

THURSDAY | OCTOBER 3, 2019

Frank Gleeson

Robyn Benincasa

Team Building: Not Just a Job, an Adventure

Taking your team to the next level

The real secret to success is to play less like an individual and more like a team. Robyn Benincasa knows a thing or two about being part of a team. The professional adventure racer, firefighter, CNN Hero, author and motivational speaker described how to build world-class teams as the keynote speaker at Wednesday's General Session.

"A fast-moving company is like an adventure race every day of your life," Benincasa said. "If you want to go fast, you can go alone. But if you want to go far, go together."

Real team builders and leaders have some common ground. They leave their egos at the start line. They ask

for and accept help. They value team success over individual glory. They give away the credit.

Another distinction? The ability to keep the team inspired when things aren't going well.

Benincasa recalled a specific time when she was participating in the Eco Challenge. It was 120 degrees Fahrenheit, she was covered in leaches, and her feet were bleeding.

"When I get to the end of my rope, I start crying—or buying shoes—and buying shoes was not an option." She was so close to the end of the race but physically and mentally felt she couldn't go on. She couldn't see because she was crying. That's when a teammate stepped

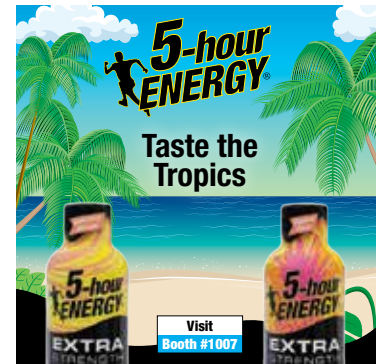
up and said something that has stuck with her to this day.

"It's not that people who are going to win the Eco Race aren't crying. It's that they are crying and walking," he told her. This was the motivation she needed to complete the race. Pain is mandatory. Suffering is optional, she said.

Great leaders accept challenges. For Benincasa, it was how she reacted to having multiple hip surgeries that ultimately took her out of the world-class adventure racer game. She could have wallowed in her fate. Instead, she shifted her focus on what she could still do.

Kayaking was always her favorite part of adventure racing, so she decided

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Customer Service Trumps Everything

Jim Knight rocks the NACS Show 2019 with tips for creating a memorable customer experience.

Creating unforgettable moments is key to achieving rock star status in the retail industry. Convenience store operators who are serious about amping up their businesses should stock their stores with people who can create these moments, according to Jim Knight, who oversaw global

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Retailers Starved for CBD Info

The sky is the limit.

Retailers are craving more information about CBD and hemp, as chained retailers become the No. 1 spot for consumer CBD purchases. This recent rise to first place comes after the passage of the 2018 Farm Bill, allowing retailers the opportunity to legally sell a narrow set of CBD products.

CBD experts Colleen Lanier, executive director of Hemp Industries Association, and Kristen Nichols, editor of *Hemp Industry News*, dished out details about retail prospects for CBD products during the Wednesday education session, “CBD, Hemp, Edibles: What Retailers Need to Know About This New Category.”

“If you think you’re seeing CBD everywhere, you are. And you’re seeing it in everything,” Nichols said.

Questions still remain for convenience retailers considering this exciting new space. Lanier and Nichols covered the basics, including the difference between CBD and hemp, how they work, types of products and the consumer profile.

As a reminder, cannabis is a plant that includes the marijuana and hemp



Colleen Lanier

varieties. Cannabidiol (CBD) is one of 113 cannabinoids produced from the plant, and it’s getting all the attention—for now. Lanier suspects a number of the other cannabinoids will trend over time as we understand their individual effects.

“One of the reasons CBD is so exciting is because it plugs into our body’s CB1 and CB2 receptors and has some benefits for our neurologic processes,” Lanier said.

Lanier also addressed the hundreds of aromatic oils contained in the cannabis plant, known as terpenes. Terpenes claim to promote calm, alertness and anti-inflammation. Some effervescent waters have terpenes

and are marketed as “cannabis terps,” Lanier said.

Interestingly, the oily, nutty seed from hemp has trace amounts of THC, the ingredient that causes a “high” and is a good source of protein. It may offer retailers a new food source product that appeals to vegan consumers, she said.

Lanier and Nichols say it’s important for retailers to consider traceability of supply chain, including compliance with USDA Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and FDA current Good Manufacturing Practices (cGMP); whether the product has supplement facts or a nutrition facts panel that is appropriate



for the product; whether it is backed by any quality or consumer-safety certifications, such as the U.S. Hemp Authority; and whether the manufacturer, brand or product makes unsubstantiated health claims—a red flag for the FDA, Lanier said.

Unfortunately, there isn’t much market data available on CBD products, largely due to prohibition, Nichols said. Similarly, the FDA is still weighing in, overshooting its deadline to have more information by late summer or early fall 2019.

“The cannabis plant has been illegal for almost 100 years and has only been legal for about 5 minutes,” Nichols said lightheartedly. ●

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TEAM BUILDING

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to see if she could excel at that as an individual. She not only excelled, she set the Guinness world record for greatest distance paddled by canoe/kayak in 24 hours on moving water by a female, June 26, 2011, on Canada’s Yukon River.

Then, she set her sights on something even bigger. She created the Project Athena Foundation, which helps survivors of medical or other traumatic setbacks achieve their adventurous dreams.

“It’s not about the setback, it’s about the comeback,” Benincasa said. “I wanted them to live an adventurous dream as a part of their recovery ...

Very often, people are saying, ‘OK, I survived, but now what?’ We want to be that ‘now what?’”

Benincasa was introduced at Wednesday’s General Session by Frank Gleeson, NACS chairman 2018-19, who welcomed attendees from more than 70 countries in traditional Irish Gailic, Céad Mile Fáilte, which means 100,000 welcomes.

Gleeson spoke briefly on what it means to be a leader in this industry and how being informed is critical to business. Today, three issues should be top of mind to all leaders in the convenience-store industry: Sustainability, leadership and innovation, he said.

“Sustainability. It’s one of those words that can mean a lot of different

things. But I can tell you what it means to me,” Gleeson said. “It’s all about aligning your business practices with customer preference.”

And today, that means single-use plastics, he said.

“Plastic-free is a top criteria for shoppers. A year ago, it wasn’t even on the list,” he said. “That’s one example of how fast the issues are moving and how fast we need to move.”

Gleeson said that innovation is about finding new ways to delight customers. More importantly, it’s about leadership.

“That’s something within all of us,” he said. “You can get there if you really want to. The key is to always be brave, have conviction and courage and never, ever give up the fight!” ●

NACS Supplier Board Names New Leadership

Drew Mize, executive vice president of global ERP solutions at PDI, has been named 2019–20 chairman of the NACS Supplier Board.

Mize began his career in 1995 as a business analyst for TMI Services, holding the position of vice president until 2005. In his current role, he oversees PDI's convenience retail and petroleum wholesale technology solutions divisions globally.



Drew Mize

Rick Brindle, vice president, industry development at Mondelēz International, was named chairman-elect. Brindle has been named among the Consumer Goods Industry's Top 25 Visionaries by *Consumer Goods Technology* magazine and Supervalu Vendor of the Year. Brindle was inducted into the 2017 Candy Hall of Fame and the 2018 Convenience Hall of Fame.



Rick Brindle

The board is comprised of individuals from NACS supplier member companies. Three vice chairmen were elected to the leadership team: Tim Blair, vice president, national accounts, MillerCoors; Brent Cotten, senior director, customer and industry affairs, The Hershey Company; and Frank Squilla, executive vice president, industry and trade relations, InComm.

Three new members were elected to the board: Alicia Cleary, director, industry relations, Anheuser-Busch InBev; Dave Jeffco, vice president of national accounts, Krispy Krunchy Foods LLC; and Bryan Morrow, national C&G and field sales lead, PepsiCo Inc. ●

A Positive Shift

Words and reactions make a difference.

