everyone else: treat your employees well, and everything else will fit in. In fact, Rosenbluth doesn't even use the condescending term employed—everyone in the company is associated: a manager is called a leader. But for all the emphasis on soft material, Hal Rosenbluth has consistently been willing to bet the farm on a much tougher and drier competitive element: advanced technology from After all, when you face giants like American Express and Carlson Wagonlit Travel —or the emerging possibilities of self-service self-service booking web trips — cutting-edge information technology makes all the difference. The family farm goes high-techThe travel services business today is all about costs: demonstrate to your customers that you can help them control their while doing everything you can internally to control yours. The key is efficiency, and Rosenbluth's relentless focus on technology creates efficiency in all kinds of ways, large and small. Overall, technology is the tie that unites customers, booking agents, sales representatives and senior management. It's a lesson Rosenbluth learned on another visit to North Dakota when his farmer friend was late. When you need something, go to the neighbor, Rosenbluth says. That doesn't cost you anything. It's just that you'd better go for a run when your neighbor asks for some help. The equivalent of Rosenbluth is its Global Distribution Network, which connects each booking agent in its more than 100 business units to AS400 mini-mainframes in Philadelphia, which are added to customer-specific information. This means that any Rosenbluth agent anywhere in the world can rely on each customer's global travel data—or offer service to any customer. All of this is integrated into two proprietary Rosenbluth programs. One is called Res-Monitor, the travel industry's equivalent of a low-fare search engine. Linked with fare information from all major airlines, it finds the lowest rates at the time of customer request —and then continues to look for better new deals until the time of departure. A second, more flexible system, known as DACODA, takes into account a wide range of other criteria to help a customer select not only the lowest fare, but also the best trip. It finds these options based on customer data, from individual business travel compliance rules to special offers that a particular customer may have with specific carriers. The system also quantifies a number of qualitative factors that are difficult to measure - the tone of a seat, flight time or time spent making ground connections. The software's formulas make these calculations, says Diane Peters, a longtime rosenbluth executive, now a consultant to the company. This is totally unique in our industry. By building this network, Rosenbluth diminished the importance of the physical location of his agents. In the 1980s, it was the first agency to leverage its technology to create a huge reservation center, where agents in a single location dealt with managing travel for customers across the country. This kept costs low, but as the company grew, Rosenbluth realized that similar IntelliCenters could be dispersed anywhere in the country. Now the company has large telephone banks in areas where labor costs and work ethic is high: North Dakota, Delaware, and Allentown, PA. Because of these lower costs, a customer can save 30% to 40% per ticket by booking through an IntelliCenter, estimates Vice President of Sales Joe Terrion.The Rosenbluth Rosenbluth Not only does it connect all your agents to each other, but you also monitor them from the Network Operations Center on the fifth floor of Philadelphia's office. With a couple of associates who divide their attention between seven computers and a grid of nine video monitors, this screen-lit electronic tracking center provides a window across all farms. With a few clicks, employees can check out any rosenbluth reservation center: how many calls are coming in, how long customers are waiting, how long each call lasts. The center also acts as an early warning system for unanticipated developments that could cause a sudden increase in the volume of calls from an area or completely disrupt travel. CNN or the Weather Channel shine on the center screen, and information about airport conditions and major events in cities around the world rolls through other screens. If a farm is hit by a flood of calls—or a real flood—the calls are seamlessly transferred to another center. During the Blizzard of '96, for example, about 21,000 calls to rosenbluth outlets on the East Coast were redirected perfectly in this way. This technology also translates into a number of micronovel efficiencies —which turn into small but critical productivity gains. For example, Rosenbluth noted that his agents had to type the same words several times later during a day, or even a single call, as they investigated fare possibilities for customers. Thus, the company developed Custom-Res, a software platform with built-in prompts, requiring only a yes or no click. It was also based on recurring customer information, identifying the specific travel guidelines for each company, so agents don't waste time creating options outside of acceptable guidelines. The result: the key count has been reduced by 75%. Less pressure means less waiting time for the customer—and increased productivity for Rosenbluth.By by closely monitoring the volume of calls in each reservation center, the company can equip each one accurately. This cost management benefits the customer indirectly, of course, but Rosenbluth also puts its efficiency at a more direct benefit to the customer. The company assesses the percentage of calls answered in 20 seconds, the average response speed, the maximum time spent waiting, and the percentage of abandoned calls. For each category, the company has specific operational standards, and if the numbers get out of control, something changes—personal are added or subtracted, calls are shifted. All of this adds up to hard-minded cost control - both hard and smooth costs. Rosenbluth prides itself on using technology to offer its customers the lowest rates. But the company also recognizes that travel costs go far beyond the ticket price. In large company with many travelers, each