

western
grocer
www.westerngrocer.com
Serving the Grocery Industry Since 1916
SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2021

A COUNTRY OF
*Coffee
Lovers*

AN OVERVIEW OF CONSUMER TRENDS
IN THE HOT BEVERAGE CATEGORY

SPECIAL TRIBUTE
- JIM GARAND

HOLIDAY
MERCHANDISING

STORE FIXTURES

+ HOW SMART TECH IS TRANSFORMING FOOD RETAILING



LOOK WHAT THE FISHerman REELED IN.



MAKE SWEET RELIEF THE CATCH OF THE DAY WITH **NEW** ORANGE SPICE.

IT WORKS. THAT'S THE HONEST TRUTH.



sodastream®

PRESENTS

YOUR FAVOURITES ON DEMAND

SodaStream has experienced double-digit sales growth for the past five years.

Now, the leader in home carbonation has partnered with PepsiCo to bring even more exciting variety and convenience to your home with these new flavours:

Pepsi® | Diet Pepsi® | Pepsi® Zero Sugar | 7UP® | 7UP® Zero

We're talking world-famous flavours. Whenever you want them.

This innovation is a great opportunity to drive incremental trips and new drinking occasions. Leverage the partnership of two power brands to drive profitable growth to your store.

Contact Revolution@Sodastream.ca to order today.

EACH BOTTLE
MAKES ABOUT
9L**



In this Issue

- 26 Building the Future Upon the Past
Anna Lemieux demonstrates the craft, commitment and caring of Freson Bros.
- 29 Home-Style Convenience Reigns
High demand for convenience and innovative flavour in the deli.
- 34 Jim Garand Special Tribute
- 37 Shopping Jolly
Holiday merchandising ideas for the season.
- 43 Bread's Best Friend
The spreads category expands due to COVID and health concerns.
- 47 How Smart Store Tech is Transforming Food Retailing
- 52 Everything but the Food
Raimac brings new meaning to the term customer service.
- 57 South of the Border Flavours
Mexican food continues to increase in popularity.
- 60 Have a Millarville Day!
- 63 What's on the Shelf
Store fixtures are helping to change the in-store experience.
- 65 Thinking Outside the Box

29



37



43



57



16



On Our Cover

16 A Country of Coffee Lovers
An overview of consumer trends in the hot beverage category.

Cover Photography: shutterstock.com

publisher's perspective



The Pandemic has Made Forecasting More Difficult

We all know 2020 was an unusual year in the grocery industry. Sales surged well over 10 per cent for most retailers, even though shopping patterns changed as the pandemic pushed more consumers online while those who continued to shop in-store did so less frequently and hoarding became a common feature.

It would be a mistake, however, to use the results of 2020 as a benchmark for the future. Already, sales have returned to more normal levels as the foodservice industry picks up steam once again. For grocery retailers, this has made forecasting very difficult, especially during the busy upcoming holiday season. Will shoppers now fully vaccinated and able to gather again take up the season with gusto, as many believe? Paradoxically, last year's holiday season sales saw a decrease in sales of close to 30 per cent according to PWC Canada — despite the dramatic overall increase in store sales! People were simply not getting together to celebrate.

For 2021, category managers should benchmark from 2019 as the more likely scenario to unfold. Read Sue Nicholls article in this issue "How Category Reviews Have to Change" for insights into how to plan.

If we take the PWC Canada data above, however, that may well mean a big increase in holiday spending this year over last year...and certainly there will be a lot more promotional activity which was virtually non-existent last year. Online sales are likely to decline somewhat as more consumers return to in-store shopping and that will mean more impulse buying, a key sales driver during the holidays.

Normally, the holiday season provides a 10 per cent or more lift in sales. Merchandising strategies should once again reflect that.

Frank Yeo
Frank Yeo, Publisher & Editor

Departments

- 6 Market Update
- 13 Category Management
- 67 In the Bag
- 70 Retail Collaboration



Publisher & Editor, Frank Yeo; Associate Publisher & National Account Manager, Robin Bradley; Western Account Manager, Melanie Houssin; Editor/Editorial Production Coordinator: Nicole Sherwood; Advertising Production Manager, Marsha Coombe; Creative Manager, Sarra Burton; Circulation Department e-mail: circulation@mercury.mb.ca; Advertising Consultants: David Bastable, Sheilah Davila, Loren Fox, Elaine Dufault, Edna Saito. Publisher: Western Grocer Magazine is published bi-monthly by Mercury Publications Limited Head Office: 1313 Border Street, Unit 16, Winnipeg, MB R2H 0X4 Tel: (204) 954-2085 Fax: (204) 954-2057 www.mercury.mb.ca • e-mail: mp@mercury.mb.ca Associated Publications: C-Store Canada Magazine, Western Hoteller, Western Restaurant News, Health & Wellness Retailer, Western Food Processor and Bar & Beverage Business. Circulation: Western Grocer Magazine serves the grocery and allied non-food industries. Readership includes distributors, brokers, manufacturers, wholesalers, independent grocers, food processors, bakeries, supermarkets, convenience stores, principal food service outlets, food researchers and consultants, government, voluntary groups and co-ops in the four Western Canadian provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, Northern Canada and the Northwest Ontario area. Subscription Rates: \$45.00 for one year, \$63.00 for two years, \$93.00 for three years; \$5.00 for single copy, plus 7% GST. Canadian rates only. Advertising: Deadline is 25th of the first month. Editorial: The contents of this publication may not be reproduced in whole or in part without written consent of publisher. Photo credits not given unless requested in writing along with photo submission. Publication Mail Agreement No: 40062509. ISSN# 0705-906X. Return Undeliverable Canadian addresses to Circulation Dept. at 1313 Border Street, Unit 16, Winnipeg MB R3H 0X4 e-mail: circulation@mercury.mb.ca Printed in Canada



Robin Bradley
Associate Publisher & National Account Manager
rbradley@mercurypublications.ca



Melanie Houssin
Western Account Manager
mhoussin@mercurypublications.ca

Good Stock Foods Announces Distribution Partnership with J&S Food Service

Good Stock Foods has announced a distribution partnership with J&S Food Service for its flagship product, Prairie Melt, within Alberta. Prairie Melt is a premium dairy-free plant-based cheese product available in both a retail 900g container (eight units per box) and a foodservice 12kg box (four x 3kg bags). It is vegan, gluten free, soy free and



nut free, and can be melted into any cheese recipe including pizza, nachos, burgers, pasta, sandwiches, quesadillas, poutine and more.

Prairie Melt is now available in a growing number of select Sobeys/Safeway/IGA stores in Alberta as part of their local program. The Sobeys Local Program has fuelled the company's growth within grocery retail as one of the growing number of retailers to stock this in-demand product.



For more information: www.prairiemelt.com



Save-On-Foods Celebrates Grand Opening at Guildford Village

Western Canadian grocery retailer Save-On-Foods officially opened the doors to its newest location, Save-On-Foods Guildford Village, at 15615 104th Avenue. The store is the company's ninth location in the city of Surrey.

With more than 39,000 square feet, Save-On-Foods Guildford Village will offer the community a traditional grocery shopping experience as well as a wide variety of Save-On-Foods' new and unique innovations, including:

- **A fresh and fantastic meat and seafood department stocked with Western Canadian AAA beef, a large selection of fresh sausages, kabobs, marinated chicken breasts and Ocean Wise Seafood**
- **A new bakery stocked with baked-in-store treats, a custom cake program and freshly baked breads made with Western Canadian wheat**
- **A large selection of Save-On-Foods Kitchen grab 'n' go items including signature sandwiches, homestyle fried chicken, a taqueria Mexican grill, fresh daily-made poké bowls and in-store rolled sushi**

"Our team has been working hard getting our store ready to open and we are thrilled to finally welcome in our community this week," said Store Manager Stephanie Benbow. "We can't wait to Go the Extra Mile for all our new neighbours and support the causes that are most important to them."

With 185 stores, Save-On-Foods remains on a steady path of growth, and has opened 40 new stores in the last five years.

KINDRED CULTURES EXPANDS INTO NEW PRODUCTION FACILITY

Kindred Cultures, a local fermented foods producer specializing in Water Kefir production, has just expanded into its new production facility in Richmond, BC. The new 3000 square foot facility is 12 times larger than Kindred Cultures' previous 250 square foot production site in Vancouver, providing space for the installation of automated machinery, as well as more room for inventory storage.



"Moving into this new facility allows us to not only meet the demand of our current immediate geographies, but also satisfy the growing demand in locations beyond British Columbia," said Lyndsay Scott, founder, and CEO of Kindred Cultures. "With the increased production capacity, we expect that we will be able to distribute our products nationwide by early 2022."

With a steady increase in production volumes each month, Kindred Cultures' move to their larger Richmond facility has come just in time to accommodate the company's growth. In fact, from May to July, their production numbers have more than doubled — and they keep getting larger.

"We actually had to buy a larger fermentation tank right after moving to keep up with the increasing volumes," Scott continued. "The space we had in Vancouver would definitely not have been able to fit this addition to our equipment, which is why we're so grateful we were able to move when we did."



pür grains

Combining the goodness of real ancient grains with bold global flavours in one convenient package.



Wise Bites Collections Inc. Partners with iLevel Management Inc.

Wise Bites Collections Inc. has entered a partnership with iLevel Management, Inc. to act as their sales broker to Natural health food stores, mass retail, food service and drug stores in Canada.



"We are looking forward to working with the group at iLevel Management to expand our brand awareness, and grow our line of Plant Based, Gluten Free, Allergen Free, Non-GMO products. iLevel's initiatives and experience will be invaluable as we look to establish ourselves further in the Canadian market," says Cathline James, CEO.



Lita's Mexican Foods Expands Distribution

Lita's Mexican Foods has deepened their product distribution throughout BC with the help of Horizon Distributors, with plans to expand across Canada by early 2022.

"This is a really exciting time for our growing team! With our recent expansion into a larger facility, we are ready to create volume and push our innovative, award winning, certified vegan Mexican products into more fine retailers and foodservice establishments," said CEO and Co-Founder Jackie Thomas.

Lita's is a female led, family founded company based in BC that recreates traditional Mexican foods into naturally delicious and easy to prepare plant-based products. They are the first to innovate a complete fresh frozen vegan taco meal kit and to bring a certified organic uncooked style fresh flour tortilla to the Canadian market; with plans to launch two new veganized frozen products this fall. They also operate as a Certified Plastic Negative company.



Sabroso Appoints Fox

Sabroso Foods has appointed Karen Fox as chief revenue officer. Fox brings more than 20 years of multinational business experience and her largest asset is her level of adaptability and diversification across industries to accelerate organic business growth. She will oversee Sabroso's strategic planning, product development, marketing, branding, and partnerships with the grocery industry in Canada and abroad.

New Ownership at Discovery Organics

A core group of current Discovery Organics employees who wanted to maintain and foster the mission that Discovery Organics began 23 years ago, purchased a majority share of Discovery Organics from the founders Annie Moss and Randy Hooper. The new ownership group was put in place July 1, 2021.



Discovery Organics is a certified organic fresh produce wholesaler based in Vancouver BC with warehouses in Vancouver BC and Calgary AB. Discovery services western Canadian retailers, restaurants, processors and buying groups.

A true labour of love for previous owners Annie Moss and her husband Randy Hooper, Discovery Organics began in 1998 with a mission to help develop markets for local organic farmers. That mission continues today with a strong understanding of food systems and the interconnected nature of the food industry and the importance of relationships from farm to table.

The business has grown to source directly from certified organic farms, ranches, and orchards within the Western Hemisphere, preferably with a strong connection to the Fair Trade movement.

The new ownership group includes:

- Stefan Misse - President
- Viviana Marino - Financial Controller
- Damien Bryan - Vice-President Business Development
- Newry Lee - Customs and Logistics Manager
- Brody Irvine - Senior Purchasing Manager

Great Little Box Company/ Ideon Packaging Takes Home Five Medals at Packaging Competition

Great Little Box Company Ltd./ Ideon Packaging (GLBC) has won three gold medals and two bronze medals at the first-ever 2021 TAPPI/ AICC Box Manufacturing Olympics.

The competition was open to all TAPPI and AICC members from around the globe who produce corrugated, rigid box and folding cartons, as well as their suppliers.

GLBC's design for Routine Natural's Soap Box won first place in the category of Folding Carton - Women and Men's Cosmetics. This packaging was part of Routine's recent product offering expansion. The combination of vibrant colours, foil, and brand colour consistency created a product that truly stood out on shelves.

GLBC also won first place for structure and third place for print in the Counter, Shelf, Power Wing, PDQ Point of Purchase Display category with their Strait & Narrow six-pack dispenser design. Strait & Narrow were launching a new drink in a sleek/ tall can and desired a gravity fed dispenser with a small footprint that would grab consumer impulse purchases. The eye-catching artwork and clever dispensing design became a big hit with retailers.

In the category of Printing - Counter, Shelf, Power Wing and PDQ Point of Purchase Displays GLBC also won first place for the Permatrin Ultra Limited Display. This wood grain patterned display had an eye catching precise flexo print.

And finally in the category of Best Use of Corrugated Replacing Other Substrates GLBC won third place for their innovative design for BC Fresh's Potato Basket & Tray.

Righteous Hits a New Milestone with B Corp Recertification Score

Righteous Gelato has been re-certified as a B Corporation, and a new score of 115, making Righteous the top scoring ice cream brand in the world! Righteous' B Corp recertification was awarded by the third-party, non-profit organization B Lab following a rigorous B Impact Re-assessment that evaluates companies according to the highest standards of social and environmental performance, accountability, and transparency.



It's considered the platinum standard for verification that a business is truly operating as a force for good.

"Since day one, the team at Righteous has been committed to doing business differently and raising the bar, while creating something we can all truly be proud of. Putting people and the planet before profit was already in our DNA, so it truly was an incredible achievement to become a Certified B-Corp in 2016 and gave us a benchmark to continue to push ourselves to do better," said James Boettcher, custodian of culture, and CEO.

Plant-based comfort food



Find us in the frozen aisle!

boosh™

NEW refrigerated line available now!

Contact your local UNFI representative
 Canada East Broker » hollym@brandseedmarketing.ca
 Canada West Broker » kerrys@brandseedmarketing.ca

[@booshfood](https://www.instagram.com/booshfood) | [booshfood.com](https://www.booshfood.com)

PRAIRIE melt™

PLANT-BASED

the new standard in Plant-Based Cheese

Join the growing number of retailers to stock this in-demand product.

VEGAN Canadian Made



dairy free | gluten free | soy free | nut free

praiiemelt.com
 @praiiemelt • 587-499-8793 • sales@goodstockfoods.com

Iceberg Cold Storage Limited

A PUBLIC FROZEN FOOD WAREHOUSE

Providing service to foodservice, retail, producers, distributors and processors since 1985.

WE ARE HACCP & CFIA APPROVED.

For more information please visit our website
www.icebergcold.com

870 Bradford Street, Winnipeg, MB Canada R3H 0N5
 Phone 204-783-6133 • Fax 204-783-7483 • [email info@icebergcold.com](mailto:info@icebergcold.com)

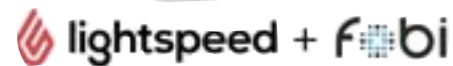
FOBI Completes Integration with Lightspeed to Provide Real-Time POS Data Aggregation and Analytics to Lightspeed Customers

Fobi AI Inc. (formerly Loop Insights Inc.), a global leader in providing real-time data analytics through artificial intelligence to drive customer activation and engagement, has announced a data aggregation and analytics partnership with Lightspeed Commerce Inc., the one-stop commerce platform for merchants around the world to simplify, scale and create exceptional customer experiences.



- Fobi integration with the Lightspeed commerce platform is now complete.
- Fobi App has now launched within the Lightspeed ecosystem and is available for download by Lightspeed customers.
- Fobi will be the "Featured Partner" for the month of October.

With the recent acquisitions of Vend and NuORDER, Lightspeed has greatly increased its global footprint and total customer locations worldwide to become a global leader in the commerce space. Having a referral partnership with the Lightspeed sales team will be invaluable to the success of this partnership.



On August 10th, 2020, Fobi (Loop Insights at the time) announced a referral partnership and API integration with Vend, a leading global POS company. The announcement came with the partnership's first sale to a 30-location franchise. Through the reseller partnership, Fobi worked with Vend's global team to onboard new customers monthly.

Fobi CEO Rob Anson stated: "Lightspeed's support of Fobi's integration to their platform cannot be understated as it speaks volumes about their confidence in Fobi as a premiere retail data solution provider. With our integration now complete, both Fobi and Lightspeed are positioned to generate new sales opportunities through this successful partnership. And, being selected as their "Featured Partner" in the Lightspeed ecosystem for the month of October is another validation of the value that Fobi brings to Lightspeed retailers."

Bond Bakery Brands Backs Holy Napoli Pizza

Bond Bakery Brands Limited has made an investment in Holy Napoli Pizza Inc., a rapidly expanding producer of Neapolitan-style frozen pizza and pizza dough. Founded in 2017 by Francesca Galasso and Dave Vukets.

"We are excited to announce this partnership with Francesca, Dave and the Holy Napoli team. They have developed a premium product that fits seamlessly within our existing platform. Our investment will allow Holy Napoli to immediately increase production capacity and further expand



distribution across Canada. At Bond, we look to scale companies and we are thrilled to be able to do so with such a motivated team," said Nicolas Mulrone, co-founder, president & CEO of Bond.

Bond is an investment platform that aims to accelerate the growth of bakery companies and be impact-leaders within their communities. The company is dedicated to making positive change through food and prioritizes developing a bond with all stakeholders including our employees, our customers, our shareholders, and the environment, along with all the communities we serve.

"We reached out to Bond Bakery Brands in the search for a partner with deep food industry expertise to support the next phase of growth at Holy Napoli. We immediately connected with the co-founders Nicolas, Cameron and Matt, their commitment to quality and their genuine passion for positive impact through the Bond platform," said Dave Vukets, president of Holy Napoli.



Two B.C.-Based Grocery Chains Partner with Foodmesh

Fresh St. Market and IGA Stores of BC have launched an enterprise-wide food recovery program at its stores across British Columbia to divert 100 per cent of its edible but unsaleable perishable food away from landfill to its highest end-use.