If the session name (Oh Shift!) didn't pull you in, then Jennifer Powers' humor and wit did. Powers'

Tuesday session, "Oh Shift! How to Change Your Life with One Little Letter," entertainingly coached attendees into shifting challenges into positives.

Powers, a master certified coach, speaker and author of "Oh Shift!" coaches individuals toward improved confidence, allowing them to live and work at their full potential. During her session, Powers offered a fresh perspective on shifts that stick.

"Use your words," Powers said. "Words give you power and control over how you feel and attract positivity in your world. We are so powerful with our words. But we're not using them enough. And they're free!"

Powers' life-changing tools are designed to help people choose their words and reactions in response to challenging circumstances, spend less time in resistance and more time in a

state of peace and positivity. In short, she said, everyone can learn to react to challenges better and to view change in a much more positive light.

"Having a bad day?" Powers asked attendees. "When I'm having a bad day, I compliment someone, and it turns things around. It's so easy to do."

Choosing how you view a situation and the words to describe it can make a difference, she said. For example, changing the phrase "I have to" to "I get to" turns it into a positive. Similarly, swap "I have no time" for "I'm going to make time" and see how it changes your life. It's important to substitute a positive phrase for a negative one. Otherwise, you'll never make progress toward a more satisfying life, she said.

Powers also encouraged attendees to remember the "F" words—flip, find and freak. Flip the focus and find the message, for example. And when you find yourself "freaking out," laugh at



Jennifer Powers

the irony, take deep abdominal breaths and count to 12, think of someone worse off than you or say, "Oh well, no big deal, so what, who cares" in order, three times fast.

When all else fails, she said, imitate Mother Theresa, Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr. or "any other great one." ●



Left to right: Jay Ellingson, PhD, Ryan Krebs and Jeremy Zenlea

Few people think about food safety as they grab from the shelf and consume on the fly. That responsibility lies with c-store operators. Having a series of checks and balances in place even before the food hits the shelves is key, according to a panel of food safety experts who led Tuesday's education session, "Food Safety Roundtable: Protecting Public Health and Your Brand."

The foodservice category continues to be a key focus for the convenience channel. In 2018, foodservice sales accounted for 22.6% of in-store sales.

"Food safety is not an option. Erring on the side of extreme caution can remove most hurdles and questions associated with 'what to do

and when,'" said Ryan Krebs, director of food service at Rutter's.

Krebs was joined by Kwik Trip Inc. Senior Director of Food Protection Jay Ellingson, Ph.D.; *Food Safety Magazine* Editorial Director Barbara VanRenterghem; and Cumberland Farms Food Safety Director Jeremy Zenlea. The four analyzed current food safety practices in their organizations and identified additional steps all organizations should take to overcome food safety challenges. Attendees later broke into round table groups to discuss and share collaborative solutions to relevant food safety challenges.

Certain risk factors can jeopardize any operation, including purchasing food from unsafe sources, failing

to cook food adequately, using contaminated equipment, poor personal hygiene and holding food at improper temperatures. Zenlea said the cornerstones of Cumberland Farms' food safety system are prediction, prevention and reaction. One of its food safety initiatives includes the use of predictive analytics for significant food safety events.

"Regardless of the level of proposed risk of a company's food and beverage offerings, all types of food establishments will eventually be faced with food safety challenges," Zenlea said. "It's important to have a plan in place to handle such challenges, thus protecting the health of their brand and consumers." ●



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JIM KNIGHT*continued from page 1*

training for Hard Rock International for two decades.

Knight kicked off the NACS Show 2019 on Tuesday with a high-energy, rock-n-roll-themed keynote that described how every customer is searching for differentiated service—they crave it.

“People are coming in to spend disposable income. They don’t need you. They are choosing you,” Knight said.

But creating this type of service isn’t something you can fake. It has to start below the surface with a shared mindset where everyone is focused on the same thing. It’s about choosing the right people and then training them in the way they should go. It’s about surrounding yourself with what Knight described as an army of giants.

“Behaviors cannot be canned or fake. All the training in the world can’t fix a

bad hire,” he said. “But there are rock stars that live among us. I want [to hire] people obsessed about the brand. I want people in the memory-making business.”

Knight called brand associates the amplifier of a business. Without them, everything falls flat. Strive to hire associates who have the three Cs: Solid competence, strong character and culture fit. Unique people create unique experiences, he said. But you have to have people smart enough and competent enough to create that feeling.

Once you find the right people and get them all singing off the same sheet of music, they are in the position to create mind-searing experiences. They should treat each person special, like it’s a first date or first day of work. He asked the audience to recall the amount of effort they put into getting ready for their first date or the optimistic attitude they had that first day of work. Associates should bring that “first-time-thunder” level of effort and detail

“But there are rock stars that live among us. I want [to hire] people obsessed about the brand.”

Jim Knight

to work with them every day.

Creating this differentiated service happens through personalized and customized attention, developing an emotional attachment with customers.

“Authentic customer-obsession creates lifelong raving fans,” Knight said. “It generates a feeling of ‘I want more of that’ with your customers.”

If you really want to blow people

away, products and atmosphere are not enough, Knight added. To take it to the next level, you have to crank it to 11 by adding—and emphasizing—service and value.

“It’s not enough to be fast and cheap. Service trumps everything—product, price, convenience, theme, tech—it always has, and it always will,” Knight said. ●



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TOP 10

COOL NEW PRODUCTS



The Cool New Products Preview Room, located in B401, is the perfect place to experience a selection of the latest products and services in the convenience store industry. Use a handheld scanner to capture details of your favorite products, including exhibitor name, booth location and release date. Simply return the scanner when you're done and receive a printout of your customized product list. The Preview Room is open from 8:00 am to 5:30 pm today.

* The Top 10 Cool New Products list is effective as of Wednesday at 4:00 pm.



1
ED300 DIGITAL
Marmon Foodservice
Booth 7605



2
LANCER TWINPOUR
Lancer Corporation
Booth 7453



3
MOBILE STOCKER
Mobile Merchandisers
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4
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5
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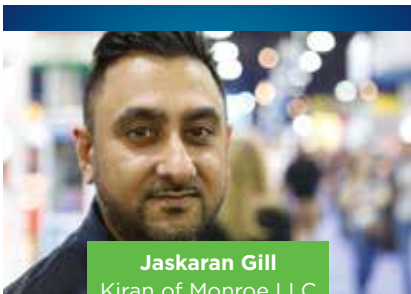
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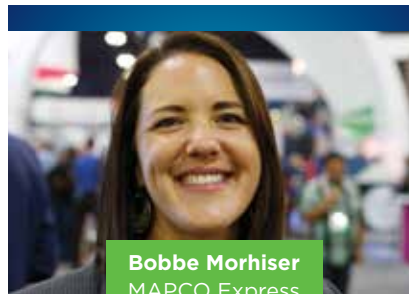
question of the day

What do you hope to learn or see at the NACS Show?



Jaskaran Gill
Kiran of Monroe LLC
Monroe, LA

I came to see some of the new gas station products. We wanted to see the new pumps and credit card readers, etc. And we've seen it. I loved what I saw. It's my first NACS Show with many more to come after this.



Bobbe Morhiser
MAPCO Express
Franklin, TN

I'm looking for more ways to innovate loyalty in the mobile experience. Something beyond the things we've been talking about for years, like digital coupons. I want to see what's next.



Anik Doshi
SAT Kaival Management LLC
Bakersfield, CA

I'm here to see innovation and the future of where the business is going. Also, I want to see the Cool New Products and the speakers who motivate us and help us with our businesses.