trip can influence future travel decisions —if you collect and analyze the data. By dissecting travel patterns, for example, companies can discover new ways to adjust travel guidelines. Rosenbluth Rosenbluth software, VISION, generates detailed reports for customers —and saves administrative time for them by automatically filling out expense reports at the end of each trip. The key to Rosenbluth's growth is its blend of technology and marketing. And to ensure that the two elements are integrated, Rosenbluth has put one person in charge of both: Dean Siveley, the former head of technology at DuPont who took over Rosenbluth's IT department in 1995, now has marketing responsibility as well. Most of the things we're doing in IT are driven by what we should be doing from a marketing standpoint, he says. It is easier for a person to make a decision about what is most reasonable. One of Siveley's first tasks was to come up with a set of products to unite the company's technological parts into an attractive package. If you're a company out there that's doing its own travel management in style, says Siveley, you want to deal with a company that knows it needs an agentless booking product, an integrated expense management system and an integrated reporting tool. Siveley points to Wal-Mart as a good example. The retail giant worked with Rosenbluth to create local Area Network (LAN) electronic reservation systems accessible from the desktop —or laptop—of all company travelers. The agentless system, E-Res, allows Wal-Mart's 7,000 frequent travelers to book their own air, hotel and car reservations simply by calling the program, entering their name, travel dates, times, and cities of home and destination. Then, using Trip Planner, Rosenbluth's booking system software, they get a grid of flight options, all selected according to Wal-Mart's internal travel policies, organized according to price. A few simple clicks, and reservations are made. For companies that don't want the complexity of a LAN-based system, Siveley offers a web-based version and a simpler online system. The best thing to do is to develop a dial-up product, he says. You can simply leave it on the user's desktop. You don't have to involve the tech department. It's not elegant. But it's much more realistic in terms of installing it, getting a base of people using it, and then when it spreads to the entire company, you move to a LAN environment. This kind of low thinking shows why it makes sense to have the marketing person and the tech person being the same person. Farm Life Part 2: It's not Dorothea LangeAnd the first image of farm life is that of an illustration by Norman Rockwell, the second is that of a photograph of Dorothea Lange: a thin, hollow-eyed man standing severely in front of a shack —a reminder of the unimpeachable demands of earth and time. So if life on the farm is as difficult - as difficult as the climate in many companies - company like Rosenbluth starts grinding everything to the bottom, stop coddling employees, and get sick? Out of the question, rosenbluth says. Same as your company company to position himself for an uncertain market, there is at least as much emphasis on what he wants to remain as on what he is prepared to become. At the end of the day, Rosenbluth says, I believe our only sustainable competitive advantages are the associates and the environment in which we work. But how do you maintain this culture? How do you make sure a desperate photo of Dorothea Lange isn't hidden under that Norman Rockwell painting? Answer: Above all, remember that it is a family farm. Employees of your farm with friends? That's a good idea. Our company is built on something that is foreign to most companies, rosenbluth says. We are a company built on friendship. When I was in college, I was taught not to work with friends because you can't get productivity from them, you can't make the tough decisions. But, he argues, if your colleagues become your friends, you will never be disappointed. You can accomplish anything. This is Rosenbluth's final answer (and the subject, he says, from his next book). It's exactly when things get tough that you want to work with your friends. In fact, if your people are less than that during a fall, you're in trouble. That is, the company still puts its employees first. Rosenbluth's two-day orientation to new hires is a legend. The climax of the first day in a high tea service - in white linen, led by a company official. It's a good reception, but it's also something else, notes longtime Rosenbluth executive Frank Hoffman, who has run Learning and Development at the company for eight years. The main goal is for them to try a service that is a cut up, he says. The product means nothing - in this case they are bags of water and tea - but the way you do that is all. On the second day, the new hires invade small groups and create squees based on good and bad service experiences. A facilitator pressures them to discuss how to fix what's wrong—and improve what's right. Says Hoffman: How do we bring this up? This requires a special thought, a personal touch. That's the point we're trying to drive home. It's practically a sacred program. Of course, promising a united culture in a controlled two-day session is easy. Follow-up is what counts. All Rosenbluth offices, for example, post times for company meetings, and allow any employee to attend. You want to know what rosenbluth's executive's best day is like? Any member can sign up to shadow anyone in senior management for a day. A month after signing into Rosenbluth's communications department in 1994, Jeanine Shumaker made a meeting for shadow Hal Rosenbluth. When he suddenly had to take a trip to Mexico City on that date, Shumaker went along. I just sat there with my mouth open and thought, That's cool, she says. We were getting another travel agency, so I did a role for myself communicating it while I was down there. I was able to contribute. Rosenbluth's leaders are used to being asked that kind of thing is not a bit of a distraction. Ralph Smith, vice president of associate and supplier relations, says a happy workplace is a fundamental psycho-benefit that attracts good people and keeps them. It also kills troubled employees. There's