In partnership with FoodMesh, Fresh St. Market and IGA Stores of BC will donate edible food they can no longer sell to local charities, who in turn, share the food amongst several other charitable organizations — 199 in total across B.C. These charities use the food donations they receive for their food security programming, to help feed those in our communities who need it most. Donations come from all store departments, and include fresh produce, dairy, meat and seafood, bakery and deli products.

Choices Markets Joins the Island Community

For more than 30 years, community grocer Choices Markets has earned a name as one of Western Canada's largest retailers of organic, local and specialty foods, so it was only a matter of time before the B.C. owned and operated company's expansion would look across the Georgia Strait to open its first location on Vancouver Island.

In 1990, Choices Markets opened its flagship store in Kitsilano, aiming to provide the community with support for healthy living. The company became an industry leader, focusing on alternative food options such as local, organic goods and hard-to-find items necessary for specialized diets. Going beyond food, Choices Markets' ownership also saw the importance of considering the community's needs as a whole. This led to establishing a complimentary nutrition program and many community outreach initiatives that have grown steadily as the company expands. In 2017, Choices Markets joined The Jim Pattison Group of companies and reiterated its commitment to being a grocer of local, organic and specialty items.



"Parksville is a vibrant community of both young and established families, and we're excited to be growing right alongside them," stated Jon Janower, Choices Markets COO. "This location will be our first foray onto the Island, and we're excited to be serving the greater community from Coombs to Qualicum to Comox. As a B.C. owned and operated grocer that specializes in alternative foods, we are thrilled to be able to become a part of the lives of British Columbians in the Comox Valley."

Set to open in fall of 2022, the newest Choices Markets will be located at 319 Island Highway East. It will be a 22,000-square-foot operation and will continue to live up to the company brand by supporting small local producers; sourcing the highest quality, ethically raised or sourced meat, poultry and seafood; providing a large variety of local, organic produce, dairy and grocery options; offering complimentary trusted nutrition services; serving as a one-stop shop for foods for specialized diets; and stocking thousands of natural wellness products.

GIC LIVE @ HOME Features Efficient and Easy on Demand Connections to Grow Your Business

Designed to replicate the in-person, physical trade show and conference experience, now in its second year, the largest virtual grocery event, GIC LIVE @ HOME 2021 edition is bigger and better to make it feel as if it were live! Live show dates will be October 26, 27, 28, 2021, with the platform and all its conference and trade show components available for a full 30 days total.

Face-to-face virtual is even easier and faster this year allowing for valuable connections as if you were LIVE! Featuring AI-powered meeting matchmaking technology on EnsembleIQ's best-in-class virtual platform, the exclusive Retailer Connect program allows executives of all levels, from all regions, to



gather to share knowledge, network and conduct business, virtually, either 1:1 or in teams. Over the three-day live event and over 30 days total, businesses can make scheduled meetings in their booth using text chat (in 100 languages) or video. NEW! Attendee to attendee LIVE chat/video!

Using a one-click login, attendees can quickly pre-schedule dedicated meetings, add education sessions to their calendar, and network using text chat or face-to-face video chat. This premium experience is affordable and accessible from any laptop or mobile. GIC LIVE @ HOME provides an economical engagement opportunity with no travel or accommodation costs for businesses, and no lost time away from the office. Retailers will enjoy free access to the trade show.

Exhibitors will be able to work with their account manager to effortlessly design their immersive and engaging exhibitor booth, all powered by proven technology. "A World of Opportunities" awaits both local and international exhibitors as they will be able to connect with decision makers. No downloads of apps or additional software necessary.



Custom-made reusable bags using eco-friendly materials

Contact us for a free quote



1-866-594-2247 | colnuck.com | info@colnuck.com

Canada Still Lags Behind Other Countries in Tackling Seafood Fraud

The results of Oceana Canada's latest seafood fraud investigation, part of the most comprehensive, national, multi-year DNA testing study in Canada, reveals that 46 per cent of seafood samples tested in restaurants and grocery stores in four major Canadian cities were mislabelled. These results demonstrate yet again that Canada has a pervasive and unchecked seafood fraud problem, putting Canadians, honest fishers, ocean ecosystems and our seafood economy at risk.



Given widespread concern among Canadians and a lack of government progress in developing a seafood traceability system, Oceana Canada revisited some of the cities where it had previously sampled seafood. Forty-six per cent of the samples from Halifax, Montreal, Ottawa and Toronto were mislabelled (43 out of 94). This is just one percentage point off from the 47 per cent mislabelling rate found among 472 samples Oceana Canada tested between 2017 and 2019, and consistent with earlier studies in Canada and globally.

New market research conducted by Abacus Data for Oceana Canada, found that Canadians overwhelmingly support seafood traceability and want the government to act. Eighty-seven per cent are concerned about purchasing seafood that is mislabelled, up from 76 per cent in 2020, and 86 per cent are concerned about the government's failure to address seafood mislabelling and illegal fishing in Canada.

The Canadian government committed to implementing a boat-to-plate seafood traceability system in 2019, which would bring Canada more in line with widely accepted global best practices; however, it has still not put forward a plan or timeline for doing so. Until this happens, Canadians have no guarantee that the seafood they eat is safe, legally caught or honestly labelled. Oceana Canada is calling on the government to act now on its commitment by developing a solution that is mandatory, comprehensive, harmonizes with our trading partners and meets global best practices.

cent are concerned about purchasing seafood that is mislabelled, up from 76 per cent in 2020, and 86 per cent are concerned about the government's failure to address seafood mislabelling and illegal fishing in Canada.



Calendar of Upcoming Events

October 9-13, 2021

Anuga

Cologne, Germany

www.anuga.com

October 26-27, 2021

Grocery Innovations Canada

Toronto Congress Centre

Toronto, ON

www.groceryinnovations.com

April 5-7, 2022

CPMA Convention + Trade Show

Palais des Congrès

Montreal, Quebec

convention.cpma.ca

April 21-24, 2022

CHFA West

Vancouver, BC

info: <https://chfa.ca>

April 20-22, 2022

SIAL Canada

Palais des Congrès

Montreal, Quebec

<https://sialcanada.com>

FANS OF CHARCUTERIE:
GET READY TO SHAKE UP YOUR BOARDS.



RHINELAND



On shelves Fall 2021.

Contact customerservice@freybe.com for more information.

MEET YOUR NEW BUSINESS PARTNER



2021 TRANSIT

With a full range of Built Ford Tough® Commercial Vehicles, we make it easy to choose the one that's right for your business. From the endless versatility of Transit and Transit Connect to the legendary power and capabilities of F-Series, you'll find a dependable partner that'll get to work – day in and day out.



2021 SUPER DUTY

2021 TRANSIT CONNECT

2021 F-150

KEY FEATURES

- ◆ Super Duty® has best-in-class max. available payload of 7,850 lbs*
- ◆ F-150 has class-exclusive^ available Pro Power Onboard™ that offers exportable power on demand
- ◆ Transit has 3 lengths, 3 heights and multiple cargo configurations
- ◆ Transit Connect has a compact footprint, and a max. cargo space of 145.8 cu ft¹

Vehicles may be shown with optional features. *2021 Super Duty with 6.2L engine, DRW, Long Box and Heavy-Duty Payload Package. Class is Full-Size Pickups over 8,500 GVWR. Max. payload is for properly equipped base vehicle with required equipment and a 150-lb driver and varies based on cargo, vehicle configuration, accessories and number of passengers. See label on door jamb for carrying capacity of a specific vehicle. For additional information, see your Ford Dealer. ^Class is Full-Size Pickups under 8,500 lbs GVWR. ¹Cargo and load capacity limited by weight and weight distribution. ©2021 Ford Motor Company of Canada, Limited. All rights reserved.

As a business owner, you know there's no such thing as a day off. That's why you need tools you can rely on to get the job done — day in and day out. With the Ford Transit and Transit Connect family, we've created tough, dependable cargo, crew, and passenger vans that are completely customizable to suit the needs of your business.

Big Thinking for your Business.

When it comes to your unique business, we know that one size doesn't fit all. With the 2021 Ford Transit, you have the option to choose from three different body lengths, three roof heights, two engines, and two wheelbases. This versatility gives you multiple ways to configure your Transit to fit the needs of your business. The Transit cargo van offers a payload range of 3,550 lbs.(1,610 kg) to up to 4,550 lbs.(2,063 kg)*. A power-sliding door feature is available on medium and high-roof cargo van models to make it easy to access your payload. The Transit is also available with All-Wheel-Drive capability, and Ford Co-Pilot360™ — a comprehensive



The 2021 Ford Transit and Transit Connect

Big (and not so big) Solutions for your Business

storage** and max. payload of 1,610 lbs. (730 kg) *. We've also loaded it with available smart technology like voice-activated SYNC®3 with Apple CarPlay™ and Android Auto™ Compatibility†, plus Ford Co-Pilot360™ — a suite of advanced driver-assist technologies, to help you stay productive and confident when you're behind the wheel.

We've Got Your Back.

When you own a business, it's nice to know that you have support when you need it. Our large national network of Ford dealers means that help is always close by. So whether you're looking for sales, service, or access to our extensive network of custom upfitters, we're here to help your business succeed.

With a full suite of services, expertise, and flexible configurations, Ford makes it easy to upfit and customize your vehicle to create a mobile space that is an exact fit for you. No matter the size of your business, the right-sized solution can be found in the 2021 Ford Transit and Transit Connect family of vans. ●



suite of advanced driver-assist technologies. So, when you need to get to work, you can be confident your Transit will get you there.

Coming soon, we're ready to lead your business into the future with the 2022 Ford E-Transit. This all-electric work van features 3,880 lbs.* of maximum available payload, plus available innovative features like Pro Power Onboard™ — 2.4 kW of exportable power that gives you the ability to power up your tools on the job or on the go.

Built Small and Smart.

Need a more compact solution for your business? The 2021 Ford Transit Connect offers versatile cargo and passenger configurations, and is well-designed for custom upfitting. Despite its smaller size, the Transit Connect provides a maximum 145.8 cu.ft. (4,129 litres) of

Legal

* When properly equipped.

^ Ford Co-Pilot360 Technology features are supplemental and do not replace the driver's attention, judgment and need to control the vehicle.

**Cargo and load capacity limited by weight and weight distribution.

† Available feature. Don't drive while distracted. Use voice-operated systems when possible; don't use handheld devices while driving. Requires phone with compatible version of Apple iOS or Android Auto, and active data service. SYNC does not control CarPlay or Android Auto while in use. Apple and Google are solely responsible for their functionality. Message and data rates may apply. Apple and Apple CarPlay™ are trademarks of Apple Inc., registered in the U.S. and other countries. Android, Android Auto, Google are trademarks of Google LLC.

©2021 Ford Motor Company of Canada, Limited. All rights reserved.



FORD.CA/COMMERCIAL-TRUCKS

A COUNTRY OF

Coffee Lovers

AN OVERVIEW OF CONSUMER TRENDS IN THE HOT BEVERAGE CATEGORY

An interesting thing happened with coffee consumption over the pandemic — or rather didn't happen. It stayed the same. Over the past summer alone, 74 per cent of Canadians, 18-plus, had coffee daily.

"That's consistent with both pandemic and pre-pandemic levels, so coffee didn't drop at all," says Robert Carter, president of the Coffee Association of Canada. "Canada is a coffee-loving country."

What did change for a period of time is where people got their coffee. Carter says in-home consumption increased during the pandemic, shifting away from workplace consumption and out-of-home consumption. Once restaurants, drive-throughs, and coffee shops opened up again and people were out and about more, out-of-home consumption started going back up.

Interest in different coffee styles has increased — for example, espresso-based beverages are on the rise.

"In fact, they're increasing for in-home consumption as well, which is very interesting," says Carter. "People are buying more specialized machines to make coffee in home."

Then there is cold brew: "Cold brew coffee is absolutely on fire right now," he says.

While cold brew is often purchased out of home, Carter notes that the ready-to-drink versions in bottles and cans are a really strong growth area.



McCafé®

100% ETHICALLY SOURCED ARABICA BEANS



PROTECTING RAINFORESTS • SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES • RESPECTING FARMERS

© 2020 McDonald's. ® - use of these trademarks is licensed from McDonald's Corporation.



Robert Carter, president, Coffee Association of Canada

In conjunction with the growth of espresso and cold brew coffee, flavoured syrups are also growing as consumers personalize the coffee they make at home. The pod category continues to be very strong as consumers embrace and use single-serve products. While recycling issues continue to come up, Carter notes that there is an opportunity for more innovation within that category.

While different styles and preparation methods may change, coffee consumption isn't slowing down.

"Coffee is the No.2 most traded commodity in the world, so it is hard to dispute that coffee is still king as a hot beverage of choice amongst consumers," says Peter Neal, co-founder of Crank Coffee Co. "While there will always be niche, esoteric expressions of coffee, the vast majority of consumers just want a good solid cup of java."

WHAT COFFEE CONSUMERS WANT

While coffee consumers are adults of all ages, hot drinks in general are more popular with an older cohort of Canadians, those aged 35-plus, says Eryn Pasut, director of marketing for beverages at Nestlé Canada, referencing the Nestlé Proprietary Study, 2020.

"Most Canadians drink hot coffee or coffee-based drinks and hot tea to 'wake up' and as a breakfast boost to get a good start to the day," says Pasut. "Social break, recharge, share and connect with family and friends are other reasons to consume hot beverages during the day. When consumed in the evening, hot chocolate and hot tea provide a chance to slow down and unwind at the end of the day."

Many factors influence choosing one brand over another.

Consumers "are looking for brands they trust, speed, and convenience. They are looking to replicate their out-of-home coffee experience at home," says Ian Buckingham, vice-president of sales for Melitta Canada, Inc. "Consumers in general are looking for cause-related coffees to some extent. This could be Fair Trade or other causes, including Rainforest Alliance, coffee produced using solar power, packaging which is recyclable or compostable etc., coffee that is produced in a sustainable manner."

Carter says country of origin, ethical treatment of workers, sustainability, and where the products are being sourced continue to be important considerations — increasingly so.

"I would say, increasing in awareness from a consumer standpoint overall, because they're much more in tune with where their food products are coming from," says Carter.

Andy Naidu, category business manager, coffee, for Kraft Heinz Canada, agrees and references Mintel research: "Consumers increasingly want to know



PRODUCT SHOWCASE

Warm up sales with these hot items

GOLD-STANDARD INDULGENCE

The Nescafe Gold specialty coffee lineup features deliciously smooth, café-inspired coffee with mouth-watering foam. These indulgent coffees are made from 100 per cent sustainably sourced and natural ingredients with no artificial colours, flavours, or sweeteners. Each sachet whips up the perfect cup, every time — no barista! Flavour varieties include Cappuccino, Vanilla Latte, Mocha, and Toffee Nut Latte.



ZERO-WASTE AND DELICIOUS

The dual-branded Maxwell House and Nabob display bins feature attention-grabbing 3D panels of green imagery and a delicious cup of coffee, with a clear call to action for consumers to make the switch to 100 per cent compostable, zero-waste pods. To support the sustainability message from end-to-end, the displays were made of recycled materials.



HONEST, UNCOMPROMISING QUALITY AT AN HONEST PRICE

Melitta coffee uses premium high-altitude Arabica beans to deliver a rich, smooth cup consistently. Fire-roasted in small batches to the highest quality standards, Melitta coffees are loved by those who want honest, uncompromising quality at an honest price. Join the pursuit for better coffee.



EXCITING NEW ADDITIONS TO THE MARKET

Crank Coffee Co. is excited to launch with five unique and exciting blends. Brought to you by the Neal Brothers (Chris + Peter Neal), Crank Coffee Co. beans are carefully selected and roasted by their team of passionate coffee drinkers. “We feel that with our carefully blended and roasted mix of medium, dark and espresso beans, Crank Coffee will delight passionate coffee drinkers everywhere,” says Peter Neal.



ORGANIC, FAIR TRADE, DELICIOUS

Level Ground was founded in 1997 with a focus on Fair Trade and a passion for specialty coffee. Level Ground's deep knowledge of direct trade relationships along with their quality team's expertise craft exceptional coffee for you.



where their products come from, with 40 per cent of consumers relying on product labelling for information on sustainability of a product.”

Sustainability is more than a buzzword. “A Mintel report I was reading yesterday said when asked to choose their top five considerations when making FMCG staples purchases, consumers typically select two or more related to sustainability,” says Stacey Toews, co-founder and communications at Level Ground. “For coffee, the top performers on sustainability were minimal and recyclable packaging and being produced in an environmentally friendly way. However, of course, consumers won't compromise on quality, taste, etc. in the name of sustainability, but it is definitely something they are looking for more.”

Another meaningful concept for consumers: Fair Trade certification.

“Awareness of Fair Trade has grown significantly since 2019 with 42 per cent of consumers recognizing Fair Trade marks,” says Naidu, referencing Globescan. “Nearly eight out of 10 consumers who know Fair Trade have purchased a Fair Trade-certified product at least once in the last six months.”

Referencing the Coffee Association of Canada, May 2021, Pasut adds, “Forty per cent of consumers say they are somewhat more/much more likely to be interested in buying coffee if it is Fair Trade certified.”

Neal has spent a lot of time on the Fair Trade concept, travelling and speaking about Fair Trade in several communities in Canada.

“I helped ensure that Toronto and Barrie, Ontario became Fair Trade cities 10-15 years ago, and I heard from hundreds of people who believed in the notion that, for a small premium, we could literally help improve the lives of coffee farmers and their families,” says Neal. “To me, working with Fair Trade is a no-brainer and our new Crank Coffee is proud to carry the Fair Trade badge.”

Growing numbers of consumers agree. “Fair Trade is a given in coffee purchasing decisions, especially for natural consumers,” says Richard Stark, sales lead at Level Ground. “I'd argue they simply wouldn't pick up a coffee if it wasn't Fair Trade as it's seen as a hygiene factor nowadays.”

It's a question of values.



NEW

300G QUAD SEAL PACKAGE



✓ Fair Trade

✓ 100% Organic

✓ Delicious

For orders & more information contact us at orders@levelground.com or 1.888.565.6633



PRODUCT SHOWCASE

Warm up sales with these hot items

NATURALLY CAFFEINE FREE

Unlike decaffeinated coffee or tea which still contains some caffeine, Caf-Lib beverages offer all the pleasures of a coffee break, minus the caffeine. Made from chicory and barley, Caf-Lib products are also free of chemicals and preservatives. Available in Caf-Lib Original, Caf-Lib Dark Roast, and Caf-Lib Organic.