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When: 3-7 p.m., Thursday, October 3

Where: International Club, Room B208

Who: Mark Wohltmann, director, NACS Europe, and Frank Gleeson, NACS chairman and president, Aramark Northern Europe

What: International Executive Education Alumni Reception
Alumni of the NACS Executive Education programs held at Cornell, Kellogg, MIT, Wharton and Yale will share their personal stories about why they participated, what they learned and how they are using their newfound skills to respond to the challenges of a competitive global marketplace. ●

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Meals on Wheels

Education session explores the pros and cons of launching a food truck.

Convenience store retailers and companies are using food trucks to serve as **test kitchens** for new menu items and concepts or to **introduce freshly prepared food** in a market where people may be hesitant to **try convenience store food**.



Food trucks are predicted to bring in **\$1 billion** in annual revenue this year.



More than **4,000**

food trucks are serving up everything from comfort food to unique menu items across the U.S.



A decade ago, the idea of serving gourmet food from a truck or trailer was unheard of. Today, modern food trucks are common in communities of all sizes. And many people are cashing in on the tasty prospects of hitting the road with a food truck.

Food trucks aren't just for individuals who are turning the engine on the mobile business. Convenience store retailers and companies are using food trucks to serve as test kitchens for new menu items and concepts or to introduce freshly prepared food in a market where people may be hesitant to try convenience store food, according to Shane Flynn, managing director of Aramark Northern Europe and the presenter at Thursday's session, "Making Money with Food Trucks." Aramark uses food trucks to tap new markets through business events, sports games, festivals and universities.

"We have found that it's a great way to trial products," Flynn said.

"Rather than making a big investment and infrastructure change, it's an interesting, relatively low-cost way to try new concepts. If your offerings test well, then you can be more confident in moving the concept into your store."

More than 4,000 food trucks are serving up everything from comfort food to unique menu items across the U.S., according to a study by IBISWorld, a market research firm. Collectively, food trucks are predicted to bring in \$1 billion in annual revenue this year.

It's easy to see why the industry is booming. Food trucks deliver exactly what customers want: They meet consumers where they are and offer different types of cuisine at affordable prices. C-store operators also turn to food trucks during times of peak store traffic, to sustain business during a store refurbishment or to reach new customers.

Flynn will share how Aramark's experience, the risks and pitfalls of launching a food truck and tips and

tricks for making the business work in the convenience store space.

The allure of food on wheels

"There's a certain kind of theater to food trucks," Flynn said. "I think it dials up an operator's credentials in terms of authenticity. If done right, your food truck can almost have an artisan feel."

Convenience stores that launch a food truck shouldn't replicate what's offered in their brick-and-mortar. In fact, retailers might find that their food truck takes on a life of its own. With integrated marketing and promotions, retailers can ensure the food truck becomes an extension of their store brand as well as a brand that consumers seek out.

"We find people are very open to trying new things in that environment," Flynn said.

Another approach to the food truck business is to use it as a vehicle for collaboration with local chefs or celebrities. Recently, for example,

Aramark launched a Jamie Oliver-branded food truck and uses it for Aramark business events and client requests.

The logistics of operating a food truck

"Despite the small space, this is still a kitchen," Flynn said. "You need a good, robust supply chain, a simplified menu and the right controls in place to make this work."

Limited storage space, maintaining food safety and cross-contamination are common risks associated with operating a food truck. You can avoid some of these pitfalls by making sure your menu is simple.

"I can't stress simplicity enough," Flynn said, "especially when a food truck business is just starting out."

With time, Flynn said, food truck operators will learn how to create a menu that is flexible and readily available to customers—which is a great experience to have before bringing the concept inside the convenience store. ●



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Global Leaders Converge

2019 Convenience Summit Europe covers industry trends and issues.

London served as the backdrop to the 2019 NACS Convenience Summit Europe (CSE), bringing together a global network of thought leaders to address trends and pain points in convenience retailing. The June 5-7 event was a hotspot for both leading convenience retailers and suppliers from around the world.

From self-checkout to loyalty programs to sustainability, retailers took a deep dive into a new retail landscape. Convenience retailers, always thirsty for information, immersed themselves in education sessions, panel discussions and networking. Among the highlights was a look at China's booming c-store scene, beginning with the session, "Collision (or Integration?) of Online and Bricks-and-Mortar."

"You could say the East is rising in defining new retail," said Mike Watkins, head of retailer and business insight at Nielsen.

According to Watkins, fresh food—particularly seafood—is important to Chinese consumers. And in China, advanced payment technologies, such as mobile-phone apps, already account for 60% of grocery sales, he said.

"Convenience stores have a unique advantage," Watkins said. "They can actually complement the e-commerce providers, which is a convenient place to collect packages and a convenient place to dine."

During the session, Matthew Brennan, managing director of China Channel, presented several case studies that provided a look into the Chinese convenience retail market. In a quickly changing landscape, the boundaries between offline shopping and online shopping are disappearing, leading to "a lot of experimentation," he said.

In quoting the chief technology officer of Hema Supermarkets, Brennan said "The essence behind new retail is to apply the idea and technology of the internet to restructure people, products and place in an all-around way—from the place of origin to the hands of consumers."

As an example, Brennan pointed to two major conglomerates that dominate the digital landscape in China: Alibaba Group, the e-commerce giant, and Tencent, the online games, social media and payments giant.

China is advancing its use of other technology, as well, including facial recognition. For example, KFC customers can place a food order at a kiosk and pay using facial recognition technology. Not surprisingly, QR codes have pushed ahead of credit cards and cash.

The summit explored other technology topics, including speeding up the self-checkout process. In the session, "The Many Dimensions of Self Checkouts—How New Technology Disrupts and Supports



István Kapitány, global executive vice president of Shell Retail, was among the featured speakers at CSE. Kapitány is the 2019 NACS European Convenience Industry Leader of the Year.

New Retail," Gary Harris, head of brand at SPAR International, touted the company's university student-focused store concept. The approach has a fresh, Gen Z look and feel that is unique to this format of stores in the company's portfolio—and is cashless.

At SPAR Netherlands University c-stores, self-service is interwoven, Harris said. Shoppers select grab-and-go items, scan and pay for them with their smartphones using a mobile payment feature that's part of the university store app.

Similarly, Sören Birkström, CIO, and Jesper Østergaard, CEO of Reitan Convenience Denmark, spotlighted its reversible-touchscreen checkout kiosks throughout its 7-Eleven stores in Sweden. In front of the counter, customers can use the screens as self-checkout stations. Behind the counter, a clerk can flip them around and use the same system in a more traditional checkout queue.

The impact of consumer demand on social awareness and environmental sustainability stirred discussion during the summit. In one session, executives from three start-ups detailed the link between a good cause and a successful enterprise, without compromising a company's mission.

"If you're doing something in sustainability, you better make sure that you're telling your customers about it," said Nate Marsh, chief revenue officer of Atlanta-based B2B GreenPrint.

GreenPrint is an environmental technology company that helps brands reduce the negative effects of their environmental footprint by investing in tree-planting programs, renewable energy projects and carbon reduction programs, among others. A key component of GreenPrint's business is helping its partners develop marketing and outreach campaigns to share their stories about their sustainability efforts.

"One of the biggest things we hear about in Europe is greenwashing," Marsh said, in which corporate sustainability efforts are only window dressing. "How genuine is the program, or are you just doing enough to make the claim?"

Planning for next year's CSE is already in the works and is expected to deliver the same high-energy, up-to-date sessions and discussion content NACS members have come to expect. Mark your calendars for the 2020 NACS Convenience Summit Europe, June 2-4, in Berlin, Germany. ●



Frank Gleeson, NACS 2018-19 chairman and president, Aramark Northern Europe, listens to a panel discussion on self-checkout strategies.

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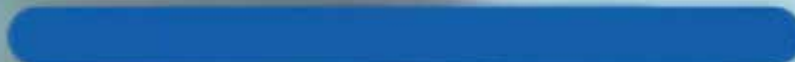
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Paying Down Debt

Attract and retain millennials by aiding with student loan repayment.