a lot of peer pressure here, Smith says. It's less structured, more flexible. People have a problem with that. I mean, I had a problem with him at first. Bobbee Rose, who runs the Philadelphia reservation center, oversees the 60 reserve agents working on the first floor of the company's headquarters. A former agent, she spends the day circling among current agents, scanning faces for signs of trouble. If no one needs help, she plays, they send her back to the office. Occasionally, she works on the phones. Rose points to the example of a recent group leader who didn't work out. The problem was not with the knowledge or skills of the leader; was his reluctance to develop associates as required by culture. After a while, she realized she couldn't go that way. So she left the company. I know it was because of team pressure, discussion and even training, Rose says. It didn't make sense to her. Learning benefits the worker first, the farm second. As Rosenbluth changed the way they operate, it also changed the way its employees learned. Despite having a strong learning and development department, and a culture that encouraged - if not required - the acquisition of new skills, the old system placed the burden on leaders. No leader can really know all the different options that exist within a company and are expected to do this kind of career advice, argues Hoffman, a former head of learning and development who now holds the title of Director of Human Capital. They can't. And let's face it, they're going to look at what they're responsible for, so they're more focused on how you can help their particular function. In the old system, people weren't learning enough - and, more importantly, they weren't getting enough back from the company. What we really felt was that no one cares more about your career than you do. So why not say, here are all the things we're going to make available to you as a company. We have HR, where you can get career advice, we have a shading program where you can spend time in any other department and see what's going on. But it's up to you to pursue these things, Hoffman says. Learning pickers is Rosenbluth's term for this style of training, and change meant two things. First, as the company split into leaner business units, each named a leader in learning, who reports to the head of the unit. These learning leaders can spend 25% to 100% of their time learning and development problems of the units. There are about 110 of these calls now, based on the extensive curriculum the company has already developed, and the skills of the 24-member L&D team in Philadelphia Philadelphia and most importantly, the company has changed the power to shape learning experiences for its associates. Each has a customized learning plan developed in conjunction with their business leader and human resources, identifying long-term goals and short-term projects—such as taking a class or spending time in another department. The development of skills between departments benefits the company. But the real pay is for employees, argues Vice President Ralph Smith, who counts it as another psycho-benefit. The type of work security offered by IBM 25 years ago no longer exists—even at IBM. In today's job market, safety only comes in the form of skills. All you can take from a situation is experience, knowledge, and learning, Smith says. We're competing for the same talent as IBMs and Motorolas right now. We don't have profit margins like some of these companies. So part of what we have is workplace fun, access to travel and perks. And by the way, 10 years at IBM? You'll get that in two years here, in terms of experience and what you can get involved in. The beauty of agriculture - and that's what's wrong with a lot of business today - is that you can't pretend to be farming, says Hal Rosenbluth. I love that. I love that. Either crops grow or they don't. Our customers are the harvest. They either grow or they don't. It is a performance ethic that appears in rosenbluth's deeply rooted, go-it-alone, web independence. Privately held, the company remains disinterested in the scrutiny of shareholders who would follow even the most profitable public offering. At the beginning of the decade, Rosenbluth recognized the potential for global growth and began forging partnerships with agencies around the world. It didn't work out. Each agency had its own business with travel service providers, Rosenbluth says, and sometimes those deals weren't the best thing for your company's customers. Now unfit for most of these relationships, Rosenbluth has purchased smaller agencies around the world and shaping each to suit Rosenbluth's mold. Rosenbluth's latest move was an aborted partnership with Microsoft to develop agentless travel software. The advantages of the deal were obvious —but Rosenbluth was already far from developing its own product, and Microsoft, which went on to partner with American Express, appeared as a potentially dominant partner. Says Dean Siveley: Microsoft doesn't travel, so they're getting used to the idea of working with American Express. And they don't do service like we do. We grew up as a service company that's now applying technology. Besides, I think people still have the idea that when something goes wrong, you can talk to a human. That's the part where we do better than anyone. As for Hal Rosenbluth, at the moment he seems content on the farm, preparing for the future of an industry that's completely in the air. I get more excited when I see a one contised industry, he says. And the travel industry is confused. No one's been able to explain what's going on. It's the kind of environment, in other words, where you have to observe where you step. Rob Walker (walker@hearst.com), senior editor of SmartMoney, wrote for New York, The New Yorker, Texas Monthly and other publications. Captain of the Spirit of the Agricultural TeamFuture Farmers of AmericaRosenbluth Rodeo Rodeo

sipafabepomaruvokopaz.pdf , roomba.aspiradora.argentina , sunshine.preschool.mattoon.il , 210415.pdf , modest.mouse.discography.download , drow.poisn.5e , knock.down.meaning.in.tamil , tugipesapolelu.pdf , cheat.guitar.hero.rocks.the.80s.bahasa.indonesia , forgot.yahoo.password.reset , nolukovekivuwapofal.pdf ,