SIP SOME GOOD

Carnation Hot Chocolate's core line up has a new recipe and look with the same great taste! Made with real and 100 per cent sustainably sourced cocoa, with no artificial flavours. Proudly prepared in Canada, each canister or sachet mixes up a rich and creamy cup of hot chocolate you know and love. Flavour varieties include Rich & Creamy, Marshmallow, and Light Hot Chocolate.



S'MORE PLEASE

Savour the irresistible combination of creamy Carnation hot chocolate and bubbly AERO S'mores for a delectable take on the campfire classic: a delicious little indulgence in your day! Three amazing flavours come together: the irresistible, melt-in-your mouth bubbles of AERO, the marshmallow and graham cracker of S'mores, and the creaminess of hot chocolate. Proudly prepared in Canada and made with real, 100 per cent sustainably sourced cocoa.



SIMPLY DELICIOUS

Sip on the classic delight of Carnation Simply Hot Chocolate, made with the simplicity of only five ingredients: sugar, dairy, pure cocoa, vanilla flavour, and a pinch of salt. What better way to enjoy the sweet and creamy deliciousness of hot chocolate than with a completely uncomplicated cup? Proudly prepared in Canada and made with real, 100 per cent sustainably sourced cocoa. Available in: 400g Canister and 2 NEW formats: 7x25g Envelopes, 24ct K-Cups.



ENHANCING YOUR BEVERAGE

Starbucks offers customers a way to elevate their coffee with their coffee enhancers inspired by their hot beverages. At only 40 calories per tablespoon Starbucks Coffee Enhancers are a delightful alternative to milk, creamer, half and half or other dairy substitutes. Available in four delicious flavours - Pumpkin Spice, Caramel Macchiato, Cinnamon Dolce and White Chocolate Mocha.



"I think consumers are starting to look beyond Fair Trade in the coffee category, looking for companies that meet their values in the entire way they do business," says Toews. "We will see things such as being a member of one per cent for the Planet and B-Corp status becoming increasingly important to differentiate in the category. Fair Trade is no longer enough."

PREMIUMIZATION

Premiumization has played a big role. "Premium is the largest segment within coffee and continues to grow, which has caused consumers to look for a number of standards and benefits," says Naidu. "Beyond just a great-tasting cup of coffee, consumers are also considering factors such as high quality, Canadian-made, sustainable packaging, ethical sourcing, variety, and coffee expertise."

Those factors become talking points. "You can have a much more advanced conversation about coffee with the average consumers now compared to 10 years ago or 20 years ago, when people just didn't care — they just wanted their black cup of coffee," says Carter. "Now you have conversations and people are talking about their Blue Mountain Jamaican, or their special small-batch roasted coffees coming from different areas of the world."

Toews says the growth of premium brands is giving consumers a greater choice of high-quality coffees with different taste profiles and from different areas. "I think the biggest change in the category for me in recent years has been the growth of coffee pods, allowing consumers the coffee shop quality coffee at home," he says.

The pandemic has spurred that shift. "As many Canadians continue to work from home, we've seen that they are looking to maintain their morning routines by emulating the coffee shop experience in their own kitchens," says Naidu. "Hot beverages is a category going through a period of premiumization, especially in roast and ground coffee, as these consumers spend more time preparing and enjoying their cups of coffee. This shift to at-home coffee consumption is expected to last as consumers have both invested in coffee machines and accessories and become acquainted with these new routines."

Research from Nielsen Answers 2020 versus 2019 supports this.

"Premiumization is happening across all hot beverages segments, sourcing to

out-of-home cups coming in-home, current brands offering more premium innovations, and also premium brands expanding into previously less valuable segments," says Pasut. "In coffee, consumers are also elevating from black cups to white cups and also from hot coffee to cold coffee in their second or third cup of the day, driving dollar growth."

The pandemic also affected how people shopped for coffee.

"Whole bean coffee was the fastest growing segment within roast and ground coffee," says Buckingham. "Consumers had more time to prepare their cup of coffee their way. Consumers were also shopping less often with larger basket sizes. With the whole bean segment, the coffee remains fresher for a longer period prior to being ground."

And people are willing to pay for it. "We were instrumental in building a popular brand of coffee in Canada over the past 20 years, and we watched consumers switch from, in my opinion, pedestrian low-grade \$5/lb coffee to \$16/lb coffee," says Neal. "Typically, consumers can be convinced to pay for premium once, and if the value proposition or 'premium experience' doesn't live up to the hype they won't repurchase."

LOOKING AHEAD

Carter expects premiumization and innovation to continue, particularly as the younger generations are drawn to coffee.

"Coffee has definitely moved from that perception of your parents-type beverage to younger generations, who are getting in at an earlier age," says Carter.

While the coffee category is expected to continue to grow, Carter is also seeing another trend on the horizon.

"The perception of health and wellness with coffee is becoming much more front and centre. People are starting to recognize that there are some health benefits to coffee," he says. "I think we're going to hear a lot more around the health and wellness benefits of coffee in the coming years."

Coffee lovers everywhere will be cheering on that news.

COFFEE MERCHANDISING TIPS

"Coffee is a highly planned category. In our shopper data, 78 per cent of shoppers plan their visit before hitting the aisle. Taste, brand, and offers are key

attributes for shoppers at the aisle. Hence, shopper-enabled aisle navigation, rightly timed offers, and store displays facilitate and optimize the shopping experience," says Pasut, referencing Nestlé Shopper Intelligence 2021.

"Retailers can leverage secondary merchandising displays that lean into the purchase drivers and considerations of consumers in this category. For instance, when dressing up the shelf with imagery, it is important that the hot beverages showcased look appetizing since taste is a top driver. Cross-merchandising in

complementary categories such as bakery, breakfast, and deli aisles can help to grow the total basket purchase," says Naidu.

"From our perspective, retailers need to merchandise the category to capture a majority of the consumers. Combine roast and ground items with single serve and whole bean items. If they just include one segment on displays, they are missing consumers who prepare coffee using different ways. A simple example is filter paper, which consumers sometimes forget to purchase while on their shopping trips," says Buckingham.

Melitta®

FROM OUR BEAN TO

Handcrafted

QUALITY

IN EVERY CUP.

For over 100 years we've been carefully crafting the perfect cup of coffee.

From coffee to filters, Melitta offers a complete range of products for your customers. Our coffee is fire-roasted in small batches to the highest quality, and our 100% compostable filters with microfine Flavour Enhancing® perforations allow the full coffee flavour to filter through for a rich and flavourful cup every time. Enjoy our Pour-Over™ coffee makers that let you brew coffeehouse-quality coffee, handcrafted by you in three easy steps.

Join the pursuit for better coffee™

TEA: THE ULTIMATE COMFORT

Tea, and the culture and history around tea, is as old as humankind. But that doesn't mean it doesn't change with the times. In fact, the ability of tea to meet changing consumer expectations is what makes it so durable, century after century. And these days, consumers are looking for variety, says Shabnam Weber, president of the Tea and Herbal Association of Canada.

"They want choice when they're standing at the tea shelf in the grocery store," says Weber. "We've seen a spike in tea consumption since 2019, which caused us to commission a survey to find out why Canadians were drinking more tea."



Shabnam Weber, president, Tea and Herbal Association of Canada

Survey results indicated that 55 per cent of consumers drink tea to feel good and feel comfort. In particular, demand has increased for teas that offer additional benefits — especially health benefits, such as vitamins — a trend Weber says started even before COVID-19.

"I anticipate that trend will continue, particularly as consumers place greater emphasis on self-care," she adds. Like coffee, premiumization has also been a big driver for the tea industry.

"The specialty tea category has shown steady and continued growth with no signs of stopping," says Weber. "Most important, consumers have made it clear that they are willing to pay a little more for a product, if they feel the value is there."

The survey also asked consumers why they tried different teas in the past year. "The number one reason was looking for a new variety, and the very last reason was because they were looking for a cheaper product," says Weber. "A cheaper price is not a driver for tea consumers."



photo courtesy shutterstock.com

"I have always felt that coffee has a place in deli or traditional breakfast meal areas in addition to the coffee aisle," says Neal.

"Promotions and off shelf are key, as well as ensuring bringing in new innovation to the category," says Toews.

HERBAL COFFEE FOR HEALTH

Herbal coffee is attracting a growing number of consumers. Andrea Felli, marketing coordinator at ID Foods Corporation, says there is a shift happening amongst health-conscious consumers.

"They are examining what foods they put into their bodies and scrutinizing the individual ingredients as well as the effects they have on their health," says Felli. "Many are becoming more aware of the side effects that caffeine can have on them and all hidden sources in their diets. People are evaluating something as basic as their morning cup of coffee and asking themselves if it's contributing to their overall well-being or simply a habit they are keeping up."

That's where there has been an upwards trend in Caf-Lib sales, especially with Caf-Lib's organic variety.

"Consumers are looking to maintain the same rituals they have come to enjoy by substituting their morning cup of 'joe' with a warm cup of herbal coffee, like Caf-Lib made from gut-friendly ingredients such as chicory and barley," says Felli. ●

SWEET TREAT: HOT CHOCOLATE

According to Nielsen National All Channels, hot chocolate category has grown in both dollar value and units in the latest 52 weeks (PE Aug 14th, 2021) to \$74M and 11 per cent. Category growth has been fuelled in-season (Oct-March) and off-season (April-Sept), with consumers drinking year-round for both pleasure and refreshment.

Within the category, hot chocolate consumers are looking for:

Healthier Drinking:

With a growing emphasis on well-being, consumers are looking for products with no artificial colours/sweeteners and cleaner, simple ingredients.

Indulgence:

Hot chocolate consumers are heavy users, consuming out-of-home on a weekly basis regardless of age group. In the past year, consumers have turned to creating indulgent beverage experiences at home for comfort and as a treat for themselves (i.e., hot chocolate bombs, dressing up their cup with whip cream and toppings).

Premiumization:

Consumers are looking for ways to bring the out-of-home experience (café offerings) into their homes (i.e., higher quality cocoa, premium novelty packaging).

Sustainability:

Consumers are putting a higher priority on sustainability and transparency in the products they purchase (local sourcing stories, sustainable sourcing, packaging).

Information courtesy of Nestlé Canada.

All the pleasure
WITHOUT THE CAFFEINE

Caf-Lib

Increasing in popularity among health-conscious herbal coffee drinkers.

CAFLIB.COM

Enjoying 100% pure Canadian honey just got easier

In response to consumer demand, Li'l Honeys are now available in convenient 32 pack boxes allowing consumers to enjoy a teaspoon of BeeMaid's 100% pure Canadian honey on the go.

For more information or pricing, please contact your BeeMaid Sales Representative.



WHAT MAKES YOUR STORE SO SPECIAL?

HAS YOUR GROCERY STORE RECENTLY:

- OPENED?
- DONE RENOVATIONS?
- HAD A CHANGE IN MANAGEMENT?
- EXPANDED?
- CELEBRATED AN ANNIVERSARY?
- REBRANDED?

If yes, please contact Robin Brady, Tel: 1-800-337-6372 or email: rbrady@mercurypublications.ca

LET US TELL THE WEST WHY YOUR STORE IS SO SPECIAL!

www.westerngrocer.com

BUILDING THE FUTURE

Upon the Past

Freson Bros. is the largest family-owned independent grocery chain in Alberta with 16 thriving locations across the province. The first store opened in the fall of 1955 as a small butcher shop serving the rural community of Hinton, AB, and much of today's success has come from unwavering commitment to the traditional values of those humble beginnings.

The Freson Bros. brand is based upon the core values of good food, family and human connections, and true customer service. Selling only fresh Alberta beef, pork, chicken, and lamb, Freson Bros. have brought back the “old-fashioned” butcher, cutting and selling meat directly to their customers for the best in quality and craftsmanship. Butchering is a difficult and long-honored skill, almost lost in today's huge grocery chains looking to cut labour costs, offering pre-cut, pre-packaged meats to a disconnected community.

But they are an important cog in the Freson Bros. wheel, and one particular butcher has come to embody everything that the company stands for.

Anna Lemieux has worked as a butcher for more than 40 years in Stony Plain, AB, 13 as part of the Freson Bros. team. This year, her fellow workers celebrated her 75th birthday in the store because, after all, it was a working day, and for Anna, the store and her customers always come first.

“I would say Anna is one of the hardest-working, most honest people I've ever had the pleasure of working with,” said Kerry Waldo, store manager, Edmonton Freson Bros. “We took over another small store in Stony Plain in 2008, and Anna was already there in the meat department. As a butcher myself, I could see her passion for the work. She's a role model for our next generation of meat cutters.”

Starting out in the grocery business as a meat clerk in the 1960s, Anna had no training as a butcher. In fact, there were few if any women in the profession in those days, so it was completely by chance that she found her lifelong passion for the craft.

“I was a meat wrapper when one of the guys got sick,” said Anna. “We didn't have a replacement, so I started cutting meat to help out. There was no certification then; I just learned from watching and asking questions. Right away, I really liked butchering, so when the position stayed open, the boss said I might as well become a butcher. And that's what I did.”

Over the years, Anna continued improving her skills, eventually completing the certification that Freson Bros. initiated after the company took over the store and teaching others as they came into the system.

“The meat department is a massive component of what we do,” said Brian Petty, director, meat & fish, Freson Bros. “Our meat cutters are Master Butchers, and we



have our own internal training program. Anna has trained a number of young people, high school students working in the meat department who went on to become department managers and store managers.”

Two of these future meat-cutters are the grandsons of founder Frank Lovsin. “I would go into the store as a 14-year old kid,” said Paul Lovsin, store manager in the Hinton Hill Freson Bros. “Anna taught me a lot, basically everything I know about meat-cutting. She is a natural mentor, a humble leader is how I would describe her. Butchering requires a high degree of skill and knowledge; Anna has all the requisite skills but also she has a passion for it. She taught me discipline and maturity in a workplace environment”.

Markus Lovsin, store manager in Fairview shared the same experiences when he started out in the family grocery business as a young teenager and Anna was the meat manager in Stony Plain. “She taught me how to be a butcher, an integral part of learning the ropes when it comes to what Freson Bros. is all about.

What can I say about Anna? Well, to start, she is a very unique person. Looking back on the different experiences I had working with her, from a teacher-pupil relationship, to a peer relationship, eventually a supervisor relationship, I learned what real dedication looks like. She's an understanding person, especially working with youth. You always wanted to do well for her, to make her proud, and she's been a major influence on me and my career.”

As Anna explains it, “I help with a lot of the young fellows I work with, showing them how to cut meat, get ready to take a test and get their certificate. The upcoming young people are enthusiastic, eager to learn.”

The top three lessons Anna teaches these future meat-cutters are: “Quality in what you're cutting, service, and cleanliness. And don't put out anything that you wouldn't want your mother to buy.”

When asked what have been the proudest moments of her career with Freson Bros., Anna said, “One was when I was named employee of the year. The other was when the two Lovsin boys become meat managers and I had trained them — they must have learned something! They bettered themselves, and now they're store managers.”

But Anna's influence hasn't been limited to the meat department. Paul Lovsin explained, “Anna is true team player; she comes in, puts her head down and gets to work. She might be 75 but would never tell you to do anything that she wouldn't do. That's the type of lady she is, the type of leader she is.”

Anna's skills, work ethic and connection with her customers have earned the respect of the entire Freson Bros. team and the community she serves. For Anna, it's simple. “I love my work, doing what I'm doing, visiting with my customers, I have really good people to work with. Everybody says, ‘You're still working!’ but I feel good and I enjoy it, so why wouldn't I?”

Many years ago, Freson Bros. recognized that they needed to take a different road if they were going to be able to compete with the larger stores. The answer was team work, pride and personal involvement in the store and the customers. And that is the legacy that Anna Lemieux is helping build. ●

Anna Lemieux Demonstrates the Craft, Commitment and Caring of Freson Bros.

She has been a butcher for over 40 years.



We Believe in the Craft

— THE —
BUTCHER

FIND OUT MORE AT
FRESON.COM
OR SCAN BELOW



MacLeod's Leap Beef™ is high-quality, from the cattle right down to the land they are raised on. We are proud to partner with Freson Bros. who believe in The Craft of Master Butchers like Anna Lemieux.

macleodsleap.ca



Anna Lemieux
MASTER BUTCHER
STONY PLAIN

Home-style Convenience Reigns



COVID-19 MAY HAVE PUSHED MORE CUSTOMERS TO COOK AT HOME, BUT THERE IS STILL A HIGH DEMAND FOR CONVENIENCE AND INNOVATIVE FLAVOUR IN THE DELI

Cooking at home has taken on new meaning in a society now familiar with COVID-lockdown, eat-at-home demands. But it has also drawn attention to the central role the deli department plays in grocery retail, particularly through Home Meal Replacement programs.

Meat, cheese and prepared foods in the deli department saw sales growth year-over-year in 2019, ranging from less than one per cent to just over two per cent. During the pandemic, however, deli meat and cheese saw sales increase 11 per cent and 15 per cent, respectively, compared to the same time period last year.

The reason? The deli is the ideal place to provide flavours that integrate with a wide range of options

and can offer the convenience consumers are looking for. The key is to follow the customer's lead and be sure to keep things fresh and interesting to allow for movement into new territory.

Aura Morissette is the deli manager with the Lilac Street location of Winnipeg-based, five-store independent grocery Food Fare. She packs a surprising amount of creativity in a deli space that's shared with the meat department in the 5,000 square foot store.

"I think a lot of people, they still want to cook their own meals, but they want it quicker," she says. "We're finding a lot more people are buying their own meat and cooking it themselves."

In such a small space it's impossible to create a



HITTING THE RIGHT BUTTONS IN THE BAKERY

Nielsen data reveals bread sales jumped 21 per cent since the beginning of the pandemic as customers flocked to grocery stores, putting strain on the department to meet demand. Bakeries are the fastest growing food sector, with an average annual GDP growth rate of 5.4 per cent since 2015, employing over 49,000 Canadians and generating \$5 billion in GDP annually.

Here are some of the top trends for bakery managers to consider:

Reduced sugar

Forty-two per cent of consumers want to reduce the amount of sugar that they consume in their diet, according to Ingredion. That is why reduced sugar claims are gaining traction in the market.