One of the biggest issues permeating the business landscape in America today is student loan debt.

About 44 million Americans collectively have more than \$1.5 trillion in student loan debt. It touches every industry, including the convenience store sector.

Convenience retailers can help employees chip away at that debt with a new NACS member benefit, the Gradifi Employee Student Loan Repayment Program. The new program is designed to help retailers hire and retain top talent. The employment perk helps employees refinance or pay down existing loans or save for future tuition needs.

"Attracting and retaining high-caliber college graduates is a key part of our strategic growth plan at NACS, as well as for many retailer and

supplier member companies," said Brian Kimmel, senior vice president and chief financial officer at NACS. "A student loan repayment benefit will help our industry become more widely recognized as an employer of choice."

Increasingly, employers are turning to student loan and college savings benefits to bring financial wellness to employees as a way of differentiating themselves among competitors. The new Gradifi program gives NACS members the opportunity to compete effectively in today's tight labor market, improve retention rates and help employees whittle down education-related debt. According to Gradifi, 76% of job-seeking candidates with student loan debt say their choice to take a job would be "considerably affected by an employer's willingness to offer a student loan benefit."

Gradifi was founded in January 2014 by Boston entrepreneur Tim DeMello and acquired by First Republic Bank in 2016. Today, Gradifi is a leader in providing innovative financial benefits that empower employers to help their people work toward brighter financial futures.

And the return on investment on employer contributions is significant. According to the Society for Human Resource Management research, replacing an employee costs between 90% and 200% of the employee's annual salary (including both direct and indirect costs). With Gradifi Student Loan Repayment, companies can potentially reduce costs associated with turnover and increase productivity by reducing financial stress.

What it includes

NACS members who sign up for Gradifi SLP Plan® will receive preferred pricing. Employee benefits through this plan include:

- Direct contributions to their student loans.
- One-on-one student loan and college planning counseling through American Student Assistance®.
- Content and calculators that help program beneficiaries make smart choices about their financial decisions.

Learn more about the Gradifi program

For more details about the Gradifi Student Employee Student Loan Repayment Program, visit www.convenience.org/Gradifi to explore program materials, view a webinar and to sign up for the program. ●

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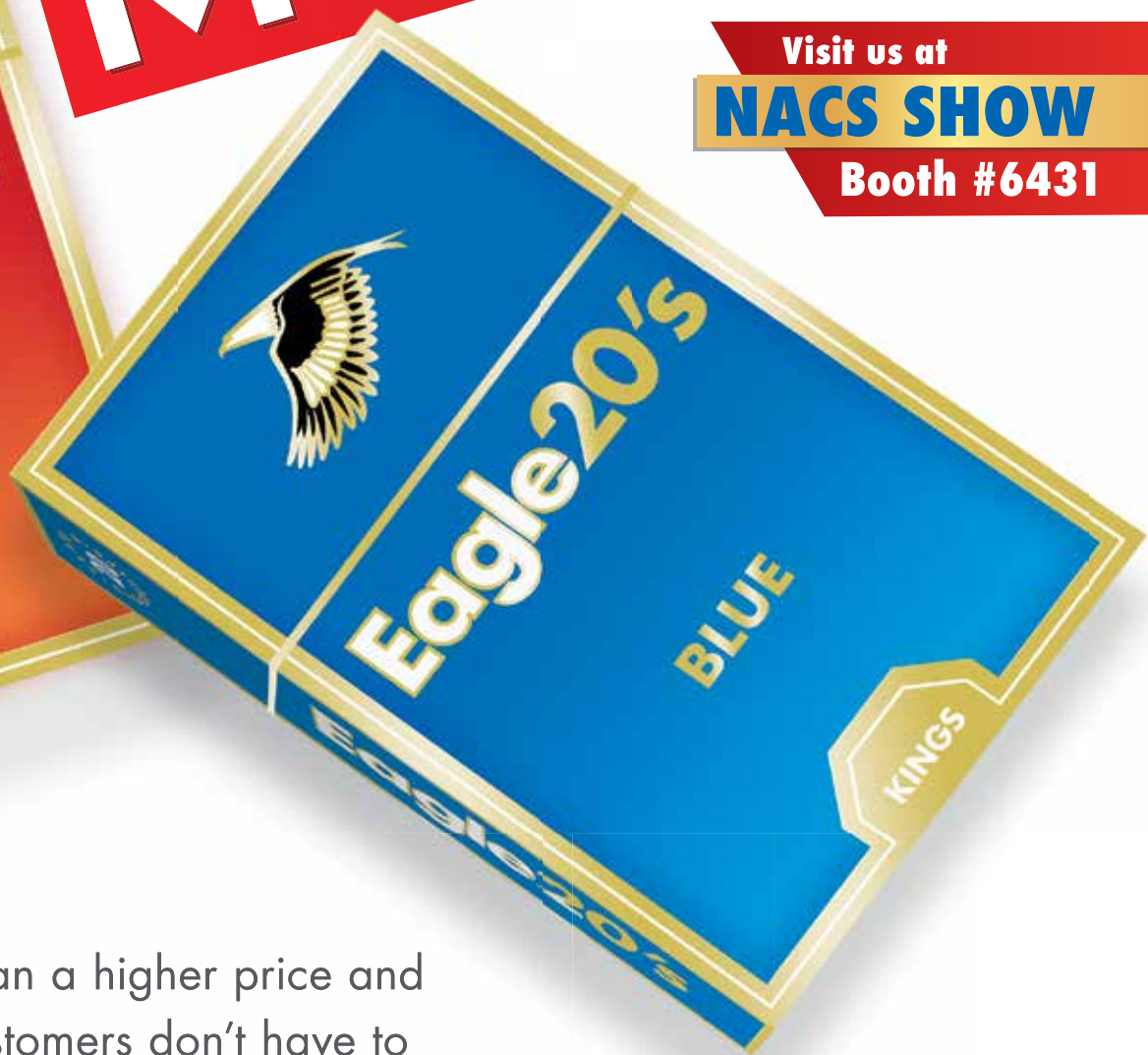
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*Based on CPW growth YTD July 2018 versus YAG retail shipment data.

Maximize In-Store Sales

Tips for mastering the new-product introduction.

One of the biggest mistakes convenience store operators make is thinking like a convenience store, according to Lonnie McQuirter, director of operations for 36 Lyn Refuel Station in Minneapolis and a panelist at Thursday's session "First to Market: Getting New Product on Your Shelves."

"Sometimes, retailers have this negative attitude that's kind of self-fulfilling in a way that they're just a gas station that happens to sell chips and Coke," McQuirter said. "If you want to create an experience your consumers are going to remember and make the effort to come back," he said, "you must put more effort and thought into what new items you offer, where you place them in your store and how you display them."

Don't let limited store space restrict big thinking. C-store retailers can do a lot with a little when introducing new products. Let your creative juices flow. More importantly, think like a consumer, McQuirter said.

Although McQuirter admits many customers visit convenience stores looking for staples, retailers are missing a huge opportunity to differentiate their store and their brand from competitors. McQuirter considers Phil's 550 in Marquette, Michigan, the gold standard in product merchandising and customer service.

"This little convenience store is located in a quintessential small town, but it's iconic. The owners have created a big following for their business," he said. "It's surprising what you can do with such tiny square footage. For the amount of pride that the cashiers, the owners and everyone else have, you feel guilty for not being able to spend more money there."

Jared Scheeler, CEO of The Hub Convenience Stores Inc., a set of four stores located in Western North Dakota, is among the session panelists, and he will offer sage advice for even the smallest retailers. According to Scheeler, some single-store, independent operators "struggle to find the right resources and information" about product merchandising.

