

Preface

In 1978, with a total investment of \$12,000, Ben Cohen and Jerry Greenfield opened a homemade ice cream parlor in an abandoned gas station in Burlington, Vermont. From that humble beginning, Ben & Jerry's Homemade has grown into a \$100 million publicly held company that is nationally recognized as one of the most innovative, progressive, and socially responsible businesses in the world. This book is the anecdotal story of how that happened.

In 1982, I was hired by Ben & Jerry's as the company's general manager, and became president and CEO in 1989. As both a member of the board of directors and the leader of the management group that was running the company day-to-day, I was in the unique position of participating in both sides of the debates that occurred as the company evolved from an entrepreneurial venture into a "professionally" managed business.

Other than its ice cream and yogurt, the company is perhaps best known for bringing "sixties values" to today's business world. The process of integrating those values into the organization during a period of rapid growth created conflict and setbacks with which the book attempts to deal openly. With hindsight, all of the participants agree that the tension, although frustrating and difficult at the time, contributed to an outcome of which all of us are extremely proud.

The idea that a company has obligations to stake-holding groups other than its shareholders is a relatively new one. As we grappled with the practical implications of that fundamental premise, there were few examples in the business world to follow and learn from. It's my hope

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that this book, by relating our company's experience, will be of assistance to the growing number of businesses that are now moving in that direction.

Although I talked extensively with many people in researching the book, the story is told through my eyes. As much as possible, I've attempted to give a broad perspective, but the reader is cautioned to recognize that the interpretation of the events can't help but be my own. As such, this book shouldn't be taken as the company's definitive history, but only as one person's view of it.