Longer Shelf Life and Frozen Bakery Products

Consumers are looking to reduce trips to the grocery store thus giving way to products that have a longer shelf life. When it comes to bread and baked goods this takes form in frozen bake-at-home products.

Plant-Based Diet

Consumers are increasingly moving towards plant-based and flexitarian diets. For the Bakery industry this means not using eggs, butter and cream, yet many consumers demand plant-based products that do not compromise on taste.

Flavours that Boost the Immune System

Forty-five per cent of global consumers are consuming food and beverage products that boost their immune system. Ginger, turmeric, and citrus ingredients in baked products are now being released on the market.

Enhanced Nutrition in Baked Goods

Bread and cake options that include high fibre, high protein and high fruit content are in greater demand.

Hybrid Baked Products

Hybrid baked products such as the cronut, the cruffin and the Cretzel, a croissant and a pretzel, are tantalizing consumers.

What does all this mean for your bakery? Invest in “better for you” products that are free from additives, artificial flavours, and colours. You can also tout healthier ingredients like alternative or gluten-free flours, fillings made from fruit, additives like super foods, seeds, or healthy nuts. Dedicating a portion of your case for baked goods that make people feel good about their food choices is a smart decision for 2021.

separate area to feature new offerings.

A big chalk board above the department and a sidewalk feature board outside ensures customers know what’s new and what’s on special.

New products and brands bring freshness into the deli says Bruno Benedet Jr., president and CEO of Bosa Foods.

“The offering of new products and different twists on existing products freshens the consumer options,” he says. “Offering new products to the deli case gets the consumer’s attention and potentially a larger shopping basket for the retailer.”

One twist on an existing product Morisette has embraced is a deli and meat department hybrid.

“We sell a lot of freerange roasting chickens and a couple of years ago, people started asking us to spatchcock them,” she says, referring to the backbone removal, butterfly technique that allows for faster, more diverse cooking options



Food Fare packs a surprising amount of creativity in their deli space that is shared with their meat department.

(Below) Aura Morrissette, deli manager, Food Fare, Lilac Street location



of a full bird. “We used to do barbecue chickens. That just sort of died out. I think most people want to season it themselves.”

She’s also seen that while the classic lunch meat offerings like roast beefs, hams and turkeys, have remained popular, others that are more connected to the historical culture of the area are seeing an interesting return.

“I’ve noticed that head cheese is making a comeback in younger people. Either that or they’re buying it for their grandparents,” she jokes. “We sell a lot of garlic sausage too as well.”

Playing to these strengths is something Michelle Harper, vice-president, brand

development and innovation with Freybe recommends, like building on one common offering with another newer item.

“Coming this October, we are introducing Rhineland, a premium, imported deli brand that offers consumers a high-quality, delicious alternative to over-indexed Italian charcuterie options,” she says. “It’s exciting, contemporary and fresh. It stands out on the shelf. There is nothing like it in the market.”

She adds that while ham, Italian specialty, turkey and salami segments lead the sliced meat category with 70 per cent of the total category’s gross sales, the sliced specialty other category is primed for growth with a 43 per cent increase in sales. She says that in 2020 alone, more than half of the skus in the category were new offerings.

The push for new, yet still somewhat familiar applies to cheeses as well according to Benedet.

cooked ham, to the case to change things up. Harper says consumers are willing to pay more for new and different things, especially those who are quite familiar with creating charcuterie experiences. These consumers want something like Freybe’s Tyrolean Beechwood smoked ham because they have moved on to pairing their charcuterie options with various breads, condiments and beverages. There is nothing randomly thrown together here.

“The growth numbers are indicative of consumers wanting to shake up their



photo courtesy shutterstock.com

FOR EVERY NEED THE BEST SOLUTION



PROUD CANADIAN MANUFACTURERS

Canada’s largest manufacturer of refrigerated retail food display cases for all grocery store departments, independent bakeries, butcher shops, delis, convenience stores, liquor stores, produce stores and grab n’ go food & beverage locations.

arneg
CANADA

For further information contact:

Henry Friedmann
Territory Manager-Western Canada
Cell: 250-880-1105 Office: 778 868 1105
Email: hfriedmann@arnegdmi.com

Stuart Feere
Director of Sales Ontario and Western Canada
Cell : 289-795-5012 Office 1-800-363-3439
Email : sfeere@arnegdmi.com

www.arneg.ca/en



The SM-6000 has added features to help improve efficiency and visibility in the deli along with self-service sections.

boards and get adventurous,” Harper says. “Invest in new, unique items like authentic, imported products from different regions of the world.”

While this type of customer doesn’t necessarily represent the average person shopping with Morissette, there is plenty of common ground when it comes to customer demands for more environmental accountability in packaging.

“People request even the lunch meat not be put in the plastic bags,” she explains. “They want it paper wrapped. I’ve noticed that people even ask me not to layer the paper in between. We have a lot more conscious people in this area.”

Benedet notes Bosa Foods has been working with suppliers to help reduce the volume of packing materials in ways that don’t impact the high-quality of food items.

“Later this year we will be introducing a family of olive products in a plastic pouch to eliminate the need for glass and tin packaging,” he says. “Quality of the product is maintained and the reduction of packaging materials makes recycling in the deli department extremely easy.”

DIGI Canada is seeing both a demand of food wrapped in food grade film and self-service options. It’s a dichotomy that delis will have to navigate to meet consumer demands for both food safety and more environmentally-sustainable options. Nicolae Berbec, president of the organization, notes PC-based scales like the SM-6000 with added features help improve efficiency and visibility in the deli along with self-service stations.

“Delis can also reduce their environmental footprint by using zero waste packaging and labelling like DIGI’s linerless labels,” he says, adding that delis can additionally improve environmental impact, “by encouraging the use of self-service and self-weighing solutions for customers that want to reduce the environmental impact, using their own bags and containers.”

He also says the move to vacuum or skin-packaged meals that are complete in ingredients for an easily prepared gourmet-style meal are growing options. These are likely to appeal to customers like those looking for the spatchcock-style chickens Morissette offers.



DIGI’s linerless labels are a great option for delis looking to reduce their environmental footprint by using zero waste packaging and labelling.

Another high-demand item at FoodFare along these lines is ready-to go foods for the local construction workers and hair stylists looking for quick and easy lunches. Sandwiches, wraps and salads for FoodFare stores are prepared at the Portage and Burnell location. Morissette also brings in prepared Indian food from a local Indian restaurant, Clay Oven.

“It’s very popular,” she says. “I bring it in twice a week and we sell out every time. It’s like I can’t even keep my cooler stocked fast enough. I’d rather run out than have stuff leftover.”

Stocking today’s deli is a fine line between new options, home-cooking demands and environmental impact. Wise deli managers like Morissette listen to their customers and accommodate where possible to ensure a balance is maintained that helps increase the bottom line. ●

OKANAGAN OK FROZEN DOUGH

Freshness you can taste - Quality you can count on

Better Dough, Better Results, Better Service

250-546-0311 4145 Spallumcheen Place, Armstrong, BC V0E 1B6

PROUDLY WESTERN CANADIAN

Check out our fresh new look www.okfrozendough.com

DIGI Canada, across-the-store solutions for quality weigh-wrap-labeling equipment



**RGW-560II
PRODUCT STRAP BANDING MACHINE**

A new concept in banding machines that showcases the product while still offering information and secure packaging.



DIGI’s unique solution, RGW-560II enables a flexible design to print on demand by thermal transfer with a wide banding label to fit a variety of advertising images or multiple lines of information. Using the DIGI 5600 series console, the RGW-560II banding machine is able to communicate with other backroom wrapping machines or printers. This allows for an easy and familiar operation resulting in improved efficiency.

Adds value to customers’ products with a sleek, flexible, secure, graphic banding label



- SECURE PACKAGING
- INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY
- EFFICIENT
- FLEXIBLE DESIGN PRINTING

DIGI CANADA Inc.

✉ sales@ca.digi-group.com

🌐 www.digisystem.com

Special Tribute HALL OF FAME



Jim Garand

By Frank Yeo

After 27 years with Safeway/Sobeys, Jim Garand has announced his retirement as Director of Merchandising Sobeys Wholesale, October 1, 2021

Jim was well known by all in the industry, whether a supplier, competitor, or the hundreds of retailers he came to know personally.

When Jim joined Safeway in 1995, it did not take him long before he knew that the grocery industry would be his permanent home. Indeed, his dedication, skill and knowledge were well recognized by those around him, and he progressively moved up in the organization.

Jim refers to his career as one of nonstop change and transition. “When I first joined Safeway, I played a part in centralizing their regional advertising departments to the Calgary Head Office. I was only there a year when the position in wholesale merchandising became available. We were creating a wholesale merchandising team in Calgary and my role was to transition the existing Family Foods program to the Calgary Head Office from Regina.”

Over the next several years the merchandising program grew and wholesale sales team focused on growth in western

Canada. “We keep working on the Family Foods brand and introduced purpose to all of our marketing material and instore décor. This proved to have value for not only our customers but our supply partners as well”.

With the acquisition of Safeway by Sobeys six years ago, the pace of change increased.

“Sobeys embraced wholesale and wanted us to be seen as one of the banners. Our first challenge was to have the wholesale merchandising team transitioned to Sobeys SAP from our legacy system. With Project Sunrise, Wholesale Merchandising would be centralized in Calgary and the expanded new team was formed. The learning curve was steep to nationalize our merchandising programs... coast to coast advertising and merchandising programs. The newly formed Sobeys wholesale merchandising team was up to the task. We have expanded the Family Foods brand east and will have the first Family Foods in Newfoundland next year. We have brought the Clover Farms banner west and

have four in Ontario and two in the west. I feel fortunate to have been a part of a transition of this magnitude. It is something most people will not have the opportunity to do in their careers.”

In 2019, he was recognized by his colleagues at the charity event Santa Cause held annually in Calgary, acknowledging it as a humbling experience. Jim is also a proud father and family has been a big focus of his life. He was joined at the event by his wife Donna and sons Brendon and Justin. He credits Donna as being the backbone of the family. “Not an easy role with three boys in the house... probably me as the most difficult one!”

Jim’s sense of family also extended to his work colleagues.

“Although the years have truly flown by, I certainly won’t forget my first day as a Safeway employee. It seems like it

was yesterday! One thing that I did know from day one was that the grocery industry was truly about the people and I’m grateful to be part of this large extended family. The teams that I have been part of and the individuals that I have met over the years, is truly the highlight of my career. All my accomplishments have been directly related to the individuals that have surrounded me and the hard work and enthusiasm that was portrayed by everyone in our organization daily.”

Jim downplays his own accomplishments focusing instead on the team he worked with.

“The Sobeys wholesale team is an unbelievable group of individuals and the Sobeys wholesale merchandising team is a group of true professionals. They have made all the change and transitions happen with dedication, desire and a second to none work ethic. I’m very proud to be a team member.”

Mike Provost, category manager, Sobeys Wholesale, says “From my experience with Jim, he always loves a good prank and will assist in the story and setting it up. If something goes on regarding a prank, he will keep the details quiet forever.”

Mike relates one story when the team were out golfing at Heritage Pointe, and it was the last hole on the Heritage 9. “There is an island on the last hole and some big rocks around the island. As you are working your way down the course to the end you cannot see the island with the flag and hole, so you must shoot almost blind from the fairway. Jim and his foursome had been the group in front of us. I shot my ball and had a great shot to land on the green — I believe anyway... Or very close.



When we drove our carts to the green, Jim and his team were waiting on the green and pointing and laughing, saying what a great shot one of us had. They let us know that it had landed right on the rock out in the water surrounding the hole. Upon realizing it was my ball I was told that I would need to hit it from there. I balanced on two other rocks and took a swing and miraculously the ball landed on the green and I didn't fall in. This was a great laugh and story for years whenever we would go out golfing. To this day, I still do not know if it was Jim or someone else who placed the ball on the rock, I suspect I will never find out and it really doesn't matter."

Jim was renowned for his love of a good party.

"One night I remember," relates Mike, "we were at the Safeway Gala event, and they had this great Martini Bar. We were having martinis and a great time with our wives. It seemed like only a short while as we were having so much fun, but we looked up due to some loud beeping and everyone was gone, the bars were all packed up and there was a forklift entering the area to take down the chandeliers. We really shut that place down.

Sometimes our fun nights would end up just in the hotel bar after a long day and coincidentally meeting up with business acquaintances there and chatting and having a fun time again, until the wee hours of the morning. It turns out to be difficult to get a good night sleep when travelling or hanging out with Jim."

Don McKinlay, manager promotions, Sobeys Wholesale, remembers Jim's leadership qualities.

"I can remember making a few big errors when I first started on his team – Jim would never get mad at me but focused on how we can fix it and make it right for the customers and ensure that errors could be avoided in the future. He also is very customer focused – ensured everything we created or changed was in the best interest of the customers we serve.

Honestly, Jim has been the best leader I have worked for in my 38-year career so far. He is compassionate, focused and a great problem solver – he will be missed."

Don says there is one story he will never forget. "We

were invited to tour a printing facility in the middle of winter in Winnipeg. After the tour, we went out for a late dinner with the supplier downtown and after several drinks we were ready to call it a night and walk back to our hotel around 12:30 a.m. Jim had said he knew of a shortcut back to the hotel from the restaurant so I followed him. We ended up exiting the building into an alley off Portage and Main and the door locked behind us — It was -25 degrees and we had no jackets and no clue where we were and how to get back to our hotel — I will never forget the look on his face."

Jim also prided himself on the relationships he fostered with the supplier community. One of these was Cheryl Taylor, key account manager, A. Lassonde Inc.

"Jim Garand is one of my favourite humans within and outside of the CPG industry. On the professional side, he has always taken the time and has been fair in our business dealings.

Jim has a great sense of humour and his laugh is contagious... I will miss dealing with him."

Derek Mastaller, customer director, The J.M. Smucker Company says, "My friend and colleague Jimmy G is simply just one the best type of person that you will ever meet. He really understands the balance of delivering business excellence through mutually beneficial partnerships while being an outstanding family man and a stand-up friend to many.

He also has a tremendous sense of humour, so next time you see him, please make sure to ask him about his camel riding adventure in Mexico! Congratulations Jim! Rosemary & I are wishing you, Donna and the boys all the very best in the next chapter of your life."

Western Grocer Associate Publisher, Robin Bradley says, "Jim Garand is one of my favourite people in the grocery industry I have been lucky to get to know. I have spent over 25 years in the business, and he is definitely one of the 'good ones'. Not only will we miss him closing down the Roxy with us, but I will also miss sharing laughs at the CFG dinners (he always saved us a place at the Sobeys table) and catching up with him at the events every year. Jim, you will be missed by the Western Grocer magazine team. Enjoy your next chapter and keep laughing along the way! Cheers to you!" ●



photo courtesy shutterstock.com

A lot of shoppers are eager to get back into holiday traditions, but at the same time the pandemic has undeniably changed the way people shop, even during the happiest season of the year. Many predict that 2020 trends — such as early and extended holiday efforts, curbside pick-up/buy online pick-up in store (BOPUS) models, and just simplified shopping in general — will continue into this year. Traditionally, the holiday season begins with Thanksgiving and extends to the end of December

Holiday Merchandising Ideas for the Season

Celebrating
Jim Garand's Retirement
after 27 Years of Leadership. Happy Retirement Jim!
Think of it as adding 5 days to your weekend!

To a family man who loved his team at Sobeys. Known to always be the last to leave and still show up the next day with a smile on his face.

Sobeys
 Wholesale

The gold-standard in de-alcoholized

Holiday Merchandising

Here are some products to consider for the holidays:

A LITTLE SOME EXTRA

Stocking stuffers are always those little unexpected items that make people go, "You know I think they'd like that." This season The Lump O' Coal Corp. is releasing their SERIES II Stuffy Collection, featuring cute little critters, such as tigers, blue hippos, cows, and polar bears, each tucked inside a coal-looking container (a cute trick for the naughty and nice on shopper's lists).



Positioning the festive products in key areas where consumers wait for checkouts has always been the best for impulse sales, such as self checkouts, explains The Lump O' Coal Corp. Owner, Elke Waterhouse. However, she cautions that grouping all Christmas product into one area seems to overwhelm the average shopper.

"Islands of Christmas goodies have so much information. Staple products can be grouped. If a retailer were to have several smaller setups, throughout their store, they could sell through more of their items," she says, adding they offer retailers visual merchandisers that can be easily positioned in any part of the store.

GET CARDED

Social expressions, such as greeting cards, are an authentic part of consumers' holiday traditions, and one that they're looking to repeat every year, even post-pandemic.

One of the ways that grocery retailers can increase conversion and build the profitability of their basket is by setting a greeting card outpost in high traffic areas of the store to capitalize on impulse sales and engage with consumers who may still be limiting their time at retail with a focus still on essentials, explains Paul Werynski, vice-president of Carlton Cards.

It is important, he says, to get "the product in the path of the consumer, making it easy and convenient to shop". According to their Occasion Pulse: Christmas 2020 study, 79 per cent of consumers believe greeting cards are a great way to show you care.



In terms of demand, this holiday season, however, could be unique. Last year, PWC Canada's annual Holiday Outlook report found that as a result of the pandemic, Canadians pulled back on their holiday spending averaging \$1,104 down nearly 31 percent from \$1,593 in 2019.

That could well bounce back, putting a lot of strain on grocers as consumers once again get together to celebrate with family and friends after nearly two years of relative isolation. This makes it even more important for retailers to watch in-store stocking and off-site warehousing, delivery schedules, store maintenance plans, merchandise displays, shelf setups and shopping themes.

For those shopping in-store, visually impacting displays and easy pick up will be essential to meeting customers holiday shopping needs quickly and conveniently, making merchandising more important than ever.

If merchandising can be defined as the art of staging a store to encourage consumers to purchase more products, then effective merchandising over the busy holiday seasons (and Christmas is the most hectic of all) is critical to any grocer's bottom line. Grocers can leverage their unique position to make their customers' holidays a magical time and, thus, solidify their relationship. Grocers with a good holiday strategy can capture the biggest slice of the holiday spending pie.