Niche products differentiate

Both McQuirter and Scheeler agree that small, independent operators can set themselves apart by carrying specialized products, such as those

sourced from local vendors or those that customers might not expect to see in a convenience store.

"We actually brought in a rack of sundresses to a truck-stop-style gas station, and we had to reorder them three times," Scheeler said.

Other products that have sold surprisingly well in Scheeler's stores include Angry Bird merchandise at the height of the craze about four years ago and high-demand solar eclipse glasses at the time of the 2017 event.

Don't know where to start? Scheeler suggests forming strong relationships with distributors and manufacturers. These partnerships provide good feedback on what's trending in your marketplace, what new products are on the horizon and what time- or event-based products might sell well at your store.

However, don't forget the little guys, McQuirter said.

"A lot of times, convenience stores look toward the same brands and vendors they always use for new product recommendations," he said. "Sometimes, they don't realize that the major brands are simply replicating whatever is stealing market share from their brand."

He suggests connecting with smaller, more localized vendors that can fulfill a particular category need but are doing it in a truly innovative way. For example, McQuirter's customers flock to his store in search of locally made, hard-to-find hot sauces. And, because his store also stocks organic foods, one product that continues to

fly off the shelf is the Louisville Vegan Jerky, despite its \$8 price tag.

Merchandising is a must

It's one thing to bring in niche products, but you have to merchandise it well. Otherwise, customers might never notice them.

"The way you display your products and merchandise in your store really can have a positive or negative effect on your customer," McQuirter said.

That means posting signage, creating promos and being intentional in where you place items. Putting kombucha tea near the antacids and aspirin, for instance, most likely will turn customers off from purchasing that item.

And, don't forget to equip your frontline employees with all of the information they need to help you move the new product in your stores. Scheeler integrates new product education into his extensive employee training program. For example, McQuirter invites employees to sample all of the products so they can form their own opinions about each item.

The bottom line

It takes time and effort to build an efficient sales strategy for new products. However, fostering brand loyalty among your customers is crucial for turning them into lifelong fans.

"It's tough to measure how impactful this strategy is," Scheeler said, "but I go on faith that because we're doing things differently and being purposeful, we're going to grow our business this way." ●

"If you want to create an experience your consumers are going to remember and make the effort to come back, you must put more effort and thought into what new items you offer, where you place them in your store and how you display them."

Lonnie McQuirter

Director of Operations, 36 Lyn Refuel Station



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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

2020

FEBRUARY

5-7

NACS Leadership Forum

Venue: Eden Roc
Miami Beach, Florida

MARCH

3-5

NACS Convenience Summit Asia

Venue: Waldorf Astoria
Bangkok
Bangkok, Thailand

10-12

NACS HR Forum

Venue: Westin Dallas
Downtown
Dallas, Texas

10-12

NACS Day on the Hill

Venue: Four Seasons Hotel
Washington, D.C.

APRIL

7-9

NACS State of the Industry Summit

Venue: Hyatt Regency
O'Hare
Chicago, Illinois

19-24

NACS Leadership for Success

Venue: Virginia Crossings
Hotel and Conference
Center
Richmond, Virginia

26-30

Conexus Annual Conference

Venue: Loews Ventana
Canyon Resort
Tucson, Arizona

JUNE

2-4

Convenience Summit Europe

Venue: Berlin Marriott
Hotel
Berlin, Germany

JULY

12-17

NACS Financial Leadership Program at Wharton

Venue: The Wharton
School at the University of
Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

19-24

NACS Marketing Leadership Program at Kellogg

Venue: Kellogg School
of Management at
Northwestern University
Evanston, Illinois

AUGUST

2-6

NACS Executive Leadership Program at Cornell

Venue: Dyson School at
Cornell University
Ithaca, New York

OCTOBER

11-14

NACS Show

Venue: Las Vegas
Convention Center
Las Vegas, Nevada

NOVEMBER

1-6

NACS Innovation Leadership Program at MIT

Venue: Sloan School
of Management at the
Massachusetts Institute of
Technology
Cambridge, Massachusetts

To be announced

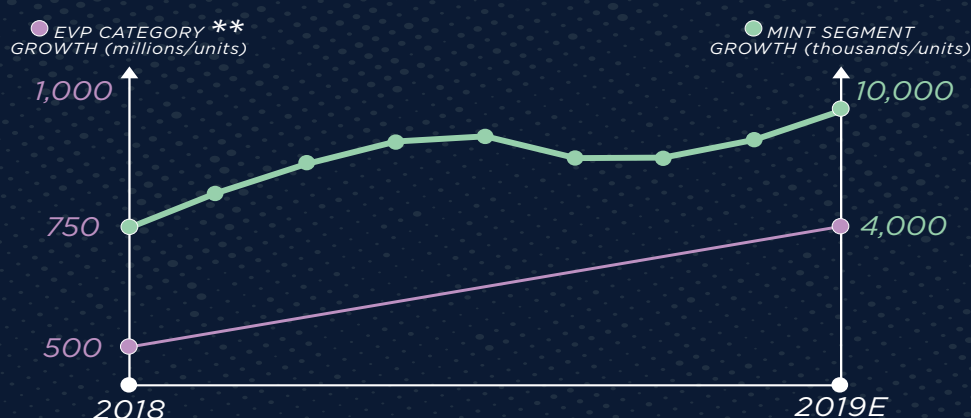
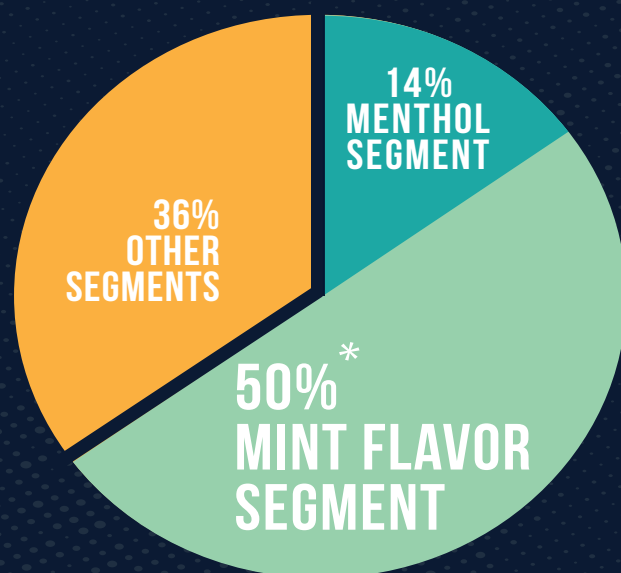
NACS Women's Leadership Program at Yale

Venue: Yale School of
Management at Yale
University
New Haven, Connecticut

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**Source: [Tobacco, Market]: Nielsen US Tobacco YoY rates for C-store channel (2013-2014) and all channel (2015-2017); UBS Global Tobacco Report 2017 YoY forecast (2018); Morgan Stanley Tobacco report (2018-2025 forecast); CDC 2017 unit tobacco sales; [EVP Market, 7-Eleven EVP]: MSAI Partnership Retail Database; [C-Stores sales]: Wells Fargo Convenience Stores Report. *7-Eleven 2016-2018 CAGR excludes 7-Eleven Horizon
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Good for Business

NACS retail membership provides tools to build business and profits.

As the premier association for advancing convenience and fuel retailing, NACS produces a variety of products to help retailers grow their businesses. And grow they have. The U.S. convenience store industry, with more than 153,000 stores nationwide selling fuel, food and merchandise, serves 160 million customers daily. That's half of the U.S. population.

Serving this many customers each day requires resources—lots of them. That's where a NACS retail membership can help. A NACS membership provides access to a wealth of industry information covering issues vital to the c-store business. NACS also provides cutting-edge data, training and education, as well as exclusive access to member-only events.

Jared Scheeler, owner of The Hub Convenience Stores Inc., began working in the c-store industry in his college days and knew early on that a NACS membership would be an important part of starting his own c-store business.

