



Wednesday, Apr. 30, 2008

Indra Nooyi

By Howard Schultz

The most appropriate way to describe Indra Nooyi, chairman and CEO of PepsiCo, is "world class leader." Her sharp strategic mind, tremendous market insight and humanitarian contributions all combine to make her a rare executive among the global corporate giants. PepsiCo's international business grew 22% last year, and she is showing the way for American companies trying to do well overseas. (These days, that's everybody.) Indra, 52, was also way ahead of her competitors in moving the company toward healthier products. She pushed for PepsiCo to buy Quaker Oats and Tropicana, and I wasn't surprised when PepsiCo removed trans fats from its products we before most other companies did.

I've known Indra for the past 10 years or so, ever since Starbucks and PepsiCo began a joint-venture partnership to market and distribute ready-to-drink Starbucks products. I have been particularly impressed by her willingness to do the right thing for her employees and consumers. As someone who has always aspired to build a company committed to its people and to the world, I admire her determination to achieve sustainability at an established company like PepsiCo. And I believe that all socially responsible companies could learn from Indra Nooyi's style of leadership. She welcomes hearing from people who disagree with her, but she is single-minded about following the path she believes is best for her company and its shareholders. Under her direction, I expect that we will see PepsiCo do even more in the future to excite consumers and create a better global community.

Schultz is the chairman, president and CEO of Starbucks Coffee Co.