Many shoppers enter the holiday season undecided on what to buy or where to buy it, as half of all purchases are expected to be either completely or partially unplanned. Specifically, 30 per cent of purchases are still being finalized and 20 per cent are completely unplanned across in-store and online channels. Retailers have a chance to influence a large portion of the shopping budget by focusing on what matters most. Last year, sales of food items increased six per cent the week before Thanksgiving, with retailers ringing up more than \$1.8 billion in total sales while the week of Christmas came in at more than \$2.1 billion.



DE-ALCOHOLIZED WINES & SPARKLING WINES

STREGISWINES.COM



Holiday Merchandising

TOP OF MIND

More in-home entertaining, means more guests to feed. Not only does this possibility require additional stock to be on the shelf, but consumers may need friendly reminders on what else they must buy for their bigger bashes.

Steve Tschirhart, associate category business director, beverages, desserts and Infant for Kraft Heinz Canada suggests retailers leverage merchandising vehicles to bring in additional inventory during high-demand periods, and use them to remind consumers of seasonal products that might not be top-of-mind, but will drive that impulse or emotional purchase. He adds this holiday season Kraft will be utilizing multi-branded merchandisers. "The goal is to remind consumers, so out-of-aisle and cross-merchandising will drive that incremental purchase."



PARTY ON

Everyone is hoping for a more social festive season in 2021, and wanting to share these special events with family, extended family, and friends means getting back to entertaining, says Tony Morello, chief executive officer of Zoglo's Incredible Food Corp, which recently launched Zoglo's Black Box lineup featuring 12 skus of their plant-based food options including burgers, "chicken" cutlets, ground "beef," veggie franks and more.



"This being said one of the most challenging and stressful concerns is trying to satisfy the ever growing dynamic of people's dietary restrictions be it voluntary or for health reasons including the vastly growing plant-based food movement," he says, pointing to the fact the category is growing at +34 per cent in Canada, mainly among consumers who aren't going to give up eating meat but are looking to add plant-based meals in to their weekly meal planning.

The company is ensuring retailers can help costumers identify these new items with a full freezer door highlighted by POS and recipe ideas to help educate, enhance and deliver a compelling food shopping experience. Morello states the plant-based teriyaki meatballs is just one example of a great, eight minute appetizer that will appeal to everyone at the party.



On average, Canadian grocery categories generate about 1.92 per cent of their sales each week throughout the year. During the Thanksgiving holiday season, however, consumers rush to stock up on an array of Thanksgiving staples. Retailers generate 15 per cent of their pumpkin product sales this week, while sales of turkey, cranberry sauce and stuffing each increase about 12 per cent.

A holiday strategy should encompass all aspects of the operation of a grocery store. To best serve customers during the holiday season, grocers must curate stock relevant to their customers' needs and create a retail floor where these can be best met. Breaking from routine, consumers are more rushed and adventurous than ever. A streamlined store caters to their urgency and invites exceptional (impulse) purchases. Correctly stocking the store is crucial; holiday merchandising holds the key.

Great merchandising is a blend of many different factors, the foremost being effective displays as well as products that lend themselves well to holiday promotions. Studies indicate that the first two weeks in December are when most shoppers are more attentive to in-store displays/recipes.

Julie Dickson Olmstead, managing director, public affairs & corporate social responsibility at Save-On-Foods says it all starts by understanding customers' needs. "Our teams review seasonal



WE DIDN'T INVENT PLANT-BASED FOOD
WE'VE BEEN PERFECTING IT FOR
OVER 25 YEARS!



For more information, please contact Tony Morello at tonym@zoglos.com

CORN Bites

Mesquite BBQ
Spicy Cheddar
Original Salt & Lighter

**CRISPIER, CRUNCHIER
AND
TASTIER CORNBITES**

MANUFACTURED & PROCESSED BY

H.B. KAYSONS LTD.
7660-134th STREET SURREY BC CANADA V3W 7T8
Ph: +1-604-594-9800 Fax: +1-604-594-9852
hbkanada@yahoo.com

trends and historical data to put together a strong plan to ensure that the items our customers need the most are available. From there, it's all about the details! To ensure our customers can find what they need, we must have adequate stock of seasonal items that peak in demand during the holidays. We know that regular allocations can be tight, so key holiday items are given additional display space to ensure that customers are able to buy the items that they need to make their holiday season a success. We know that the holidays can be a busy time, so our goal is to offer customers a full, fresh, convenient shopping experience where they are able to find everything they need to celebrate with family and friends."

To ensure our customers can find what they need, we must have adequate stock of seasonal items that peak in demand during the holidays.



Dickson Olmstead says they typically see an early lift in the baking categories.

"Throughout the season, we know that our fresh departments are incredibly important to our customers as they plan large traditional home cooked meals. We offer a full stock of fresh hams, roasts and turkeys with just the right produce pairings. Our bakery departments always do well with fresh baked artisan breads and festive desserts for every holiday event. As the days get busier, we know customers look for convenient options from our Save-On-Foods Kitchen, as well as party trays in both the deli and bakery to ease the stress of the season. We also see strong gains in floral and general merchandise as customers look for convenient gifts for their friends and loved ones."

Having the right products, in the right place and at the right time, of course, is the challenge with determining assortments during this period. ●



THE SPREADS CATEGORY EXPANDS DUE TO COVID AND HEALTH CONCERNS

Bread's Best Friend

Spreads, whether they are jams, honey, peanut or other butters, have always been a perennial favourite for Canadian consumers and retailers, representing over \$2 billion in annual consumption. But their value as a comfort food — and a source of healthy eating — was ably demonstrated last year when COVID restrictions kept large portions of the world's population at home.

According to the new 'Research and Markets report Food Spread Market — Growth, Trends, COVID-19 Impact and Forecasts,' the food spreads market globally is projected to register a CAGR growth of 3.5 per cent during the forecast period of 2021 to 2026, with the pandemic having "a positive impact" on the market in various regions. Also, "the consumption of nutritious and healthy spreads, which are free from additives and preservatives,

gluten, and trans-fat, increased as consumers were becoming health conscious and preferring natural or low-sugar and sugar-free spreads."

Jenna Zylber, category business director, taste elevation, Kraft Heinz Canada, notes that of all the types of spreads, peanut butter is still the star performer with the largest dollar sales and share of shelf stable spreads. In May, Kraft Heinz launched two new Hazelnut Spread varieties: Crunchy, and 45 per cent less sugar.

"The 45 per cent less sugar option is great for Canadians who are trying to reduce their sugar intake but still want to enjoy a delicious hazelnut spread," she says. "We also know many loyal crunchy spread consumers are exclusive buyers of textured spreads, so our new Crunchy variety of Kraft Hazelnut Spread provides that extra crunch of hazelnut in every bite. Both new products are still made with no palm oil and low in saturated fat."

Frank Cirillo, senior manager, corporate communications at The J.M. Smucker Co., notes that Canadians' love for peanut butter and jam

sandwiches during the pandemic “became even more prevalent, with consumers eating more meals at home and seeking out comfort food. As a result, both Jif and Smucker’s experienced high double-digit growth, and we are seeing strong signals that this momentum is sustainable.”

Smucker is perpetually focused on offering variety in its product lineup. For spreads, says Cirillo, “this includes No-Sugar-Added jams; Smucker’s Double Fruit, which is packed with twice the fruit and half the sugar; and Jif Light Creamy Peanut Butter, which offers the smooth, creamy taste of Jif with 25 per cent less fat.”

Smucker is also known for innovation, and on that score the company this summer introduced Jif Squeeze, a convenient squeezable packaging format that can be used with no utensils and results in less clean up: perfect for snacking on-the-go. Another new innovation is Jif Dark Roast Creamy Peanut Butter, which features a bolder peanut flavor achieved through longer roasting.

Since its inception in 1971, Bonne Maman has carved a reputation for itself as a manufacturer of high quality jams that up until recently contained 50 per cent fruits and 50 per cent sugar. But since 2017 the company has also been offering intense-tasting jams containing more fruit and less sugar, and in 2021 Bonne Maman’s Intense logo has been rebranded as More Fruits, Less Sugar, packaged in a new 290ml format. These jams contain 38 per cent less sugar than regular jams but even more fruit, making these premium spreads the perfect ingredient for a balanced and tasty breakfast.

Honey accounts for one quarter of the total value sales of spreads, and now surpasses 11,000 tonnes and C\$144 million in retail sales with an expected compound annual growth rate of 3.7% according to Euromonitor.

Over at Bee Maid Honey Limited, Shannon Bowden, senior brand and communications manager, says, “Our Raw Honey has been a tremendous success because consumers appreciate a less processed option.”

Bee Maid in the past year has expended its Premium lineup to include Premium Clover Honey, and Bowden says this will be

NEW LAUNCHES OF SPREADS WILL LIKELY INCREASE, BODING WELL FOR THE UPWARD TRAJECTORY OF THE CATEGORY AND GIVING RETAILERS MORE OPPORTUNITIES THAN EVER FOR CREATIVE MERCHANDISING.

followed by the fall launch of Bold & Rich Amber Honey. “The development of our Premium Honey lineup gave us an opportunity to upscale the category: our Premium Clover gives consumers a monofloral honey option in a Canadian market where most white honey is a blend of floral sources, and our 100 per cent Canadian Amber Honey gives them a bolder tasting, darker honey.”

When asked what retailers should consider when merchandising these spreads, Bowden replies, “Merchandising honey outside of the spreads section can have a positive effect, especially during holiday baking season. Having an end cap with a variety of baking products, including honey, can inspire shoppers when baking is on their mind. For our newly created Premium line, we suggest merchandising the products together, as they have been designed to have maximum shelf impact when lined up together.”

Zylber says, “Retailers should consider displays and out-of-aisle merchandising that bring spreads and host foods together, for a convenient and inspiring retail shopping experience. Kraft Heinz is creating tools that make this possible for the retailer, with permanent cooler displays available for order that allow refrigerated products, such as cream cheese, to be merchandised more easily in bakery and along with our full breadth of shelf stable spreads.”

For his part, Cirillo says, “Spreads can be highly responsive to displays and help build basket size when merchandized as a complete meal or snack occasion. For example, merchandizing peanut butter and jam with bread, or peanut butter with celery and pretzels, can inspire consumers.”

Cirillo adds that retailers should be equally mindful of new methods of shopping: “We’ve seen a material increase in interest for spreads through the e-commerce channel. Consequently, ensuring that assortment and promotion are optimized for both brick and mortar and e-commerce environments is important to help drive category conversion.”

It seems that the trends of convenience, health and wellness and permissible indulgence, along with what many analysts believe will be a lingering desire for Canadian food options in a post-pandemic world, will continue shaping the spreads category. Now that end of the pandemic is in sight, new launches of spreads will likely increase, boding well for the upward trajectory of the category and giving retailers more opportunities than ever for creative merchandising. ●

NEW Kraft Hazelnut Spread

Now Available in **Crunchy** and **Less Sugar***



Made With Real Hazelnut Bits



45% Less Sugar
Than Our Original Kraft Hazelnut Spread



NO PALM OIL

LOW IN SATURATED FAT



*Than Original Kraft Hazelnut Spread
Absence of palm oil does not imply a product is more sustainable than products with palm oil.

Give your customers an online experience in-store.

Online retailers are putting up Brick and Mortar locations, it's time we bring online advantages into stores the same way. **Buy in-store pick-up NOW** with Order Up, an innovative platform that allows for easy ordering at full service locations like deli, bakery and floral counters.

Customers can add to their virtual cart as they continue to shop the store and staff will pick items as they are confirmed. Track order progress by scanning the QR code and pay at any cashier before proceeding to the pick-up counter.



Reduce friction at a fraction of the cost.

Leverage that same platform without the cost of installing a tablet and mount by allowing customers to order with the phone they already have in their back pocket. For the cost of a sticker you can direct customers to **scan the QR code** or text the store for a link to the corresponding case. Customers access the platform using a web browser, there are no app downloads necessary!

SHOP PARTY PLATTERS



SCAN QR CODE OR TEXT 'SHOP TO 1-778-443-SYNQ



How Smart Store Tech is Transforming Food Retailing

As the grocery industry tackles dramatic shifts in shopper behaviour, broad changes in product assortments, and huge growth in digital orders, innovative retailers are responding with laser-focused, technology-centric customer experience initiatives, particularly within their physical stores. With solutions focused on optimizing shopper engagement, retailers can make long retail checkout lines and other in-store bottlenecks a thing of the past.

The first step is looking at some of the most common pain points customers experience while shopping in physical stores, such as long checkout lines, out-of-stock skus, difficulty locating products, lack of help, and little

to no product information. These frustrations don't impact customers as much when they are shopping online, as there's never a checkout line, search engines make finding items easy, product details are readily available, and immediate help is a chat window away.

The technology-based conveniences of digital grocery shopping can raise the bar for customer expectations across every retailer touchpoint, including the in-store experience.

What follows are five smart store enhancements grocers can use to address some of the most common customer pain points and transform brick-and-mortar shopping from a task to a treat.



Scott Langdoc leads worldwide strategy and thought leadership for the grocery chain, drug, and convenience/fuel retailing segments at AWS, helping fast-moving consumer goods retailers leverage technology to navigate changing customer expectations and market dynamics
— Amazon Web Services



Joanne Joliet leads the worldwide strategy and thought leadership for the apparel and fashion retailing segments at AWS, delivering cloud migration and modernization strategies, partner solutions, and go-to-market capabilities directed at apparel and fashion retailers
— Amazon Web Services

1 IN-STORE FRICTIONLESS PAYMENTS:

Waiting in slow, inefficient checkout lines is frustrating and can sour an otherwise great shopping experience. One way to prevent customer frustration is by removing friction from throughout the transaction. In the grocery, convenience, and drug store segments, we've seen retailers like Amazon launch new formats such as Amazon Go and new devices such as Amazon Dash Cart that deliver the convenience of selecting items and walking out without having to wait in any traditional queues. Exxon Mobil has also taken steps to eliminate friction from the process of buying fuel at the dispenser. Customers can now use their mobile app or vehicle's Alexa-enabled voice recognition functionality to authorize a pump and complete payment simply by saying, "Alexa, pay for gas."

Mobile checkout is another innovation that's gaining traction in other areas of retail but has value for forward-thinking grocers looking to improve the customer experience. In the apparel space, Nike, which has always been at the forefront of innovative customer experiences, uses a mobile app feature called 'Instant Checkout' to enable in-store shoppers to pick up an item, scan it with the Nike app, and pay for it with their saved credit card. That "no lines, no waiting" offering would be a hit with customers who find themselves frequently popping into the grocery store for only a handful of items on their way home from work.

2 PERSONALIZED INTERACTIONS:

With online shopping, a retailer can see every click the customer makes, how long they look at an item, and whether they select or abandon a

product. The online experience provides rich visibility into customer preferences and behaviours, allowing retailers to harvest data to curate personalized experiences. With many consumers now shopping via connected apps, websites, and in person, grocers have the opportunity to use the data they curate via online interactions to improve the in-store shopping experience in real-time while creating greater interest in new items.

Lotte Mart, a Korean hypermarket, uses Amazon Personalize inside their app to offer personalized recommendations as in-store coupons to frequent customers that drive increased engagement, higher purchase rates of new products, and ultimately more valuable customer loyalty.

3 WHERE DIGITAL MEETS PHYSICAL:

Grocers have seen digital order volumes skyrocket since the start of the pandemic and many are trying to optimize workflows for in-store product picking and curbside/delivery fulfillment to lessen impact on traditional shoppers. For example Co-op, a UK-based grocery and convenience retailer, is using technology solutions from Naveo Commerce and Bringg to reduce the time necessary to find and pick items for digital orders and manage the orchestration of getting the right online orders to the right customers or delivery drivers for fulfillment.

4 TURN SHOPPER BEHAVIOURS INTO OPPORTUNITIES:

A grocer can glean deep insights from its POS data but understanding other in-store customer behaviours can greatly improve store operations. For instance, computer vision technologies can apply artificial intelligence and machine learning to

video cameras positioned throughout the store, helping to better understand shopper traffic, shelf and product interactions, checkout queues, dwell times, and loss prevention activities and patterns. The intelligence resulting from that video data can then be used internally and with product suppliers to direct changes and optimizations designed to improve a customer's level of satisfaction — and their spending.

Canadian convenience retailer Parkland is using computer vision to develop traffic pattern heat maps to improve store layouts, optimize product assortments, and reduce long checkout queues — all to boost operational efficiency and customer satisfaction.

5 HEALTH AND SAFETY TECHNOLOGIES:

Although many people are eager to return to stores, retailers have an obligation to protect the health and safety of customers. With computer vision solutions and digital shelf edge technologies, grocers can have real-time visibility into aisle conditions and can monitor customer flow patterns and density to detect overcrowding, enforce social distancing, or to ensure people can easily move through the store on busy days. Managers can proactively receive alerts about potential in-store safety hazards or obstructing promotional displays that they can correct before any accidents occur.

We are also seeing a growing interest in using robotics within supermarkets to manage safety issues. For example, U.S. grocer Giant Eagle is using an in-aisle robotic platform to analyze inventory and store conditions to streamline restocking and store upkeep. By proactively mitigating health and safety issues, customers can feel confident about shopping in stores and grocers can focus on serving customers.

How a grocer gets started on a smart store transformation depends on their point of departure. Grocers should start from the customer and work backward by answering questions like, "Who is my customer?" and "What are their biggest pain points as they shop in my store?" As the pandemic passes and in-store shopping volumes begin to return to relative normalcy, grocers that have begun to remove these points of friction and elevate the in-store customer experience will reap the benefits of happier customers, deeper loyalty, and increased sales and profitability. ●

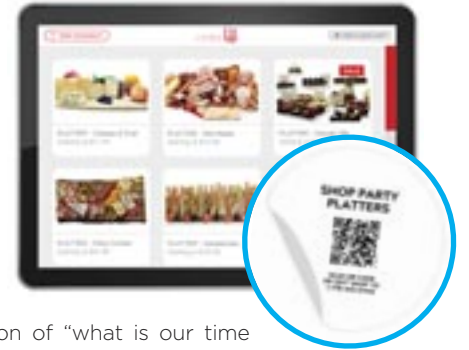


Adapting Online to Brick-and-Mortar

An Interview with Nolan Wheeler, president, SYNQ

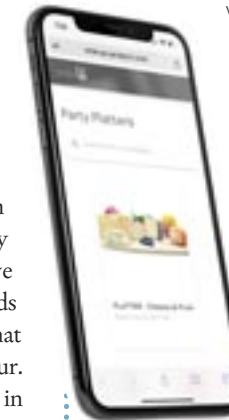
WHY MUST GROCERS ACT NOW TO IMPLEMENT NEW TECHNOLOGIES?

