

CITY OF OAKLAND



CITY HALL • ONE CITY HALL PLAZA • OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA 94612

Office of the Mayor  
Honorable Sheng Thao

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Letter of Appointment

April 30, 2024

Dear President Bas and members of the City Council:

Pursuant to City Charter Section 601, the Mayor has appointed the following person as a member of the following board or commission, subject to City Council confirmation:

**Budget Advisory Commission**

**Michael Forbes**, to serve a three-year term as the City Auditor representative on the Budget Advisory Commission that began October 1, 2023 and ending September 30, 2026, filling a seat that was previously vacant.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sheng Thao". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Sheng" and last name "Thao" clearly visible.

Mayor Sheng Thao

# Michael W. Forbes

Oakland, CA 94611 | [REDACTED]

## *Mission-driven leader building better brands*

Marketing | Consumer-Packaged Goods | Food

I am an energetic and entrepreneurial senior executive who drives extraordinary growth for consumer-packaged goods / food companies. A curious problem solver, I leverage my background in consulting, large CPG companies, and startups to build outstanding brands and high performing teams.

- ❖ **People Leader** – Natural leader with a keen eye for talent who grows inspired, high-performing teams. Scales teams to support growth while cultivating a culture of innovation. Articulate communicator and company spokesperson
- ❖ **Strategy Architect** – Big picture thinker who employs strong analytical and decision-making skills to maximize revenue, scale capacity, and optimize profitability. Quick study who rapidly synthesizes information and acts decisively.
- ❖ **Brand Builder** – Classically trained brand builder with a strong consumer lens. Innovative marketer who spots trends and leverages them to achieve outsized growth and award-winning results.
- ❖ **Business Scaler** – Creative problem-solver who takes a hands-on approach to all aspects of the business. Practical leader who captures notices opportunities for improvement and develops systems to support high growth trajectories.

## RECENT PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

### Safely

[www.getsafely.com](http://www.getsafely.com)

2022-Present

*Recruited by a leading Venture Capitalist to transform Safely from a DTC model to a traditional retail approach. Organized national brand rollout while implementing margin expansion strategy. Built the top new cleaning brand of 2022, and the fastest growing brand in 2023.*

#### Chief Executive Officer

#### Growth

- ❖ Scaled business 10x from 2021 base by pioneering retail distribution. Safely is now the #6 premium cleaning brand in Nielsen. All larger brands were owned by large strategics.
- ❖ Created growth strategy. Identified priority categories, focusing on cleaning / scent activation and discontinuing other items. Teams developed new SKUs, pricing, and go-to market model.
- ❖ Created partnerships with Target and Whole Foods Market. Launched in Whole Foods with 18 items, more than that of Method. Target will increase distribution by 4x in 2024 based on 2023 performance.
- ❖ Grew Walmart business 60% in Year 2 based on store expansion and pricing / margin enhancements.
- ❖ Developed key placements in Kroger, Wegmans, Raleys, Meijer, and Hannaford.

#### Supply Chain

- ❖ Drove margin improvement plan that created 18 point gain over 2 years, and will deliver another 12 points in 2024.
- ❖ Led a copacker shift and 're-shored' packaging to the United States. Conducted RFP process on key ingredients.
- ❖ Developed a nationwide distribution network to service key Wholesale retailers.

#### Marketing

- ❖ Created Marketing strategy, working extensively with co-founder Kris Jenner, to build social and PR presence. Created over 15 billion impressions.
- ❖ Revamped social and influencer work to increase engagement level on Instagram to over 3%. Safely has more Instagram followers than any other retail native Premium brand.

#### People and Sustainability

- ❖ Attained B corp certification in only 7 months. Gained Green Seal certification for entire cleaning portfolio.
- ❖ Developed strategy to reduce consumption of virgin plastic by introducing PCR and eventually reclaimed ocean plastic
- ❖ Built team from scratch. Over ½ of new hires were from prior relationships.

#### Corporate

- ❖ Raised \$9MM Series A in a difficult funding environment. Led by current investors (ACG and Imaginary Ventures).
- ❖ Revamped internal processes for product development, supply chain planning, demand forecasting, and monthly close.

- ❖ Conducted an RFP on banking relationships, consolidating with JP Morgan Chase.

