

The “Flavor of Change”: Torani CEO Leads Industry Innovation for Over 30 Years, Welcomes New President Tai Doong

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Leading flavor company gears up for its 100th anniversary with an expanded leadership team and ambitious growth plan

SAN LEANDRO, Calif.--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- Leading flavor company **Torani** has flourished under the leadership of CEO Melanie Dulbecco for over three decades, recording a 20% compound annual growth rate (CAGR) for the past 33 years and an **employee tenure rate 53% higher** than the national average.

With Torani approaching its 100th anniversary in 2025, CEO Melanie Dulbecco is building additional leadership capacity by appointing Tai Doong as President. (Photo: Business Wire)

With Torani approaching its 100th anniversary in 2025 and surpassing \$500 million in

annual revenue, the company is set on doubling this figure to \$1 billion by 2030. To support this significant growth plan, Torani is building additional leadership capacity by appointing Tai Doong as President.

This expansion marks a major milestone as Torani – which holds the unusual position of being a privately held company that has successfully scaled to \$500 million in annual revenue without going public – continues to scale, push the envelope as a leading flavor innovator, and expand its social impact.

A “People-First” Leader for Three Decades and Counting

When Melanie Dulbecco joined Torani in 1991, shortly after graduating from Stanford Business School, the company was based in San Francisco’s then economically challenged Bayview-Hunters Point neighborhood, with

just eight people and an annual revenue of less than \$1 million. As the first CEO from outside the founding family, Dulbecco saw tremendous opportunity to create new jobs in the neighborhood while building strategies for Torani's expansion. Since then, she has led Torani through multiple eras of growth and hired hundreds of team members from across the San Francisco Bay Area. Despite outgrowing numerous facilities, the company has remained devoted to staying in the region. Since 2020, Torani's team of over 400 employees has operated out of a state-of-the-art "flavor factory" and headquarters in San Leandro, CA.

With female CEOs **averaging 6.3 years** in the role, Dulbecco has bucked more than just this trend; she holds the rare distinction of successfully transitioning a small company into a fiercely independent, large mid-market company. In addition to this extraordinary growth, Torani has built a radical "people-first" culture under Dulbecco's leadership, backed by the fact that the company has never laid off an employee in its 99-year history.

Throughout Dulbecco's tenure, she has maintained a relentless focus on building opportunity-driven practices that enable Torani team members to thrive. This includes "Contribution Management" and "Career Mixology," programs that provide employees agency over their growth, career, and income trajectories; an employee stock ownership plan (ESOP), giving every team member from the production line to the C-suite ownership in the growing company; and "Automate and Elevate," an upskilling approach that retains every employee during process automation efforts while simultaneously providing career advancement opportunities.

"Building an 'opportunity company' that creates stepping stones for people to really make it – both economically and through learning and development – has been a huge driver in Torani's success. We're proving that an everyday company can be a force for good, and gearing up for our second century and next phase of growth," said Dulbecco. "I can't think of a better person to help lead Torani than Tai Doong. His unique background paired with a passion for developing leaders and creating opportunities couldn't be more aligned with our values and ambitious goals."

A New Era: Introducing Torani's Expanded Leadership Team

As Torani looks ahead to its centennial in 2025, Dulbecco has appointed her longtime colleague and strategic collaborator, Tai Doong, as President.

Doong has been with Torani for nine years, previously serving as the company's Chief Marketing Activist before transitioning to President. Prior to joining Torani, Doong acquired over two decades of high-level marketing and operations experience at companies including Proctor & Gamble, Intuit, Del Monte, and Mars. Born in Taiwan, Doong became a U.S. citizen in the 1980s. He holds a Bachelor of Science (BS) in Mechanical Engineering from the University of California, Berkeley and a Master of Business Administration (MBA) from the University of California, Davis.

Doong has been instrumental in some of Torani's most pivotal moments in recent years, including driving the company's accelerated growth through the COVID-19 pandemic. While many companies closed their doors, Doong spearheaded efforts to bring new Torani consumers into the fold by making cafe-quality, on-trend drinks at home. Thanks to Doong's strategic agility and leadership, Torani's consumer business doubled across channels by the end of 2021.

For nearly a decade, much of Doong's focus at Torani has aligned with his passion: coaching and developing leaders into their expanding roles and creating opportunities for all team members as the company scales.

"At Torani, one of our mantras is 'grow baby, grow,'" said Doong. "This not only applies to our growth as a company, which has been trending upwards for decades, but it's also about growth for every one of our team members, customers, and partners. The learning agility and growth mindset are fierce at Torani. I'm honored and excited to help lead the company into its next century in this new role as President."

Looking Ahead: Flavor and Business Innovation for 100 Years and Counting

After 99 years in business, Torani has quite a few achievements under its belt. On the flavor front, the company is credited with popularizing the Italian soda in the U.S. in the 1920s, creating the world's first flavored latte in the 1980s, and launching its **"Flavor of the Year" campaign** in 2021, which introduces trendsetting, globally-inspired flavors to consumers each year. Ahead of its 100th anniversary in 2025, Torani will launch a special edition of this annual campaign called "Flavor of the Century." On the business front, what began in 1925 as a small family business in San Francisco's North Beach neighborhood has grown into a global company led by its values and dedication to putting people first.

Torani products can be found today in over 8 million households across the globe. It is the leading consumer brand, the top brand for independent cafes, and is distributed 30 countries across the globe. Torani's portfolio includes over 150 unique flavors with **on-trend** options that make roughly 6 million drinks each day. To further bolster its growth, Torani is expanding its San Leandro, CA headquarters, which will soon double in size to exceed 630,000 square feet – making it not only one of the few remaining food and beverage manufacturers in the San Francisco Bay Area, but also one of the fastest growing.

About Torani

Torani is deeply committed to being an amazing flavor company whose purpose is "flavor for all, opportunity for all." Established in San Francisco's North Beach neighborhood in 1925, Torani put Italian sodas on the U.S. map in the 1920s and created the world's first flavored latte in the 1980s. From the beginning, the company has used only the best ingredients, like natural flavors and pure cane sugar, to craft flavors that are vibrant and delicious. Enjoyed

in cafes, restaurants, and home kitchens around the world, Torani strives to inspire and lead flavor innovation globally while remaining a family-owned Bay Area business. In practice and life beyond the bottle, Torani is a certified B-Corp that believes businesses should create more opportunity, and is dedicated to helping all the people, partners, and communities it touches thrive. Learn more at **torani.com**.

Lauren Trieschmann

lttrieschmann@double-forte.com

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