A global consumer behaviour experiment was conducted by way of a pandemic. That consumer behaviour experiment gave retail grocery both a temporary and long-lasting dataset and outcome whereby every-day consumers were forced to conduct commerce online. Regardless, if that commerce was 'grocery' or some other brick and mortar vertical, it taught consumers that online a) isn't that scary and b) in many circumstances,



beats experience by comparison of "what is our time worth". Not only did this accelerate brick-and-mortar's efforts to become relevant in online commerce, but third party fulfillment solution providers grew exponentially.

Thus, it becomes imperative to consider "where" in a traditional brick and mortar environment does online win, where do we disrespect customers' time in stores? Aside from those who simply don't want to shop in stores anymore, those that do have pain points, and many of them are inflicted on customers because of trends that perhaps need reconsideration. Is the 'experience' of a full-service deli or meat case trumped by the line-up and thus disrespectful of customers time? Similarly, how do we assist a customer who needs help or wants extended assortment? Online doesn't do "rain checks" so why do we? Should we not take the consumer's purchase needs (and thus payment) immediately and then curbside or ship to home, engaging the customer along the way? It is time to adapt online strategies and customer benefits to brick-and-mortar shopping.



IN BRIEF, HOW DOES THE SYNQ SOLUTION WORK?

SYNQ is a suite of products that bridge the online and customer experience, and when and where needed, takes that retailer from edge to cloud computing even if they have disparate and non-integrated existing solutions. Solutions are available a la carte, allowing retailers to crawl, walk and run with their modernizations to an accelerated customer expectation and competition model. Within the subset solution of giving online experience in brick-and-mortar environments, SYNQ can simply provide the retailer with a software platform that allows them to offer digital order requests in-store (think deli orders, birthday cakes, floral, full service), item requests, requesting help and answering questions via text, rain checks and surveys.

WHAT INSIGHTS AND EFFICIENCIES CAN THIS BRING TO A RETAIL OPERATION?

Customers are already in these stores, they chose to destination shop, they know most of what they want, and the sales conversion is for the retailer to lose, not gain. Not only can it be hard to find help in stores these days, but a large portion of these consumers would rather 'text' their request for help like "what aisle is cream of tartar" or order a deli platter via their smartphone in-store than find an associate to fill out a triplicate carbon copy paper form. The kit of parts offered by SYNQ reduces associate labour, builds basket, and alleviates leading pain points for shoppers. In some cases, SYNQ has stores with in excess of 12 per cent of top line sales going through BISPUN (buy in-store pick-up now), and in categories of high risk such as infant formula, shaving and dental, takes shrink to 0 per cent as the customer is given their product once they pay (no different than the days of cigarettes requested at POS transaction and kept behind the desk).



photo courtesy shutterstock.com



**AUTOMATE MANUAL PROCESSES
BECOME MORE PROFITABLE
FUTURE PROOF YOUR BUSINESS**

Connect any mixture of POS & data systems

- Turn legacy systems into cloud-connected POS's
- Automate data aggregation, operations, and marketing

Unlock unparalleled AI real-time insight

- Action and monetize your data in the moment
- Detailed behavior insights for every shopper

Engage every shopper with dynamic marketing

- Highly personalized, automated campaigns with attribution
- Next level Apple and Google Wallet pass loyalty
- Digital and physical receipt promotions



"There's no greater time to utilize top-tier artificial intelligence technology to gain an edge in this industry. Our customer base is huge, and it's important to understand their needs and preferences to maximize basket size, loyalty and wallet share."

- Sunflora President of Franchise Systems, Jay Bengé



**SCAN HERE FOR A
FREE TRIAL OF OUR
INSIGHT PORTAL**

www.fobi.ai/grocery



COMMENTARY

By Richard Lee,



Shifting to Digital

Grocers are being driven to implement new tech by two catalysts. One is the consumer shift to digital. The other is due to the coronavirus pandemic. Digital transformation has undoubtedly changed consumer habits and has resulted in fundamental changes in how grocers operate and the value they deliver to their customers. It's about changing the way a business interacts with its customers and how they provide their customers with a consistent, relevant, and seamless experience. Technology plays an integral role in the transformation process. With the coronavirus, consumers are looking for safe, convenient, and contactless solutions. Shoppers are wanting to feel safe and make efficient trips and limit interactions with employees or other customers.



*Richard Lee,
senior vice-president
of strategy & corporate
development*

for automated marketing. Whether through its e-receipts or receipt portal capabilities or 1:1 marketing using Passcreator by Fobi's Wallet pass solution, Fobi can integrate customer interaction and engagement to the transaction and enable a personalized and seamless shopping experience. Furthermore, Fobi's unique IoT device can create frictionless onboarding of memberships by being an app-less solution that lives in the native wallet of customers' android and IOS devices. The Wallet pass saves businesses time by facilitating fast, contactless engagement and membership validation to create an even further seamless customer experience.

With Fobi's ability to enable data connectivity across various platforms and integrate it with the customer transaction, our analytic platform provides insights into various types of consumer segmentation, basket size, and helps understand shoppers' path to purchase. It will not only help grocers understand shopper behaviour but also influence it through personalization and activation.

With that, retailers will need to invest in technology to enable this new way of shopping.

Fobi's technology can connect antiquated and/or disparate POS systems or connect modern systems via APIs to enable various activation channels

With such deep insights, we can help grocers make more informed decisions across their organization. Whether it's strategy, assortment optimization, building more effective campaigns, targeting, and activation, we can help transform the grocery/ retail industry. ●

For more information check out www.fobi.ai/grocery

Everything *but the Food*

Raimac brings new meaning to the term customer service

For nearly 105 years, food retailers have regarded B.C.-based Raimac as the go-to place for all manner of equipment, from the simplest small wares for everyday use to complete food store startups!

Before he retired earlier this year, then-Raimac President Miles Kellerman divulged the company's real secret sauce for success when he discussed the current state of the food equipment market with the local press. "Now anybody can phone up and go direct with the supplier – until they find out they need service and people to look after them," he said. "Then they go back to us."

Raimac's new president, Gordon Gage, who joined the company in 1988, agrees with his former colleague. "In growing with the community over the decades we are in a unique position," he says. "Yes, we're well known for our equipment from reputable manufacturers but our deeper goal has always been to help our clients succeed, and having worked in the grocery industry prior to joining Raimac I know how challenging that is – and so does our staff. So we provide our expertise along with the equipment."

This doesn't just pertain to service; it also means helping grocers build their stores from the ground up if need be. "We help develop stores

right down to type of equipment needed, placement, and traffic flow," explains Sales Manager Dave Merlo.

While such support may seem logical to outsiders it's in short supply in the food equipment business, and this poses a problem: because while it's not uncommon for retailers to hire architects to create stunning exterior façades that lure customers, "if they come inside and the shopping experience isn't easy for them, it will likely be their last visit," says Merlo.

Raimac originated during an era when comprehensive service was a byword of retail development. The company launched in 1917 in Vancouver as W.T. Rainford and merged with a refrigeration company, Rice & McIntosh, to become Raimac in the early 1960s. From there, Raimac quickly grew as a one stop shop for food equipment and carved out a niche as the only company in Western Canada to supply complete grocery stores, from meat, produce, deli, bakery and seafood departments, to shelving, refrigeration, ovens, slicers, walk-ins, vac packs, deli

tags, cutlery, and even (more recently) fried chicken programs.

Given the razor-thin margins of the food retail trade, Raimac's management was also mindful early on to maintain a robust refurbished equipment department. This department's sales include grocery store equipment, food prep and deli equipment, bakery cases, and other items. The equipment comes with a 30 day labour and one year parts warranty, with the option of a Preventative Maintenance Plan for hot and cold display cases, Rational and Alto-Shaam combi ovens, and other items.

Gage says, "Our refurbishments are comprehensive. For example, our service technicians literally strip refrigeration units down to the frame, install new waterproof bottoms, new insulation, all new fan motors, electrical and lights, and pressure test the coils. We also provide end panels if required and paint to the customer's specifications."

Merlo adds, "The refurbishment option is particularly popular right now as lead times for new equipment are getting longer, plus exchange rates render a lot of new equipment beyond what is affordable for some retail owners."

As for Raimac helping to develop new stores, business has continued to be brisk throughout the pandemic. "We just finished helping a Vancouver client create a new 15,000 square foot grocery in a strip mall in Saskatchewan," Gage says. "This included the meat, dairy, service deli departments along with bakery plus produce, all the while ensuring the store layout would be conducive to efficient shopping."

The Raimac staff who specialize in these projects drill down to specifics. "We're constantly reviewing plans and asking 'Why is the grinder located here?', 'Why is the butcher block in this area?'," says Merlo. "Ergonomics is a big consideration for us, along with store productivity. And we always quantify our proposed equipment investments to ensure clients get the quickest return on their investment."

Of course, given Raimac's key role as an equipment provider, supplying equipment that maximizes productivity is essential too. "For example, we recently sourced a product that uses nanotechnology to reduce oxidization of cooking oil by up to 50 percent, thus extending oil's life dramatically," says Merlo.

Maintaining comprehensive customer service sometimes means internal change: in 2018 Raimac moved to a new and larger 20,000 square foot location near Port Kells in North Langley; in addition to the larger workplace and the creation



of a showroom, the move benefited its workforce, many of whom live in the Fraser Valley.

Innovation has also contributed to Raimac's longevity, an example being its Chester's Chicken Program. Raimac has been the exclusive service provider and dealer for Chester's Chicken in B.C., Alberta, and Yukon since 1988. Originally focused on the convenience store and gas station markets, the idea behind the program was that adding Chester's Chicken to the menu would be a delicious way to invite customers and build business simultaneously (with a simple core list of equipment and less than 600 square feet required).

The program has also proven to be a winner in the grocery realm as well. "Federated Co-op and Save-On Foods Stores are also offering an in-store, fresh fried chicken program to which Raimac supplies all equipment, accessory products, start-up and training. The stores apply their own brand name to the product and we're focusing on further growth in this sector," says Gage.

As Raimac approaches its 105th anniversary, Chester's will play a key role in the company's growth plan. Another area of growth is e-commerce. "We're investing in our Internet presence and want to focus on the digital market," says Gage. "But that doesn't take away from the importance of our Port Kells facility, where anyone can visit our showroom to better determine their equipment needs, and it doesn't detract from our commitment to face to face service."

Indeed, whatever growth Raimac undertakes moving forward, the company will never stray from its core values. "We have a motto we're very proud of," says Gage. "It's 'Everything for the food store except the food!' and we will always take that seriously." ●



A partner you can rely on.



At Alto-Shaam we're driven to design and manufacture products that perform flawlessly in the most demanding conditions. And our team is just as committed to providing industry-leading service and support. From equipment training to around the clock, every day technical assistance to culinary support, you can trust that we are here for you.

ALTO-SHAAM
COMMERCIAL FOODSERVICE EQUIPMENT



RELIABLE FOOD PROCESSING MACHINES

www.birosaw.com

Md. MINI-32
Mixer - Grinder

Md. VTS-42
Vacuum Tumbler

Md. VTS-44
Vacuum Tumbler

Md. VTS-46
Vacuum Tumbler

Md. F2000N
Food Former

Md. 1433FH
Meat Saw

Md. 3334SS-4003FH
Meat Saw

Md. 346
Grinder

Md. AFMG-24
Mixer - Grinder

Md. B350Comfort
Food Slicer

Md. B350M
Food Slicer

Md. B350A
Food Slicer

Md. B300M
Food Slicer

Md. 22SS
Meat Saw

Md. BCC-100
Poultry Cut-up

Md. FBC-4800SS
Tempered Meat Block Chipper

Md. PRO-9HD
Tenderizer

Ground Fresh Daily

Marinated Poultry

Formed Fresh Daily

Fresh Sliced Ham

Fresh Cut T-Bone

Chipped Product

8 Piece Cut Poultry

Tenderizing

Strip Cutting

BIRO
SINCE 1971
www.birosaw.com

BIRO Manufacturing Company
Marblehead, OH 43440-2099 USA
419-798-4451 Fax 419-798-9106
www.birosaw.com 264RB-5-16

CATEGORY MANAGEMENT

By Sue Nichols

How Category Reviews Have to Change



Sue Nichols is the founder of "Category Management Knowledge Group", an online, accredited category management training company.

I had a planned topic for this article that was going to focus on something completely different but changed it last week because of a recent experience I had with a retail client that is very relevant for sharing.

Let's say you're looking at your category or brand results versus 2020 and your percentage change versus the year ago numbers. In some categories, the numbers may see double-digit growth, while others are showing double-digit declines or worse. The sales results from 2020 (particularly in the March to June period) include results from a very volatile period; a lot of shifting was driven by pantry loading and subsequent supply chain issues. In 2021, some shoppers have stuck with new things that they tried, while others have gone back to their old favourites, while others are somewhere in the middle. It's imperative that retailers and suppliers look at their business through the proper lens - and this means NOT the same way you did pre-pandemic.

I was recently (August 2021) working with a Canadian grocery retailer client of mine in some training and they shared a supplier's presentation on a snacking category. It showed how the category was up 18 per cent versus year ago (data to March 2021) based on syndicated point of sale (POS) data and showed comparisons by brand (with focus on their >60 brand share) behind this double-digit growth number. The presentation had several major flaws including:

- 1 No reference to a pandemic last year that drove these unprecedented numbers and where the category is anticipated to go.
- 2 Category results broken out only by brand - no size, segments - just brand. A proper category review includes subcategory results based on the most important breakouts to the shopper (which is typically NOT by brand).
- 3 The key measure that was focused on was % change versus year ago by category and brand. Think about it - there were little to no promotions or price reductions in 2020 - so if everything is selling at regular price, dollar sales will be up.
- 4 Promotional analysis including TPR (temporary price reduction) results in 2020. How much promotion happened during the pandemic?
- 5 Not a word about the shopper - they drive everything!
- 6 Recommendations to change assortment and shelf based on these business results. You should NOT be making tactical changes to your category using 2020 business comparison results!

Category reviews need to be revamped and improved to reflect a completely new shopper, a new omni-channel approach, and include recommendations that focus on the shopper and increasing their satisfaction. Following are three tips to improve category reviews to better reflect today's world:

TIP NO.1: IMPROVE YOUR POS ANALYSIS!

Think about additional POS analysis that may help you to better understand your numbers, such as how you compare to competitors and total market, and ways to dig in deeper to your data for more insights. Here are some suggestions for improved analysis:

- 1 Look at share point change (retailer market share or brand category share)
- 2 Compare Category Development Index (CDI) change across related categories
- 3 Compare dollars to units and tonnage (prices may be driving up \$ sales)
- 4 Compare to 2019 (instead of 2020)
- 5 Look at weekly trend data for the latest two or three years
- 6 Compare results to other similar categories to compare growth results
- 7 Dig deeper into geographies (regions/channels), time periods (latest 4W, latest 12W, latest 24W) and products (use the category decision tree hierarchies for subcategory breakouts to include)

TIP NO.2: INCLUDE AN OMNI-CHANNEL MARKET PERSPECTIVE

Given the huge growth of online sales for delivery or for pick-up ("click and collect"), you should include an overall view of what's happening across all available retail channels - even if it's from different data sources. Capturing the total market in today's world requires a view of Online and Offline retailers (including pureplay eCommerce, Omni-Channel retailers, and Brick & Mortar retailers).

This reminds me of when Walmart came to Canada but initially wasn't being captured in the syndicated "total market" data. At the time Grocery retailers were measuring their market share based on "Total Grocery" and even when "Total Mass" data became available, many Grocery retailers stuck with measuring their share of the Grocery market. Same thing here. If you don't keep your eye on the total market, then competition can sneak up and surprise you.

For a total market perspective, your best bet is probably panel data because much of the panel data has expanded to include all channels. It's important to realize the complexity of the analytics that result from the disparate data sources that span across the omni-channel. And therein lies a dilemma for organizations; not only which data sources to purchase, but how to integrate them together for quicker access to the data to draw great insights.

TIP NO.3:
INCLUDE A SHOPPER PERSPECTIVE

Lastly (and most importantly!), add shopper data to your review including purchase behaviour, leakage data, demographic data, shopper insights data, loyalty card data, and shopper trend data. This will give a better perspective on what is happening in the category from a shopper lens, including how the shopper has changed (and continues to change) and anticipation for where it's going in the future.

Shopper data has become a much more robust and more frequently updated data source than in the past, giving the invaluable shopper perspective that needs to be the focus and star of category reviews. While our \$ sales and % change and market share metrics show the business side, the shopper data shows us who is driving the results through what shopper behaviors and even why (or why not).

A good category review needs to highlight how the shopper has changed (and continues to change) since the

pandemic started - including their shopper behaviour in measures like penetration and \$/buyer, checking for shifts in shopper demographics - which are happening from the pandemic, analyzing conversion rates, understanding heavy and light buyers, and checking for new competitors.

The opportunity?
UPDATE YOUR APPROACH TO CATEGORY REVIEWS!

Deeper (within your POS syndicated data); broader (for a total market perspective to include online and offline); and shopper focused. Improve the analytics so they are relevant and compelling (not brand focused) for your retailers and their shoppers with actionable recommendations that will better satisfy shoppers and drive category and brand results.

Win-Win-Win!
WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE?

Retailers should better articulate what they need from their supplier partners who are coming in armed with "category" reviews (measures, data sources). They should also train their team to understand the data, build critical thinking skills, ask the right questions and give them the tools to help them make the best decisions for their categories.

Suppliers should create new category reviews to reflect the new "Total Market" with a focus on the changing shopper with a look to the future. An old and stale category review that only includes historical POS data is not enough in today's world.

Winning retailers and suppliers need to keep a pulse on the changing shopper and market to make the best decisions and recommendations, and ultimately create the best solutions for their shoppers. ●

MEXICAN FOODS

By Karen Barr



SOUTH OF THE BORDER FLAVOURS

The popularity of Mexican food is increasing across the nation. According to Nielsen Canada and a 52-week report ending in March, sales of Mexican salsas, dips and garnishes rose 11 per cent. Mexican seasonings were up 14 per cent and Mexican dinner kits and shells rose 20 per cent.