## Alter Eco Foods

[www.alterecofoods.com](http://www.alterecofoods.com)

**2018 – 2021**

*A leading brand of sustainably produced, better for you chocolate and other foods purchased by NextWorld Evergreen (Private Equity firm with French capital) in 2017. Brought in as a 'change agent' to turn around company performance, as sales had peaked in 2015.*

### Chief Executive Officer

#### Growth

- ❖ Grew business 33% over 3 years, reversing a decline and achieving 3x category growth rate. Doubled Whole Foods and Sprouts bar distribution. Rebuilt relationships with NCG and INFRA. Drove brand from #8 ranking in 2018 to #4 in 2021.
- ❖ Successfully revamped innovation platform, cementing strength in chocolate with Blackout Bar expansion and Truffle Thins line, and category expansion to Granola. Won awards with Whole Foods, KeHe, and INFRA.

#### People and Sustainability

- ❖ Rebuilt team, hiring new management team and upgrading talent throughout the company. Received a 'Best and Brightest Places to Work' award in 2019, 2020, and 2021. 90% would recommend working at Alter Eco to a friend.
- ❖ Reinvigorated Alter Eco's commitment to sustainability. Spearheaded a commitment to regenerative agriculture by launching Alter Eco Foundation. Awarded Food & Wine 'Game Changer' award in 2021.
- ❖ Led B Corp renewal process, raising score by 20%. Gained compostable certification status for truffle wrappers

#### Supply Chain

- ❖ Reduced COGS by 500 bps since 2018 through supplier contract renegotiation and portfolio management.
- ❖ Executed major overhaul of manufacturing processes that improved allergen controls and reduced company risk.

## California Olive Ranch, Chico, CA

[www.californiaoliveranch.com](http://www.californiaoliveranch.com)

**2010 – 2018**

*Vertically integrated producer of extra virgin olive oil. Built the fastest growing large olive oil brand in the U.S., from \$7MM to over \$135MM by leading expansion across multiple channels, while also building process and infrastructure to drive profitability. Interacted extensively with majority owners, a Barcelona based Spanish family office.*

### Executive Vice President & General Manager

2017 – 2018

### Vice President, Marketing and Sales

2012 – 2016

### Vice President, Marketing

2011 – 2011

### Director, Marketing

2010 – 2011

#### Marketing

- ❖ Built the number one branded SKU in the category and a top #4 brand across grocery, mass, natural, and specialty markets. Launched three of the top five new item launches in the category for a single year.
- ❖ Developed chef and expert driven messaging to gain earned media, garnering over 1 billion annual impressions, with placements in National Public Radio (NPR), *The New York Times*, *Food & Wine*, ABC, and others.
- ❖ Championed package redesign, leading to double-digit increase in turns and an innovation award from AC Nielsen.

#### Sales

- ❖ Grew retail ACV from 15% to 80% by creating National rollout strategy for the brand, with key placements including Kroger, Publix, Walmart, and Safeway.
- ❖ Pioneered development of a club channel business, focused on Costco. Gained permanent distribution slot for two items in Bay Area division and rotations in nine other divisions via new item launch.
- ❖ Drove retail with branded in-restaurant placements, crafting national partnerships with Panera and others.
- ❖ Spearheaded private-label partnerships with three leading natural / specialty retailers.

#### Margin Enhancement

- ❖ Helped double margins over four years even while COR increased payments to farmers. Transformed business model to increase revenue per gallon by 35%, recommending trade program changes that cut spending by 20% and a shift in focus from private label. Led four rounds of price increases.
- ❖ Created new bid process to reduce input expenses, achieving \$250K savings across canola oil and labels.
- ❖ Drove a just-in-time production model, reducing inventory and holding costs by 35% while keeping fill rates above 97%.
- ❖ Built business case for implementation of a third bottling line, which will generate \$1MM in annual savings.