"I've been a NACS member for almost 20 years, and if it wasn't for

"My NACS membership has provided me with knowledge and resources that, as a small retailer, I otherwise wouldn't have. I utilize those best practices to fine-tune my business every day."

Jared Scheeler

Owner, The Hub Convenience Stores Inc.

NACS, I wouldn't be in the position I'm in today," said Scheeler. "My NACS membership has provided me with knowledge and resources that, as a small retailer, I otherwise wouldn't have. I utilize those best practices to fine-tune my business every day. In addition, NACS has taught me the importance of advocacy at the local, state and federal levels.

"There are so many things going on around us that affect our businesses, and it's imperative that we're part of that process. Perhaps most importantly, the amazing suite of NACS events, even beyond the NACS Show, have put me face-to-face with some of the brightest minds in the industry. I don't think I can ever put a value on what that high-level networking has done for myself and my

businesses," Scheeler added.

These are just a few of the specific benefits that come with NACS retail membership:

- **NACS Media:** The daily newsletter, monthly magazine and weekly podcasts help members to compete effectively by staying informed of potential threats, keeping abreast of new trends and evolving consumer tastes.
- **NACS State of the Industry Summit and Report:** These provide members with concrete data and insights that help them measure and improve their business by benchmarking their own metrics against others in the industry.
- **NACS Government Relations:** The team fights for members and

their businesses on Capitol Hill by advocating against potentially harmful regulations.

- **Payment Processing Program:** This helps members reduce one of their largest operating costs (credit card fees) by bundling them with other NACS members and creating processing efficiencies.

NACS membership also promotes meaningful networking and the exchange of ideas with others in the industry. You won't just rub elbows with the best in the business; you'll build lasting relationships that you can't find anywhere else.

"Through our ongoing engagement with the convenience retail community, whether through events like the NACS Show or member outreach efforts, our teams at NACS are able to develop and deliver tools and resources that help our members operate innovative and successful businesses," said Doug Spencer, director of products and services at NACS.

NACS retail membership is open to all types of convenience stores and petroleum marketing companies, from independent stores to large chains, both domestic and international. ●

Taking Shape

NACS president to introduce Ideas 2 Go video.

We're going behind the scenes to see how some of the convenience industry's best and brightest ideas take shape. Thursday's General Session will showcase emerging concepts that redefine convenience as spotlighted in the always popular Ideas 2 Go debut. NACS President and CEO Henry Armour will be onstage to introduce this fast-paced video tour of some of the most creative and potentially profitable ideas in the convenience and fuel retailing industry. Just before the debut of the video, Armour will address attendees with his view of the industry, its challenges and the exciting opportunities that await retailers.

For more than four decades, Ideas 2 Go has featured hundreds of interviews with convenience retailers from more than 40 states and four continents. The video program debuts to a packed crowd of attendees at the annual NACS Show. It offers quick takeaways retailers can implement at their own stores.

From frictionless store experiences to innovative foodservice offers, this year's stores are operating the convenience store of tomorrow. These videos showcase retailers that are the bright lights of the convenience and fuel retailing industry and are leading the way by staying ahead of the everchanging consumer landscape.

This year's Ideas 2 Go videos feature an outstanding array of retailers, including:

High's
Gambrills, Maryland

The Goods Mart
New York City

Alltown Fresh
Plymouth, Massachusetts

Russell's Xpress
Denver, Colorado

"New Retail"
Shanghai, China

Hy-Vee Fast & Fresh
Altoona, Iowa

Choice Market
Denver, Colorado



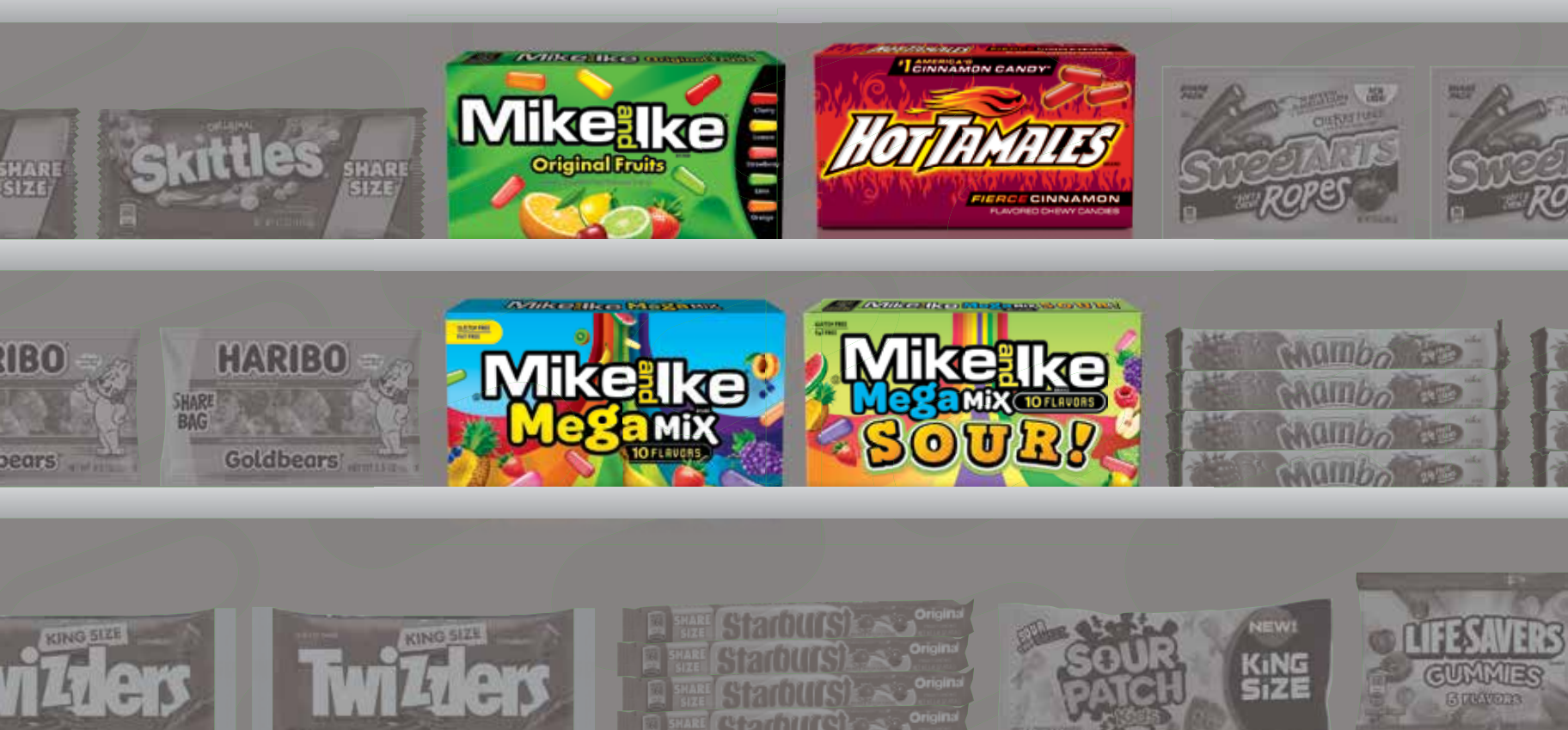
Good To Go Markets & Bullhead Pit Beef
Columbia, Maryland

7-Eleven
Denver, Colorado

Want to get inspired by the creativity of others? Check out the NACS archive of past Ideas 2 Go profiles by visiting www.convenience.org/Ideas2Go. ●

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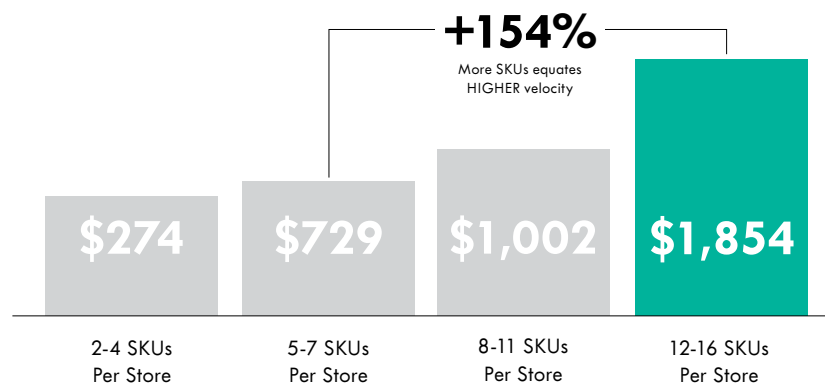


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Leveling the Field

NACS legislative efforts target flavored e-cigarette sale restrictions.