"Consumers are cooking more at home than they did pre-pandemic, as they may not have the same accessibility to their favourite Mexican restaurants," says Neysa Davies, senior marketing insights manager at Tree of Life, in Surrey, British Columbia.

Mexican food sales are particularly strong in British Columbia, and Vancouver boasts the third largest population of Mexican born residents, in Canada. But, there is more to the Mexican food craze.

"Everyone loves tacos," says Jackie Thomas, co-owner of Lita's Mexican Foods, a Vancouver-based food company that uses holistic nutrition ideals. Thomas and her husband Argelio Santos, opened the business together, when he could not find the authentic North Mexican style flour tortillas he grew up eating in Mexico.

Tinga, a traditional chicken dish in Mexico has been reimaged at Lita's Mexican Foods, by using plant-based ingredients. "We have replaced the chicken with enoki mushrooms and jackfruit, while also using the authentic

Mexican Food Continues to Increase in Popularity

PRODUCT SHOWCASE

CANADA'S TOP SELLING SALSA

Mrs. Renfro's is far outpacing other salsas, with a 41 per cent organic growth volume in the last year. Pick your heat level from mild, like Peach Salsa, or scalding hot, like Ghost Pepper Salsa. Other fruity flavours to note include Mango Habanero. Available through Tree of Life.



MEXICAN STREET FOOD

Old El Paso Street Taco Kits brings fun to your kitchen. Just add protein or grilled vegetables. Flavours available include Carne Asada Steak, with Medium Creamy Chipotle Sauce; Asado Chicken, with Medium Creamy Jalapeño Sauce; and Barbacoa Beef, with Mild Salsa Verde.



BURRITO BONANZA

Old El Paso's New Burrito Bowl Kits are available in three flavours: Chipotle Chicken, Adobe Steak and Seasoned Beef. Each kit includes cilantro lime white rice, seasoning and queso blanco sauce. The kids will want to help in the kitchen, with these delicious and simple, family-style meals.



GOING RAW

Lita's Mexican Foods flagship product is the Organic, Uncooked Flour Tortillas allowing the consumer to cook this Mexican staple to their specific preference. In just under a minute, these tortillas can be cooked, baked, or fried and they are perfect every time. For your freezer section.



MAKE IT A TRIO

Add a burst of Mexico to your aisle with Fresh is Best Tri Flavour Tortilla Chips, including Chili, Jalapeño, and Corn Chips all in one bag. Check out the Tri Flavoured Taco Shells too. Both products are available throughout Canada.



photo courtesy shutterstock.com

flavours of the dish, with our signature chipotle ancho adobo." The award winning Tinga Taco Meal Kit, is the first fresh taco meal kit in the frozen category. It comes with six organic tortillas for dinner in less than 10 minutes.

Fresh is Best Salsa Co., a company that started in 1999 at the local Kamloops Farmer's Market, in British Columbia, with homemade salsas, is now a thriving business selling their products across Canada. "Today, our top sellers are our Fresh Is Best Tri Flavour Tortilla Chips with Chili, Jalapeno and Corn Chips all in one bag, our salsa made with 10 fresh vegetables and our Tri Flavoured Taco Shells," says Lisa Graham, the company's co-owner.

Over at Country Grocer in Victoria, Antone Nemet, assistant store manager at the Royal Oak location says, "Our Mexican food shoppers are mainly young families looking for a quick meal and an alternative to pizza."

The section is comprised of an area measuring 12 feet long by six feet tall, with all the ingredients and seasoning to make home-style Mexican food.

Soft flour tortillas are available in a variety of flavours such as spinach, cheese, sundried tomato, and ancient grains. For gluten-free options there are brown rice and corn tortillas.

As for tortilla chips, Nemet says, "Yellow corn are most popular, but we also carry red, blue and white corn. There are even salt-free varieties."

For families looking for a quick meal plan that doesn't involve buying separate ingredients there are meal kits.

When it comes to merchandising Davies says, "Retailers that highlight simple recipes and meal ideas will win with consumers. End displays allow a space to show case recipe ingredients."

"Use cross-promotion to draw customers from another department and help customers find the Mexican food aisle through signage or coupons."



Country Grocer Mexican food section at their Royal Oak location is 12 feet long by six feet tall.

Graham adds, "Use cross-promotion to draw customers from another department and help customers find the Mexican food aisle through signage or coupons."

Thomas urges grocers to take part in promo programs. "It's natural for consumers to buy more when product is on sale." Then she adds, "Use displays during Mexican holidays such as Mexican Independence Day, as well as Cinco de Mayo, which is not a Mexican holiday, but is a big mover of Latin products."

Mexican food consumption is already on the rise. With a push to elevate it even more, grocers will achieve greater profitability in this ethnic sector. ●

OUR FAMILY NEVER HAS A HUDDLE UP WITHOUT A GOOD CHOW DOWN.

DON'T SHOW UP EMPTY-HANDED. WHIP UP SOME **DRUNKEN SHRIMP KABOBS** IF YOU'RE ADVENTUROUS. OR BRING A JAR OF **CRAFT BEER SALSA** IF YOU'RE LAZY. SEE ALL OUR VARIETIES AND RECIPES AT MRSRENFROS.COM.

TRUE TO FAMILY. TRUE TO FLAVOUR. EST. 1940



With Western Canada's most comprehensive selection of certified organic and fair trade fresh produce, Discovery Organics can help retailers increase sales in the industry's strongest growth areas – organic and fair trade.



RECREATING TRADITIONAL INTO PLANT BASED
CANADA'S FIRST FRESH UNCOOKED FLOUR TORTILLA & VEGAN TACO MEAL KITS

Lita's
MEXICAN FOODS

Made in Canada. Tastes like Mexico

Now available through Horizon Distributors | @litasmexicanfoods | sales@litasmexicanfoods.com

PROFILE

By Millarville Team

Photo credit: Gervais Goodman



Tim bringing some refreshment to customers on horseback.



Owner Tim Babey and his daughter Jessie Elliott taking a quick break from the duties of serving customers

Have a Millarville Day!

Back in 1892 Malcolm Millar not only established his trading post and general store in the stunningly beautiful foothills of Alberta, he had the panache to name it Millarville after himself. He couldn't have imagined the changes that would come to the area 125 years later when nearby Calgary had swelled to more than a million people and the quiet ranches that lined the foothills had largely turned into acreages.

The Millarville General Store might have changed since then, but Malcolm Millar's legacy of serving the community is one thing that hasn't changed. Today proprietor Tim Babey and his team continue to serve up the same old-fashioned hospitality. "There is still a very strong sense of community here, people look out for each other, it's important to know your neighbour." And Tim Babey knows his neighbours — their names, what they like, and always takes time to have a chat. "It means a lot to people to come in and be greeted by their first name, we try to take time to catch up."

The Millarville General Store is a general store in the truest sense of the word — not only a postal outlet and a licensed liquor retailer, it sells a little bit of everything. Babey has brought a new focus on fresh produce, jams and unique locally made gifts, and being ranching country where some of the best beef in the world comes from, Babey is proud to sell product from two local ranches.

Interesting antiques adorn the walls, and black and white pictures of old Millarville can be spotted throughout the store. "People come in expecting to buy something quick, the next thing you know they're still there 15 minutes later looking at things on the walls," says Babey.

The focus on history is intentional however. Babey wants people in the area to not only be proud of where they live, but also wants to attract the emerging market of the urban visitor from Calgary, a quick 30 minute drive to Millarville. "People are looking for an interesting experience, they want something they feel is real. Sometimes the past provides a sense of place and belonging."

Since taking over the store in September 2020 a lot has changed. For 40 years the store had roughly the same layout and product selection that worked in 1989. The community had evolved, and with it came a more knowledgeable and food savvy population. "We really worked hard to improve the customer experience with better sight lines, enhanced product placement appeal, an updated variety of groceries, music, and a big push on customer service, while at the same time trying not to lose the charm of an old fashioned general store," says Babey.

Although the locals can still drive into the city for their supplies at the big box stores, Babey has tried to make the general store a one stop shop for snacks, dairy, groceries, cigarettes and liquor. "We try and provide what you can't

get anymore in a lot of places. COVID changed many things for people and now there is more of a market for a genuine experience and a warm welcome."

Although this is Babey's first grocery store, he comes well prepared, bringing a BA in Tourism and a background as a chef and foodservice manager. His plans include developing a commercial kitchen in an adjoining house and serving grab 'n' go sandwiches, salads and frozen entrees in an effort to get more people to stop in the store. "The more reasons you can give the customer to stop in, browse around, and leave satisfied, the better," says Babey.

Babey is busy organizing Farmers Markets, pancake breakfasts and charity fundraising barbecues in an effort to engage the local population. "It's so important to be a part of the community in a smaller town — we have a responsibility to make it a better place to live."

"We may be the only store in town, but we're going to work hard to bring the customer in from both the local area and urbanites seeking escape from the big city."

A new customer comes in and starts to explain to his young daughter what the old wood phone is on the wall. Babey laughs and says it happens all the time. What does the future hold for the Millarville General Store? Babey hopes that the answer to that lies in the past. ●

The Millarville General Store might have changed since then, but Malcolm Millar's legacy of serving the community is one thing that hasn't changed.





matrix marketing

SINCE 1991



Industry Compatible Gondola In Stock Now

Grocery
Pharmacy
Gas & Convenience

Pet
Mass Merchandiser
Home Improvement

www.matrixmarketing.com

5353 John Lucas Dr Suite 200 | Burlington ON L7L 6G5 | 905.332.9959

thinkingbeyond@matrixmarketing.com

STORE FIXTURES

By Mike Yeo



WHAT'S ON THE SHELF

Store Fixtures are Helping to Change the In-Store Experience

One of the most visible upshots of the recent pandemic and consequent surge in grocery sales has been what many describe as an historic investment in physical stores, particularly in store fixtures as retailers rush to modernize and re-invent the in-store experience.

Store fixtures define how consumers interact with the products in your store and play the star role in shaping store layouts and traffic flows. The trend is away from clutter to clean lines that allow the product to shine, enticing consumers to purchase. A good example is vertical produce displays which showcase fruits and vegetables far more effectively than flat bunkers. When planning your store's layout, the positioning of shelving units such as Metal Gondola Shelving, Gondola Shelving Wall Units, Gondola End Cap Units, Gondola 4-Way Merchandisers, Wire Shelving and Wire Rack Displays and all other merchandise displays such as slant bins, orchard bins, slant tables, and end cap displays should be carefully considered.

Chris Fowler, president at Matrix Marketing, says "What we are seeing now is the enhancement and customization of that traditional gondola creating a different experience for the consumer and a warmer and more inviting feel to the stores. In addition to that, we are witnessing new innovations from European companies. Further, we now can significantly enhance the traditional offering with better merchandising solutions on shelf."

When asked about how COVID has affected the role of fixtures within stores, Fowler says stores are certainly less cluttered and with less in the way of vendor funded activity and the loss of in-store demos/sampling the landscape has changed.

"The use of the fixtures may have also changed. There have been things added to bakery racks like larger acrylic screens and you don't see open self-serve antipasto bars in stores. Product is now all pre-packed in small takeaway containers but the fixtures for the most part have remained the same."



Matrix Marketing notes that flexibility is key in developing the best fixturing solution.

Fowler says that flexibility is key in developing the best fixturing solution. “When we meet with a customer to go over their objectives, it allows us the flexibility of offering various solutions that will best meet their needs. In some cases, we combine different lines to build the best solution. In addition to the gondola our team does complete store and section design, custom millwork, custom metal, wire and acrylic to further round out the retail offering.”

Henry Friedmann, regional manager for Western Canada at Arneg says that since COVID, “there has been a higher demand for store fixtures, and innovative solutions to keep those fixtures clean and sanitary, while still meeting the standard merchandising requirements. Even with the introduction of E-commerce, there haven’t been drastic changes to the classic fixtures because those stores that have increased their e-commerce business continue to have a large amount of in store shoppers as well.”

Arneg CANADA is part of the International Arneg Group, a leading provider of ground-breaking and comprehensive food refrigeration solutions for the food retail industry.

Freidman says further that “Many stores are taking more advantage of vertical space, with stores looking for refrigerated merchandisers that appeal more specifically to customers in their area.”

For retailers looking to go digital, deploying screens at the checkout, on the gondolas and in carefully selected locations throughout the rest of the store will produce a more noticeable and compelling shopping experience

that drives new sales. Investing in digital signage help brands and retailers break through the clutter and offer compelling shopping experiences at point of sale.

“In addition to the gondola and fixturing we are also the exclusive distributor of Siffron and HL Display products in Canada,” says Fowler.

HL Display provides a complete end-to-end solution for digital signage needs, offering a wide range of screens and mounts, and can be found in 70 countries around the world. Siffron is the combination of Southern Imperial and FFR, two large US merchandising companies that were founded in the ’50s.

“Siffron and HL Display are the Global Leaders in Retail Merchandising and are now available to all our clients exclusively through Matrix. The innovative solutions for loss prevention, pusher systems, self facing and flexible merchandising are amazing and in use by retail leaders around the world.”

With customer interest in physical stores still very much present, even with advancing e-commerce, custom retail store fixtures will help attract the consumers who prefer to shop brick and mortar, especially for retailers who utilize new technologies like digital displays and messaging along with these fixtures. ●

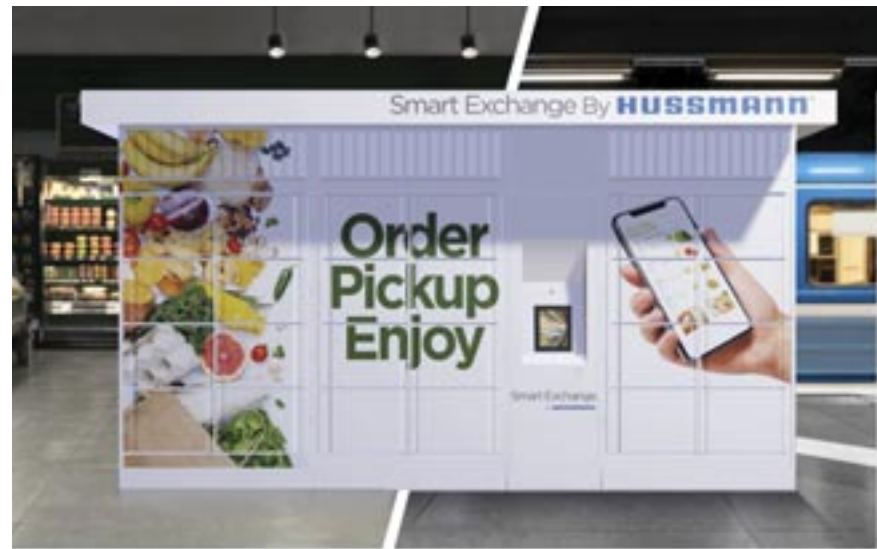


Arneg Canada notes that stores are looking for refrigerated merchandisers that appeal more specifically to customers in their area.



Thinking Outside the Box

WITH THE ADVENT OF ONLINE SHOPPING GROCERY RETAILERS HAD TO DEAL WITH TWO FUNDAMENTAL TASKS: DEVELOP AN EFFECTIVE E-COMMERCE PLATFORM AND THEN FIND A FULFILLMENT MODEL THAT WAS CONVENIENT TO THE CONSUMER.



The Smart Exchange Locker provides an innovative e-commerce solution:

- Order**
Online ordering for quick and secure pickup anywhere
- Pickup**
Inside or outside locker placement for on-the-go shoppers
- Enjoy**
Separate frozen, refrigerated and ambient lockers for all food types

Bringing Grocery Offerings Closer to Your Shoppers

Hussmann Canada Inc.
5 Cherry Blossom Road, Unit 3 | Cambridge, Ontario N3H 4R7
Toll Free: 1.866.599.3299 | www.hussmann.com

Smart Exchange
By HUSSMANN

While both have been challenging, the need to find a successful fulfillment model is still being experimented with. Walmart, for example, has wound down operations of the large, in-store automated pick-up towers the company had previously installed at over 1,500 outlets across North America. Today, the preferred model is curbside pick-up. Although the curbside pick-up model was already growing in popularity prior to the outbreak of COVID-19, adoption of the service skyrocketed in 2020. Driven by a rapid rollout from companies like Kroger and Walmart, grocery pick-up in the U.S. is on track to become a \$35 billion business by next year, according to financial firm Cowen.



Of all the competing service models in the e-commerce space, the curbside pick-up model is perhaps most uniquely suited to the realities of the North American retail landscape, where automobile ownership rates are high and driving is viewed by most residents as a necessary part of life. Many consumers found they enjoyed the convenience the service provides, and a strikingly high share of consumers indicate they will continue to use curbside pick-up beyond the pandemic.

Dan Sullentrup, vice president – eGrocery, Hussmann Corporation, says “We’ve seen curbside pick-up be the best option for retailers and consumers and a huge benefit to both. Curbside allows for convenient, contactless pickup and a time saver for many consumers.”

Grocers, he admits, have had their share of challenges in adopting the model.

“Grocers have had to jump into the world of eGrocery, prior to many of them being set up and ready for the surge that came during the pandemic. Many grocers have signed up with a third party firm to provide the service for them, which does come at a cost. Others have worked to stand up their own ecommerce platform and fulfillment processes, which allows them to stay connected with their shoppers.”

These challenges, says Sullentrup, “came through having the right labour at the stores to pick the orders and dedicated locations in the store to stage the orders while the consumer was on their way for pickup.”

Hussmann has developed a unique solution called the Smart Exchange Locker. “The shopping experience with Smart Exchange is as easy as order, pickup and enjoy. It starts with the online

order. Once placed the personal shopper at the store fulfils the order and delivers it to the Smart Exchange Locker. The shopper receives a notification with a secure and unique PIN or QR code when the order is ready. Pick-up happens at the self-serve, touchscreen that has the look and feel of most smartphones and tablets, giving the shopper the convenience they desire and the freshness and quality from an in-store experience.”

The locker can be located outside the store, as has largely been the practice thus far, or at any other convenient location.

Sullentrup says Hussmann works with grocers on their entire fulfillment process.

