



# GHRA In Action

OUR MEMBERS ARE OUR MISSION! VOL. 8 | AUGUST 2021

**Cleanliness, Sanitation Key to  
C-Store Foodservice Success**

**New Texas Law:  
Beer & Wine**

*Now Is the Right Time  
to Do a Safety Audit*





# Welcome Back!

We lost the year 2020 fighting the pandemic of COVID-19, but our members continued to take the risk and served the community by opening their doors daily. Our suppliers also continued to work hard to make sure each store order was being fulfilled.

To our Heroes, our Members, Suppliers, and all essential workers, we are excited to meet each of you at our in-person Tradeshow this year! Hope to see you!

**When: Wednesday, Oct. 27, 2021**

**Where: NRG Center**

**Member registration begins September 2021  
Stay tuned for more details!**

[ghratradeshow.com](http://ghratradeshow.com)



# A NOTE FROM THE CEO

BRIAN TROUT, CEO

Greetings GHRA Members,

I am delighted to share with you my first two months with GHRA have been extremely active and exciting. I have been learning much about our members and the organization, getting familiar with the warehouse operation, and getting to know the vendor partners that support GHRA. Plans for the trade show in October are progressing and I have been going through a systematic review of our various operational areas and working with the Board of Directors to progress a 5-year strategic plan. More to come on this once the review is completed.

Summer is here and the store traffic is picking up. All the store cooler resets have been completed, and work is ongoing to address the opportunities in the supply chain with product supply, distribution, and deliveries so that each of you have the product you need to serve your customers. There have been disruptions with product availability and deliveries have been delayed or completely missed by some of our vendors and I know the frustration and angst you feel is real and justified. We have been and will continue to be in constant communication with our vendors and suppliers so we can understand and anticipate issues that arise and adjust accordingly.

It has been our pleasure to serve all of you and we want you to know that we value your business. As we continue to work to meet your needs and address your concerns, we appreciate your support during these challenging times.

I would like to take a moment and ask for your help in a sensitive matter. The GHRA office and warehouse staff have received calls from some members and/or store employees using abusive language and speaking unprofessionally to them over the phone. Please keep in mind every employee of GHRA is committed to helping you and wants to solve your issues. No one wants to be yelled and cursed at over the phone, so I am asking that we all please refrain from using abusive language towards any employee.

Thank you for your time and attention. Wishing you all great success and prosperity,

*Brian Trout*

OUR MEMBERS ARE OUR MISSION!

# Let's Stay Connected

GHRA would like to introduce ways of being informed about all the current events and information around YOU!

## BUSINESS EVENTS PAGE

Know the latest events on our website! The business events page is designed to keep you informed about upcoming events.

- Go to GHRAONLINE.COM
- Click on the MEMBERS tab.
- Select BUSINESS EVENTS on the dropdown menu



## GHRA IN ACTION WEEKLY IN THE LOOP



IN THE LOOP is a platform to communicate all-important corporate business updates weekly at the beginning of the week via email. *\*available on website as well.*

## GHRA WAREHOUSE IN ACTION WEEKLY THEBOTTOMLINE



GHRA Warehouse brings you an updated version of the GHRA Weekly Update now called TheBottomLine. The same weekly information will be provided - with a new look!

## GHRA MEMBER PORTAL

Log in today and access all important information in the same spot like the few items listed here.

- Supplier Contact List
- Monthly Price List
- Monthly Magazine
- Warehouse Invoices
- Rebate Details & much more



GHRAONLINE.COM

# Cleanliness, Sanitization Key to C-Store Foodservice Success

By CSP Daily News



**Convenience-store retailers have long understood that cleanliness throughout the store is important to the success of their foodservice operations, which have become an important driver of traffic and sales.**

The COVID-19 pandemic further heightened consumer and employee awareness around cleanliness in retail and foodservice environments, however. Shoppers now more than ever expect stores to be clean, sanitized and disinfected, and they expect to see evidence that workers are actively cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting, especially in foodservice areas.

Visual cues such as employees wearing masks and visibly cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting surfaces have been critical for making consumers feel safer visiting restaurants, according to Technomic's recent *Safety and Sanitation Reigns, Sustainability Returns* report. The report notes that consumers indicate that they want these overt cleaning measures to remain in place following the pandemic.

In fact, consumers indicate they are willing to spend twice as much at restaurants that meet cleanliness standards than at those that do not, according to *The New Normal for Restaurants* study released this year from global strategy

and marketing consulting firm Simon-Kucher & Partners and Lucid, a programmatic research technology company.

"Sanitization standards, which did not rank highly prior to the pandemic, remain a top purchase criteria, suggesting this value driver is here to stay as a result of COVID-19," the report says. "The most important sanitization practices center around employee cleaning processes: hand sanitizer for employees, employee handwashing, and surface cleaning frequency."