Amid the noise of Washington politics, NACS continues to speak up and weigh in on the sale of e-cigarettes in an effort to protect both teens and the legal rights of its member retailers.

According to NACS Director of Government Relations Anna Ready Blom, statements made by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in November of 2018 unfairly target convenience stores in the campaign to reduce teen vaping. In particular, then-FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb advocated for new restrictions to ban the sale of “fruity flavored” e-cigarettes in convenience stores only. While the ban is aimed at protecting teens, it hinders a convenience store’s ability to sell the products to adults. More importantly, she said, the restrictions are unfairly directed at convenience stores and do not extend to non-convenience store competitors.

“NACS also is alarmed by any teen using age-restricted products. But we want the ability to sell responsibly on a level playing field,”

Ready Blom said. “The data shows where the problem really exists, and it’s not in convenience stores.”

That data, she said, indicates that the largest sales of these products occur on the internet and in adult vape and tobacco shops. Convenience stores make up a very low percentage of sales. Restricting convenience stores from selling certain flavored e-cigarettes violates section 906 of the Tobacco Control Act, she said. That section states that there shall be no restrictions to prohibit the sales of any tobacco product in face-to-face transactions by a “specific category of retail outlets.”

“If it’s legal, we should have the opportunity to sell them,” Ready Blom said. “We keep them behind the counter, and we founded the We Card age verification training program to do ID checks before the customer gets the product.”

In fact, the national non-profit We Card Program Inc. serves the nation’s retailers of tobacco, alcohol, e-cigarettes, vapor products and other age-restricted products. Individual retail establishments as well as

large retail chains utilize We Card’s educational and training services for their compliance efforts with federal, state and local laws on preventing age-restricted product sales to minors.

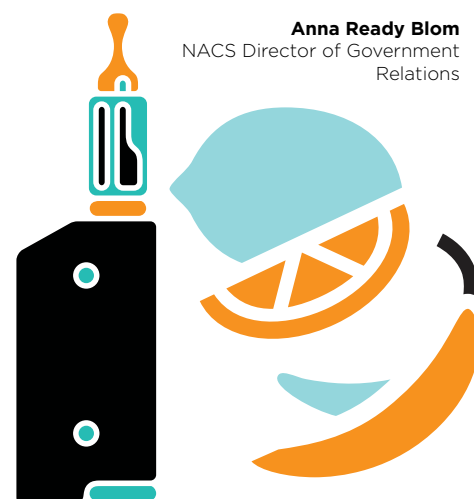
The FDA issued draft guidance on this issue, and NACS responded by submitting comments to the guidance. According to Ready Blom, the FDA is expected to issue its final ruling this fall.

“Why should retailers care about this? Because if you have a government agency telling a certain channel of trade that they can’t sell a product sold by their competitors, this could be the start of a dangerous precedent,” Ready Blom said. “It’s e-cigarettes today, but it could be another age-restricted product tomorrow. It could be any product tomorrow.”

Similarly, NACS is actively seeking c-store sponsors to support updating the Prevent All Cigarette Trafficking Act (PACT Act). The PACT Act became law in 2010 to curb internet sales of cigarettes—well before e-cigarettes entered the

“The data shows where the problem really exists, and it’s not in convenience stores.”

Anna Ready Blom
NACS Director of Government Relations



market. The update would include the sale of e-cigarettes. The legislation is currently in the hands of the Senate and House Judiciary Committees. NACS anticipates a resolution by the end of 2019. ●

FOR MORE INFO

Grab a copy of the **NACS Show On-site Guide** to find:

- Shuttle bus schedules, routes and boarding locations
- Sessions and speakers
- NACS Show expo map
- NACS Show exhibitors
- Product category listings
- CBD FAQs and exhibit floor information
- Information about NACS



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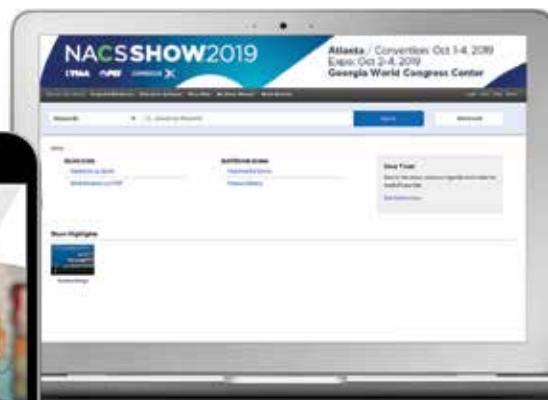
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Culture Change

Reshaping your workplace culture.

What leader doesn't dream of creating a positive workplace culture in which employees are happy, accountable and work together to provide extraordinary customer service that keeps your customers coming back?

Ultimately, company culture affects the bottom line. Every organization has a culture, good or bad. Tips and tools for improving your company culture are the focus of this morning's session, "Culture: Make Your Workplace a Great Place to Work." Joanne M. Loce, managing partner at Fortify Leadership Group, and Bob Huebner, president and founder of 200Mark Consulting, lead the session.

"Workplace culture is central to how things get done in any organization and how people interact with each other,"

said Loce. "From recruiting top talent to improving employee satisfaction to serving customers, it's the backbone of a happy workforce."

Every employee plays a role in fostering a positive workplace culture. The first step is understanding your current culture.

"If we want to have a customer-centric culture in which we treat customers well, we need to take actions that make them feel good and build up our community," Huebner said. "If my employees are rude to customers or talk about them negatively, then I'm accepting a culture that is not service-oriented."

Chances are you won't need to change your entire workplace culture.

Some aspects might already align with your vision and goals. Your organization may have lower-than-average turnover rates because your employees are happy, or they may carry a sense of pride for the work that is accomplished.

Find those areas that might not be serving your business and determine how you, as a leader, can exemplify that culture shift.

Thriving cultures have leadership support, company champions and people who believe in the mission.

And it goes beyond leadership. Leaders must set employee expectations and explain how the culture relates to them. Company culture reflects what your organization stands for, and your employees are key to its success.

Consider ongoing behavior-based

feedback, too, Loce said, through employee recognition programs. Recognizing your team's achievements is important, too. When you celebrate team successes, you boost the positive vibe in the workplace. This improves daily performance, the customer experience and the bottom line.

"Recognition doesn't have to be a monetary reward," Loce said. "Maybe it's a bulletin board in the employee room or within the store that shares how an employee exemplified the company values."

Ongoing positive feedback and coaching should become ingrained in your day-to-day work as a leader, Huebner said.