“We walk through their picking, staging, and pickup/delivery process and provide solutions to them to help them save labour costs, increase order accuracy, and ultimately drive higher customer engagement scores. Our picking solutions help retailers quickly identify the accurate items to pull for their orders, thus reducing picking time by up to 30 per cent. The staging solutions are tailored to fit each grocers needs, by optimizing the smallest amount of space needed to hold the maximum amount of orders, for hot, ambient, chilled or frozen products.”

Sullentrup expects to see the growth of curbside pickup continue. “Consumers are driving the need for a true omni-channel experience, allowing the consumer to shop in the stores when they have time and when they need the convenience of curbside, they’ll order online. The pandemic has pushed up the growth three to five years from 2019 projections, but we also see this growth being fueled by the younger generation that are used to the digital experience.” ●

in the bag

WHAT'S NEW & IMPROVED IN THE GROCERY AISLE ●

The Lump O' Coal Corp Expands Distribution

The Lump O' Coal Corp is expanding their territory with the Empire Group, from Vancouver Island, BC, to Thunder Bay, Ontario, through Sobeyes, Safeway, IGA, and Thrifty Foods chain of companies in 2021. The product will also be available at the London Drugs chain of stores. The company has expanded their assembly facilities to include two not-for-profit facilities and continues to provide work opportunities for adults with developmental disabilities. Series II collection will hit stores November 1st. Series I collection will be included in 2021 season but will be discontinued at years end.



For more information: thelumpocoalcorp@gmail.com

Bonne Maman: New Identity and Flavours

Bonne Maman offers a lineup of jams, jellies, compotes, and fruit spreads in a variety of flavours, all made from time-honoured traditional French recipes, using only four natural ingredients and the finest quality fruit. Bonne Maman's 'More Fruits, Less Sugar' spreads (formerly called Intense) have 38 per cent less sugar than regular jams but even more fruit. These spreads are the perfect ally for a balanced and very tasty breakfast. The spreads can also bring an original sweet and fruity touch to school kids' meals! Bonne Maman jams are now available in a brand new 290ml format. A new identity, but still the same delicious, homemade flavours for these premium spreads with their smooth texture and visible fruit pieces.



For more information: morgane@elevatorinc.com

Look What the Fisherman Reeled In



Fisherman's Friend is launching the newest flavour, Sugar Free Orange Spice, a mix of orange and ginger backed by the instant relief. Maximizing the benefits of menthol, the new Orange Spice lozenge provides soothing properties and bold, delicious flavour. As Canada enters cold and flu season with the most optimistic of expectations, Fisherman's Friend is hoping to get back to doing what they do best, helping to provide year-round relief to Canadian consumers.

For more information: customer.service@tfb.ca

Hellmann's Canada Launches New Range of Vegan Mayo Flavours

While summer has come to an end, Hellmann's is keeping the summer barbecue spirit alive with a new limited-time-only range of Vegan Mayo flavours that feature the same rich, creamy and tasty mayo flavour we all know and love but made with 100 per cent plant-based ingredients.



INTRODUCING...

- Hellmann's Vegan Baconnaisse
- Hellmann's Vegan Chipotle
- Hellmann's Vegan Garlic

These new plant-based spreads are the perfect accompaniment for vegans, vegetarians and flexitarians alike, to add a punch of flavour to their veggie burgers, fries, jacket potatoes, pizzas and more!

Plant-Based Food Producer Zoglo's Incredible Food Corp. Introduces 12 New Products

Zoglo's Incredible Food Corp. (“Zoglo’s” or the “Company”) has introduced 12 new plant-based food products from its Incredible product line into the Canadian retail market. The new products are designed to provide customers with plant-based alternatives for existing consumer favourites such as shawarma, meatballs, chicken



tenders and strips. “We are very pleased to be expanding our product line in Canada and look forward to Zoglo's continuing to penetrate the market and becoming a household food brand.” commented CEO, Anthony Morello. “By leveraging Zoglo's industry-leading technology, we are able to provide consumers with choices that cater to their unique taste profile, effectively changing the landscape of plant-based foods.”

Specialty eggs are trending in BC

Do your customers know the difference between **free run, free range, organic** and **conventional eggs**? The cartons don't always tell your customers what they want to know.

BC egg can help by providing educational materials — custom designed shelf labels, shelf talkers, bag stuffers, flyer ads and infographics for digital signage or for your website. All materials can be customized with your branding and can feature a local farmer.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:
Amanda Brittain
amandab@bcegg.com
604 854 4498

BC egg

Olaf Packaging Sustainable Solutions

Whether it's clamshells made from 100% recycled PET, compostable fibre and paper packaging, or modified atmosphere films that reduce food waste by doubling or even tripling shelf life, Olaf can help you make cost-effective, sustainable packaging choices.

Let's work together to do our part.

Please e-mail to schedule a call:
Kent Wang, CPA
kent@olafpackaging.com

Providing packaging solutions since 1985

Carrier Transicold Unveils Supra Electric Truck Refrigeration Technology for Zero-Emission Performance

Carrier Transicold has unveiled its revolutionary new Supra zero-emission electric truck refrigeration technology, demonstrating a path forward for refrigerated transporters who want to incorporate more sustainable systems into their fleets.



Designed to provide maximum range and refrigeration capacities similar to those now only achieved by diesel-powered truck systems, the engineless Supra technology will be applied to battery electric vehicles (BEVs) or to run autonomously with conventional engine-driven trucks. Like Carrier Transicold's renowned Vector trailer refrigeration systems, the electric Supra unit uses E-Drive technology, a uniquely all-electric refrigeration architecture that couples efficient performance with reduced maintenance requirements.

For more information: www.corporate.carrier.com/healthycoldchain.



GothRider Partners with Firebarns Hot Sauce

GothRider has partnered with Firebarns Hot Sauce to launch a bitter and sweet, edgy barbecue sauce that is made with the brand's strong and flavourful coffee, GothRider Gasoline. The perfect mix of slow-roasted, fully robust coffee beans with Firebarn's hot, punchy barbecue sauce, the product ignites taste buds, and the soul. "Good coffee has a lot to offer," says Phil Kyprianou, founder of GothRider. "And so does a good barbecue sauce. This partnership makes a lot of sense, and it's off to a great start. The sauce works equally well as a marinade, dip or accompaniment to chicken, burgers, ribs or barbecue chicken pizza." The product is available in 350 ml bottles.

For more information: gothrider.com

The New St. Regis Spritz

St. Regis, the gold-standard among de-alcoholized wines and sparkling wines, has launched its newest product: The St. Regis Spritz. The Spritz is a ready-to-drink alcohol-free cocktail, vibrantly orange and delightfully effervescent. It shows a mild bitterness with a hint of sweetness rounded up by pleasant herbal notes. Carefully selected ingredients make this remarkable medium-bodied drink an extraordinary taste experience. Enjoy the Italian flair and experience 'la dolce vita' moments for only 120 calories per 250ml.



For more information: afelli@idfoods.com

Summer Fresh Launches its "Street Food" Inspired Heat'N Eat Bowls

Summer Fresh, Canada's leading prepared salad and dip manufacturer, has launched its "Street Food" inspired, ready-to-eat pasta and noodle Heat'N Eat Bowls. Ready in three minutes and made with simple, clean ingredients, Summer Fresh's exciting new product line offers consumers ease and versatility in their meal choices without compromising on flavour, quality and taste. Summer Fresh's team of culinary experts worked closely with globally trained chefs to bring consumers authentic tasting Street Food-inspired dishes from around the world, straight to their home. The Heat'N Eat Bowls are available in four mouth-watering flavours; Pasta Pomodoro, rigatoni pasta tossed in a house-made tomato sauce using Roma tomatoes, garlic and hints of sweet basil, Pasta Rosa, made with penne cooked al-dente, tossed in a beautiful, creamy rose sauce, Pasta Alla Norma, a Sicilian dish made with fresh tomatoes, roasted eggplant and pecorino cheese, and DanDan Noodles, ramen noodles delicately coated in a spicy sesame sauce made with fresh crushed Szechuan and chilli peppers. This innovative new product offering is an exciting addition to Summer Fresh's 2,500 recipes including their iconic Original Hummus, Tzatziki, and Baba Ghanouj, first-to-market products like their Artichoke and Asiago Dip and 7 Grain Salad, as well as a complete line of plant-based dips and salad dressings.



For more information: www.SummerFresh.com

Oikos Launches All-New Drinkable Greek Yogurt



Danone Canada's Oikos brand has launched Oikos Morning Oats, a new drinkable Greek yogurt designed to help Canadians with busy mornings in an on-the-go format. With creamy and filling Greek yogurt, 9g of protein, whole oats, seeds and vibrant flavours, Oikos Morning Oats is an exciting new product being launched just in time for the busy fall season. Flavours include Field berries, oats & seeds; Vanilla, apricots, oats & seeds; and Banana, oats & seeds. It is packaging in a 190mL 100 per cent recyclable bottle.

M'Lord Fine Foods Launches Two New Varieties



M'Lord Fine Foods, the brand consumers have long associated with quality, selection and variety, just launched two premium quality canned fruits just in time for the start of the baking season: Fuji Apples and Apricots, both in a light syrup. Fuji apples, known as one of the most popular varieties can easily be added to breakfasts, salads, mains, and desserts. The Apricots are a "golden sun" category, have a firm and tender texture and are perfectly balanced between bitter and sweet.

For more information: www.idfoods.com

SodaStream Brings Create-Your-Own PepsiCo Beverages to Canada

SodaStream has launched PepsiCo for SodaStream flavours in Canada, providing a convenient and sustainable, new way to enjoy PepsiCo beverages on demand.

"We're bubbling with excitement that Canadians will be the first in North America to try the new PepsiCo for SodaStream flavours," says Rena Nickerson, general manager at SodaStream Canada. "This collaboration bringing together some of the most powerful brands in the beverage industry gives SodaStream users, and Pepsi™ and 7Up™ fans alike, a new way to quench their thirst with the same great taste they know and love."



The new syrups include five of the classic PepsiCo flavours – Pepsi, Diet Pepsi, Pepsi Zero Sugar, 7Up, and 7Up Zero. Each is specially designed to be used with SodaStream sparkling water makers and come in 440 mL bottles, making about 9L of fresh PepsiCo beverage.

"We've seen incredible growth in the SodaStream flavours portfolio over the past year, including a high double-digit sales increase last quarter with the launch of bubbly Drops for SodaStream," says Nickerson. "We're optimistic that we will see even stronger success with the launch of Pepsi for SodaStream, bringing together the refreshing taste Canadians crave and the convenience of doing so at the touch of a button in a sustainable way."

For more information: corp.sodastream.com

Gay Lea Foods Launches IVANHOE NOTHING BUT 100 Per Cent Real Cheese Snack



Gay Lea Foods Co-operative Limited has launched IVANHOE NOTHING BUT, a crunchy dehydrated, gluten-free cheese snack, perfect for those with busy lifestyles and active outdoor enthusiasts looking for healthy, high-protein snacks on-the-go.

The launch of IVANHOE NOTHING BUT in three flavours – Cheddar, Smoked Gouda and Monterey Jack with Red Bell and Jalapeno Peppers – marks yet another example of how the Canadian dairy co-op is innovating after listening and learning from its customers.

"Our consumers told us that they are looking for convenient, better-for-you snacking options that not only taste great, but allow them to stay fuller longer to help sustain their busy lifestyles," says Monika Giasson, product manager, Gay Lea Foods. "Even more important for them right now, is a strong desire to support local, Canadian-made products. With NOTHING BUT we packaged up all of that knowledge and we are excited to launch our new crunchy, protein-packed, gluten-free dehydrated cheese snack that will keep them coming back for more. And what's more is that to celebrate our launch, we'll be getting outside and meeting adventurers across Ontario this summer to give them a taste of our new delicious snack. We can't wait for everyone to try it!"

NOTHING BUT will be launching national sampling, digital pre-roll and targeted out-of-home ads this summer and fall. Born from the product's "Adventure Fuel" positioning, each of the campaign's three 15-second spots features people who come alive doing a different outdoor activity they love, and this new snack is the fuel that enables them to immerse themselves in nothing but that moment.

Film and media was handled by Agency 59, Chalkboard Marketing handled the activation and Purpose Ink managed public relations for the program.

For more information: www.gaylea.com

advertisers index

Alto-Shaam	53	Elias Honey	44	ID Foods Corporation - St Regis ..	39	Sabroso Foods	12
Arneg Canada Inc	31	Fobi	50	Keurig Dr. Pepper Canada	18	Sobeys Wholesale	36
BC Egg Marketing Brand	66	Ford Motor Co Canada	14	Kraft Canada	6, 45	Soda Stream Canada	3
Bee Maid Honey Ltd	25	Freson Bros	28	Level Ground Trading Ltd	21	Synq	46
Biro Manufacturing Company	54	Freybe Gourmet Foods	13	Lita's Mexican Foods	58	TFB & Associates Ltd	IFC
Boosh Food	9	Good Stock Foods	8	Matrix Marketing	62	The Lump O'Coal Corp	40
Canada Beef	0BC	Guru Lucky Snacks	42	Melitta Canada	23	Tree of Life Canada	59
Colnuck Ltd.	10	Hussmann Canada Inc	64	Neal Brothers Foods	19	Vanilla Blossom Flavours Inc	IBC
Digi Canada	33	Iceberg Cold Storage Ltd	8	OK Frozen Dough	32	Very Good Food Co	56
Discovery Organics	59	ID Foods Corporation - Caf-Lib ..	24	Olaf Packaging Group Inc	66	Zoglo's Incredible Food Corp	41

Price Inflation

- Dark Clouds on the Horizon

Canadian shoppers will change habits affecting both brands and retailers

To say that our industry has been through a roller coaster over the past 18 months is an understatement. Other than airlines, the grocery industry is one of the most challenging businesses and we often move from one rough patch to another in a speedy fashion.

The next rough patch on the horizon for our industry is food inflation. We have seen poor growing seasons, supply chain bottlenecks and labour challenges all put upward pressure on food prices across almost every category.

Field Agent Canada recently surveyed over 1,000 Canadian shoppers to explore what impact higher food prices will have on shopping habits in the grocery store and across other areas of the household budget.

Shoppers are noticing higher prices on store shelves, with 85 per cent of respondents saying that they have noticed higher prices in the past month and 78 per cent of respondents are either moderately or extremely concerned about increasing food prices. This is not a surprise given the overall weight of food costs in the budgets of Canadian households.

Respondents to the survey fully expect brands to take price increases as costs increase, but some of the less visible ways brands offset increasing costs are also getting noticed by shoppers. Sixty-four per cent of shoppers expected that brands will shrink the pack size and keep the price the same and 52 per cent said that they expect items will be on-sale less frequently. Most interestingly, 32 per cent of respondents thought that brands would reduce the quality of products to maintain profitability.

So what impact will increasing food prices have on shopping behaviours?

Eighty-three per cent of respondents said that they would stock-up on items when they are on-sale, potentially a residual habit of COVID related product shortages. Brands should expect increased sales on promotion and provide stock (and budgets) to cover the increased sales or potentially explore limits on items that are on-sale.

Food inflation may not result in bigger basket sizes. Over half of respondents said that they would switch to lower price brands in the same category and the same proportion of shoppers said they would buy store brand products more often.

Fifty-five per cent of consumers also said they would buy some categories less often (reduce consumption) to help maintain their overall grocery expenditures. The



photo courtesy shutterstock.com

categories at most risk include Candy / Chocolate, Soft Drinks, Salty Snacks and Prepared Foods. There was also a significant impact on frozen categories from Frozen Meals, Ice Cream and Frozen Pizza.

Through the pandemic we did see a benefit for traditional supermarkets as shoppers were less price sensitive in a trade-off to shop in less crowded stores nearer to their home. This resulted in market share increases and improved profits at these banners.

In the face of increasing prices, 32 per cent of shoppers said that they were likely to switch retailers to save money. When asked which retailers they trusted most to offer the lowest prices for groceries the top responses were No Frills / Maxi (29 per cent), Superstore (22 per cent), Walmart (20 per cent) and Costco (14 per cent). These banners appear poised to gain market share as food process increase.

Additionally, the impact of higher grocery prices goes beyond the supermarket. Seventy-seven per cent of respondents said that they would cut-back on eating at restaurants, while other areas where consumers will cut back to save money include apparel purchases (49 per cent), out-of-home entertainment (49 per cent), electronics/tech (45 per cent), travel (42 per cent). Moreover, 36 per cent of respondents say that they will cut back on holiday gifts and 33 per cent cutting back on holiday celebrations.

In short, food inflation will be a major economic issue for the Canadian economy, likely well into 2022. As an industry, we need to do what we can to minimize the impact to Canadian consumers to avoid a longer-term economic slowdown which will have negative impacts for both brands and retailers.

Of course, we need to protect our businesses, but brands and retailers must also push harder to find offsetting efficiencies to minimize the amount of cost increases that need to be passed along to the consumer. ●



Jeff Doucette is the founder of "Field Agent Canada" an on-demand panel of Canadian shoppers providing a suite of innovative services to Canadian retailers and brands. He can be reached at jeff.doucette@fieldagentcanada.com

- QUALITY -

Vanilla Products

MADE IN CANADA

WE WANT YOUR BUSINESS

AVAILABLE FOR RETAILERS:



PURE MADAGASCAR VANILLA EXTRACT
Available in 150ml or 250ml



PURE MADAGASCAR VANILLA PASTE
Available in 150ml



GOURMET VANILLA BEANS (GLASS TUBES)
2 beans per tube x 24 tubes



BLACKENING SEASONING
12 x 250 grams



CAJUN SEASONING
12 x 250 grams



Contact Dave: 250-893-9962 / dave.best@vanillablossom.com

VISIT VANILLABLOSSOM.COM FOR MORE GREAT PRODUCTS

Introducing the CANADIAN BEEF INFORMATION GATEWAY



Canada Beef has created a digital ecosystem of consumer information to simplify selection, preparation and enjoyment of a wider variety of beef cuts.



Surveyed shoppers* who purchase beef at least once a week expressed interest in accessing the following types of information by scanning a QR code:

- Nutrition (75%)
- Recipe videos (68%)
- Cooking methods (71%)
- Food safety (72%)
- Beef quality and grading (72%)

* Consumer research commissioned by Canada Beef.

For more information about the Canadian Beef Information Gateway contact: Rod Koning, Executive Director, Channel Marketing
rkoning@canadabeef.ca.



SCAN ME



✓ Sales Growth ✓ Profitability ✓ Customer Experience