#### Corporate

- ❖ Helped close two investment events totaling \$84MM with institutional and University endowment investors

- ❖ Drove key due diligence, negotiation, and integration efforts with the January 2015 acquisition of Lucini Italia. Refreshed entire product portfolio, which grew the brand by over 50% post-acquisition.
- ❖ Worked with Farming team to enhance farmer relations by revamping communications and grower meetings

**General Mills, Minneapolis, MN**

[www.generalmills.com](http://www.generalmills.com)

**2006 – 2010**

*A leading producer and marketer of branded foods. Led teams in all areas of the business, including advertising, product development, operations management, and brand strategy.*

**Marketing Manager**

2010

**Associate Marketing Manager**

2006 – 2010

**Pillsbury Cookies**

- ❖ Grew \$420MM business +6% (+2.4 share). Launched Pillsbury Simply... cookies, which exceeded plan by +40% and was awarded “New Product of the Year” at General Mills.
- ❖ Delivered first-ever digital advertising campaign for product line, with highest volume increase ever measured by General Mills. Developed new TV advertising rated second highest TV ROI ever measured for cookies business.

**Chex Mix**

- ❖ Grew \$380MM business +5% (+.4 share). Won corporate award for digital innovation, receiving \$1MM and driving +5 point increase in volume through fantasy football partnerships.
- ❖ Led marketing strategy development and change in positioning, which led to 45 percent increase in advertising ROI.
- ❖ Drove margin increase of +6 points. Created 8% price increase recommendation, led formula change efforts, and drove project to manufacture 100-calorie packs internally.

**EARLY ROLES**

**Procter & Gamble**, Cincinnati, OH, Assistant Brand Manager Intern

2005

**Fortune Brands/Jim Beam Brands**, Chicago, IL, Manager, Business Analysis

2002 – 2004

**McKinsey & Company**, Minneapolis, MN, & Chicago, IL, Business Analyst

1999 – 2002

**EDUCATION & ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS**

**Harvard Business School**, MBA, Boston, MA  
Treasurer, Social Enterprise Club and Section Historian

**University of Wisconsin**, BBA with Honors, Madison, WI  
Double Major: Marketing and Economics | Senior thesis on internet marketing selected for publication

**HOBBIES AND INTERESTES**

Hiking, running, traveling (I’ve been to 49 states and 40+ countries), cooking, reading, playing Legos with my daughter

**BOARD MEMBERSHIPS AND INDUSTRY ACTIVITIES**

**Beyond Good**, Board Member

2023-Present

**Good Food Awards**, Judge

2021

**California Olive Oil Council**, Board Member and Vice President

2011 – 2013

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND LEGALITY



CITY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

## OAKLAND CITY COUNCIL

RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_ C.M.S.

INTRODUCED BY MAYOR SHENG THAO

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### RESOLUTION CONFIRMING THE MAYOR'S APPOINTMENT OF MICHAEL FORBES TO THE BUDGET ADVISORY COMMISSION

**WHEREAS**, Section 601 of the City Charter provides that members of City boards and commissions shall be appointed by the Mayor subject to confirmation by the affirmative vote of five members of the City Council; and

**WHEREAS**, Ordinance No. 13337 C.M.S., adopted November 3, 2015, creates the Budget Advisory Commission to advise the Mayor and City Council on topics deemed important to the fiscal health of the City, encourage public participation and input into fiscal decision making, and improve the transparency and accountability of City fiscal information and decision making; and

**WHEREAS**, the Budget Advisory Commission shall be composed of 15 members appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the Council in accordance with Section 601 of the City Charter; and

**WHEREAS**, three members are selected by the Mayor, two members are recommended by the Chairperson of the Finance and Management Committee, one member is recommended by each Councilmember, one member is recommended by the City Auditor, and one member is recommended by the Chairperson of the Community Economic and Workforce Development Committee; and

**WHEREAS**, the Office of the City Auditor has recommended the appointment of Michael Forbes to the Budget Advisory Commission; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED:** That the City Council hereby confirms the Mayor’s appointment of the following individual to the Budget Advisory Commission as set forth below:

**Michael Forbes**, to serve a three-year term as the City Auditor representative on the Budget Advisory Commission that began October 1, 2023 and ending September 30, 2026, filling a seat that was previously vacant.

IN COUNCIL, OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA,

PASSED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES - FIFE, GALLO, JENKINS, KALB, KAPLAN, RAMACHANDRAN, REID, AND  
PRESIDENT FORTUNATO BAS

NOES –

ABSENT –

ABSTENTION –

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_

ASHA REED

City Clerk and Clerk of the Council of the  
City of Oakland, California