"Cultures don't change quickly," Huebner said. "After a while, the new way of operating the business becomes second nature." ●

"Culture: Make Your Workplace a Great Place to Work"
Thursday, October 3
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A411

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* Source: Better-For-You Snacks: The New Snacking Reality Study – April 2017; IRI, Total U.S. MULOc and Grocery



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TODAY at the NACS SHOW

7:30 am – 5:30 pm
Registration

8:00 am – 10:15 am
Education Sessions

8:00 am – 5:30 pm
Cool New Products
Preview Room
B401

9:15 am – 10:15 am
Super Session:
Zeynep Ton

10:30 am – 11:45 am
General Session
Featuring Henry Armour
and Ideas 2 Go

10:30 am – 5:30 pm
New Exhibitor Area
Hall B1

11:30 am – 5:30 pm
Expo

3:00 pm – 7:00 pm
International Club
(Invitation only)

Thursday Education Sessions

8:00 am – 9:00 am Negotiate Your Way to Better Relationships and Solutions A302

Improve your negotiations skills to build stronger relationships, develop more favorable outcomes and deliver better results. This session helps you develop negotiation skills and resolve issues for all parties involved.

Build Your Brand Strategy A312

An effective brand strategy gives you a major edge in our increasingly competitive market, but how do you develop one? Discover best practices around branding and branding store environments, and hear about one branding success story. You'll return to work with a plan to turbocharge your brand and your business.

EVs: Shifting from Fuel Provider to Energy Provider A314

Providing electric vehicle recharging service can be a daunting concept, but there are resources available to help you. Once you decide to make the move, what might you expect? What are the installation and operating costs? What other opportunities might arise?

Rigged Against Retailers: The Broken Payments Card System and Hope for Change A316

The U.S. payments system is broken and rigged against retailers. Dominated by major card brands, it lags behind the rest of the world in innovation and security. The United States leads the world in payments fraud, yet only represents 24% of the number of transactions. Is there hope for a healthy, competitive payments market?

Employee Coaching: The Value of Checking In A411

Coaching drives and inspires the great performance you want from employees while providing helpful feedback for things that should change. This session explores the value of checking in and discovering more frequent, meaningful conversations. Learn from two retailers putting these concepts into practice.

The NACS/Conexxus Technology Roadmap: 2019 Update A412

Technology is no longer a facet of retail, but a fact of retail. NACS and Conexxus have designed and curated a roadmap of essential and prospective technologies that high-performing retailers should include in their strategy. It explores relevant technologies of the future, how far away they are and the necessary support. This roadmap is a compilation of research from outside the industry designed to "see" 10 years ahead.

Cold Vault: Trends and Takeaways A305

The cold vault of 2019 is very different from the cold vault of 20 years ago. The exponential growth in alternative non-alcoholic beverages, craft beer and mixed alcoholic drinks offers category managers and customers infinite choices. In this session, Dr. Kim Cuellar shares trends and research to help you benchmark and develop ideas for your own cold vault. Experts from water, beer, energy and CBD beverage companies provide perspectives on their specific section of the cooler.

Leveraging Niche Brands to Grow Your Center Store Sales A402

Today, more than 40% of c-store visits are motivated by the consumers' search for center store products. IRI's Larry Levin, executive vice president of thought leadership, discusses the top performing products in the center store, ways to drive consumers there and case studies from retailers who have successfully adopted these practices.

8:00 am – 10:15 am Small Operator Workshop: One Way or Another, We're Going to Get You: Managing Store Shrink A408

RESERVATION REQUIRED. When questioned about store losses, the first response from most is shoplifting. In the convenience retail environment, several larger areas of loss contribute more toward lost profits. Learn how improved personnel practices, cash controls and implementation of store policies reduce shrink. Exercises include auditing procedures, vendor controls and how to identify shrink.

Small Operator Workshop: Not Just Another 'Promotion' Promotion A407

RESERVATION REQUIRED. Take control of your promotions away from your vendors. Learn skills to determine if vendor promotions are profitable. Participants will learn how to use vendor relationships to their advantage, five steps to market a promotion and ways to engage employees in the campaign.

9:15 am – 10:15 am First to Market: Getting New Product on Your Shelves A314

Convenience stores have long created channels for new products. Let's continue to be the first by improving and sharpening our processes. Join the discussion about best practices, from preparing stores for new products, communicating effectively, creating promotions and educating employees. Explore ways to refine processes and leverage networks to increase efficiencies in getting products into stores.

Making Money with Food Trucks A402

How do you make money with food trucks? Some use it to test concepts prior to rolling it out in their stores. Others use it to drive traffic. Three retailers share strategies and lessons learned on how they exploit their food trucks to generate profit.

Culture: Make Your Workplace a Great Place to Work A411

Leadership behaviors, management styles, workplace practices, company policies and employees work together to create your company culture. Learn how each individual plays a role in creating a great workplace to deliver amazing business results.

Super Session: The Good Jobs Strategy

SIDNEY MARCUS AUDITORIUM

The retail landscape has changed the past decade. Digital technologies are increasing demands on store operations, consumer preferences are shifting and wages are rising. Speaker Zeynep Ton address the topic with her Good Jobs Strategy to drive a capable and motivated workforce, satisfied and loyal customers and stellar financial performance.

Digitize the Impulse A412

The Coupon Bureau is a non-profit, industry-managed entity designed to connect all parties within the digital coupon ecosystem to a Universal Positive Offer File. Learn about a pilot between the bureau and Conexxus to bring together coupon/POS vendors and c-store retailers to confirm standards within the space.

10:00 am – 11:30 am Artificial Intelligence, Amazon Business & the Future of Distribution B312

Digital disruptors are invading the wholesale distribution industry. Amazon Business is leading the charge with cutting-edge technology skills, the world's largest marketplace and a vast, state-of-the-art logistics network. How will it wield these capabilities, what can we predict about its strategy and how should distributors respond?

New Tools for New Rules for New Fuels: Meeting Compatibility Requirements B309

Learn more about a key tool that identifies UL categories and standards for common fueling system components, fuel ratings and fuel compatibility.

Safety Focus on Four B310

The PEI Safety Committee covers four key safety topics, including barricading work zones, confined spaces, distracted driving and lockout/tagout.

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RAI TRADE MARKETING SERVICES BOOTH 1631

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Eat Up!

MCLANE COMPANY INC. BOOTH 2531

Stop by Booth 2531 to learn about McLane Company's latest technology innovations, enjoy samples of our tasty foodservice offerings, try candy and snack samples from Consumer Value Products, and enter for your chance to win an Apple Watch Series 5!



**Retailers only. No purchase necessary. Void where prohibited.*

Cloud 9

VERKADA BOOTH 437

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Serving Up Solutions

CMI SOLUTIONS INC. BOOTH 3341

CMI Solutions Inc., founding CONEXXUS member and leading provider of software applications for convenience store and wholesale fuel marketers, is pleased to announce the launch of PB3™ Food Service. Stop by Booth 3341 to see how CMI PB3 Food Service delivers recipe management, ingredient inventory control and true food costing.



away a Cornelius Nitro Machine stocked with Javo Coffee (retail value \$4,500). Enter to win at Javo Booth 8303 by having your badge scanned. Mention this promotion in the NACS Show Daily and receive an extra gift (while supplies last).

Packed!

MAYFLOWER DISTRIBUTING COMPANY BOOTH 420

Mayflower is a leading distributor of balloons, helium, party supplies and foodservice products. Stop by Booth 420 to pick up a travel bag and a coupon for 10% off your next order!



Drink Up!

JAVO BEVERAGE COMPANY INC. BOOTH 8303

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EDUCATION CUSTOMIZED FOR YOU

NACS has developed a series of segment audiences to guide your education session selection. Remember, your experience level will vary greatly depending on the topic.



LAUNCHERS

are looking to dip their toe into new waters, desiring to master the basics within a topic.



EXPERIMENTERS

are still in testing mode but looking to set their company apart within a given area.



TRANSFORMERS

are focusing on developing and implementing more complex processes, standards and consistency.



INFLUENCERS

are looking to build resources for big moves. They are innovators and risk-takers within a given topic.

WE CAN



..... *Chuck Norris*

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sessions and
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excitement and
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