In the convenience retailing environment, germs can easily spread from high-touch surfaces such as gas pump handles, rest room facilities, door fixtures and other surfaces into foodservice areas.

Many convenience retailers have stepped up their cleaning and sanitization regimens during the pandemic, while customers themselves have responded to their own concerns about cleanliness by carrying personal bottles of sanitizer or wipes.

Operators can give these customers confidence in the cleanliness and safety of the store environment by having their staff wipe down high-contact areas, including foodservice areas, with PURELL® Foodservice Surface Sanitizing Wipes. These convenient, ready-to-use wipes, from a brand consumers know and trust, allow workers to easily and efficiently sanitize surfaces throughout the store, killing both viruses and bacteria.

PURELL® Foodservice Surface Sanitizing Wipes kill coronavirus in 30 seconds, and are also effective against salmonella, listeria, cold, flu and norovirus.

They are fragrance-free, safe for food contact, FDA Food Code-compliant and registered with the Environmental Protection Agency. PURELL® Foodservice Surface Sanitizing Wipes also require no rinsing or handwashing after use and are an easy way for staff to manage sanitation needs without the hassle of mixing chemicals with traditional dilution systems.

Making cleaning and sanitation easy for workers not only makes their jobs easier, but also helps give them the confidence that their employers are as concerned about their health and safety as much as they are about the health and safety of customers. At a time when many operators are doing everything, they can to attract both qualified workers and bring customers back into the store, having convenient, highly visible systems in place for cleaning and sanitation can play a big role. ■



# Now Is the Right Time to Do a Safety Audit

By *ReadyConvenience.com*

Did you know that a worker is injured on the job every seven seconds? That adds up to 4.64 million workplace injuries in the United States each year, according to the National Safety Council. Research also suggests that almost all these injuries are preventable. Conducting a safety audit is a proactive step you can take to reduce the risk of accidents at your convenience store.

## WHEN TO CONDUCT SAFETY AUDITS

Ideally, you should do comprehensive workplace safety audits semi-annually or annually. More focused audits may be triggered by specific events. For example, you may want to audit your procedures for severe weather preparedness, heat illness prevention, and cold stress prevention as the seasons change. Most companies also audit certain procedures after an accident occurs.

## HOW TO CONDUCT SAFETY AUDITS

Effective safety audits should be a combination of both formal and informal reviews of safety practices at your store. Evaluate your accident record to determine what hazards put your employees most at risk. Take a look at the revision dates on your safety policies and procedures. Even if a policy seems to be effective, you should still review it regularly to make sure it meets the latest compliance regulations and industry standards. Involve your staff in the audit process. Ask employees for honest feedback about

what tasks feel the most risky or when they may have had or seen close calls where accidents were narrowly avoided. Conducting a safety audit is about your employees' well-being, so involving them in the process just makes sense.

## WHAT TO DO AFTER A SAFETY AUDIT

If your workplace safety audit finds issues, take action immediately. Train your staff on the basics of workplace safety as well as the specific problem areas the audit uncovered. Even if your audit finds no safety issues, don't think you're off the hook. Safety training must be a consistent part of your convenience store training program. Start with online training, then follow up with on-the-job training and regular refresher training. A blended approach is always more effective than employees just attending a training meeting or completing a course online. Always be on the lookout for behavior related to workplace safety. Recognize and reward your staff for safe practices, and coach employees when you see something unsafe. ■



# New Texas Law: *Beer & Wine*

By Steve Koebele – Attorney & Government Relations Counsel

**Austin, Texas – Time to get ready for increasing sales of beer and wine on Sundays in Texas. As a brand-new law as of Sunday, September 5, off-premise permit retailers may sell wine, beer, ale, and malt liquor beginning at 10:00 am on Sundays. The long-standing prior law allowed beer and wine sales beginning at 12:00 Noon on Sundays.**



During recent years, stakeholders communicated to legislators that it is inconsistent to allow people to drink a mimosa (champagne with orange juice) at a country club before Noon on Sundays, but prohibit buying beer until after 12:00 Noon. Moreover, Texas is officially Football Country! NFL football games begin in-person and on television at 12:00 Noon on Sundays. Constituents of state legislators increasingly expressed frustration that they cannot efficiently buy some beer just prior to the beginning of the football game. The legislators who opposed moving the Sunday sales hours simply voted against the legislation, but did not engage in a big fight to prevent successful passage of the bill. Of note, in-store liquor sales are still prohibited on Sundays. So, you can anticipate and prepare for increasing customer purchases of wine and beer beginning at 10:00 am on Sundays as of Sunday, September 5.

