



# BUSINESS DECISIONS OR DECISIONS FROM HELL?



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*“Had I known, I would have done things differently... This was supposed to improve our situation, but we’ve never felt so overwhelmed and so vulnerable financially.”* Does this sound familiar? I have heard these remarks dozens of times. How many business decisions end up being decisions from hell? Association, massive expansion, three milkings per day, diversification and so on. Why is it that some decisions lead to an improved bottom line and quality of life for the business owners whereas others only create worries and stress and are detrimental to farm profitability and quality of life?

And yet, there is no shortage of tools to help us make wise business decisions. We are surrounded with experts who provide more technical and economics data than we can process. We have access to a ton of information. We can compare ourselves to our neighbours, other farmers and even the United States. We are getting buried by countless in-depth comparative studies. Despite all of this, we sometimes still make the wrong decisions.

Exhaustive analysis, as thorough as they may seem, do not take into consideration the human aspect of a decision, such as the values, interests, personality, physical and mental health, strengths and limits of all of the individuals involved with the business, nor do they take into account internal and external resources, obstacles, or the unexpected. We get recipes for success, but there’s no word on the ingredients that may interfere with the desired outcome.

For example, when contemplating a business decision, do we think about the impact of having a child with learning disabilities, a spouse suffering from depression or anxiety disorder? What are the chances of a successful association with a narcissistic partner (self-centered, manipulative, aggressive and who does not tolerate criticism)?

How many businesses expand, only to realize after the fact that there is a workforce shortage or that human resources management is an overwhelming challenge? What happens when you are exhausted, your wife is exasperated and threatens to leave unless there is a major change? And what goes on when you realize that your tolerance to stress is much lower than you thought, that at \$150/hectoliter you could sleep, but at \$240 you have panic attacks in the middle of the night?

For many, this is the reality. The reality that no one talks about because they are ashamed, the reality that does not appear in business plans. Therefore, even if the neighbour’s recipe seems successful, before copying it, think of the ingredients you have at home. Otherwise, you may get



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indigestion. Success cannot be copied. It is created from who we are and what we want.

If you have any comments or suggestions to share, please contact Pierrette Desrosiers.

*Issued on the Canadian Farm Business Management Council's web site – August 2008*



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