Other positive changes in the law will help your business operations. For example, in the wake of the virus pandemic that first hit Texas during 2020, this year the legislature created retroactive civil liability protections for all businesses, religious institutions, non-profit entities, healthcare providers, first responders, and educational institutions. GHRA stores should not be a target for costly lawsuits from a plaintiff claiming healthcare injuries from exposure to virus in a C-store. So, the bill (SB 6) delivers more certain legal protections and makes it more difficult to sue Texas businesses for pandemic-related injury or death claims. ■

# A Keen Understanding of Gen Z Is Critical for Businesses Seeking Growth

This generation values discovery, authenticity, and connection.

By Convenience Store News, CSNEWS.com



CHICAGO — Generation Z is a new, powerful generation of shoppers that currently accounts for 20 percent of all U.S. consumers and \$143 billion of direct buying power.

To help marketers prepare to win with this cohort, IRI teamed with The Female Quotient, an organization advancing equality in the workplace through cross-industry collaboration, to publish “Understand Me, Don’t Define Me,” a new white paper with insights and recommendations.

“Gen Z presents tremendous opportunities for brands and retailers, but these digitally native, fiercely independent consumers approach shopping with very different expectations than prior generations,” said Lynne Gillis, principal, survey and segmentation practice, IRI. “Gen Z expects brands to be authentic and understand them as unique individuals to earn their dollars. It’s a challenge to build loyalty among a generation whose digital prowess enables them to constantly discover and experiment, and who value the freedom to continually reinvent themselves. To win, brands must understand Gen Z’s fluid needs and motivations, develop authentic, purpose-driven brand messages and prioritize connecting with shoppers on the

digital platforms — like TikTok, Snap and YouTube — that most influence them.”

The white paper includes specific insights from an in-depth study of the performance of eight New Product Pacesetter brands among Gen Z versus other generations, based on IRI purchase data and supported by a robust quantitative survey.

“Across the brand we examined, those that connect with Gen Z drive, on average, 14 times greater dollar growth opportunity than that seen for other generations, underscoring how critical a keen understanding of Gen Z is for businesses seeking growth,” added Jennifer Pelino, executive vice president, IRI Media Center of Excellence. “Our study leveraged IRI’s unparalleled, omnichannel purchase data assets alongside research from our partners at The Female Quotient and Influential, because mixing qualitative and quantitative data is key to gleaning actionable insights about a population that does not want to be defined.”

## KEY HIGHLIGHTS FOR MARKETERS INCLUDE:

**Think Discovery, Not Loyalty** — Discovery has an outsized role in shaping Gen Z’s brand and shopping experiences as they begin their lifetime journey of shopping. Marketers who are sensitive to the enjoyment that stems from the process of discovery are more likely to capture their attention, as more than half of Gen Zers say they love to try different brands, compared to just 35 percent who say they are brand loyal and when they find something they like, they stick with it.

**Connections and Influences** — Connecting through social media and sharing product discoveries is a powerful part of this generation’s path to purchase. Fifty-nine percent of Gen Z shoppers say organic recommendations from family and friends are more likely to influence an actual purchase than any other way that they may learn about a product or brand.

**Gender in Marketing** — Representations of gender have a minimal impact in driving choice for Gen Z shoppers, as just 13 percent of female-presenting Gen Z respondents aged 17-23 said that, everything else being equal, they would buy a gender-neutral product over a gender-specific product. Qualitatively, Gen Z respondents consistently said that a focus on gender neutrality or fluidity, unless authentically a part of the brand’s essence, would not resonate with them in a way that drove purchasing.

“Our research shows overwhelmingly that Gen Z is looking for brands that take the time to get to know them, and embrace the continuous evolution in their preferences,” said Janis Gilman, head of research at The Female Quotient. “In continuing our research — both qualitative and quantitative, in partnership with IRI — we can enable brands to anticipate, respond to, and innovate on the needs of this powerful new generation, while serving our mission of promoting equality and authentic change that Gen Z so deeply embraces.” ■

# Convenience Retailers & Suppliers Say Supply Disruptions May Continue Throughout 2021

By CSNews.com

**Beverages were particularly a challenge for operators, who reported disruptions to packaged drinks and beer.**

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — Supply chain product procurement was a major challenge for convenience stores and their supplier partners during the second quarter of 2021, and the struggle is expected to continue through the rest of the year.

Two in five convenience retailers (39 percent) said there were “significant” levels of disruption across the supply chain during the second quarter of 2021 and 86 percent reported that at least 10 percent of their orders were disrupted, according to two new surveys from NACS.

During Q2, beverages were particularly a challenge for convenience retailers, who reported supply disruptions to packaged beverages (72 percent) and beer (67 percent). Additionally, two in five suppliers (38 percent) said they faced “significant” levels of disruption for materials necessary to create their products.

Supply chain disruptions also extended to equipment, with 79 percent of retailers experiencing delays with store equipment and hardware deliveries. Because of supply chain delays, 41 percent postponed store equipment orders or new store construction/remodel projects.

Confidence among convenience retailers and suppliers that improvements are coming is low: Only 25 percent of retailers and 27 percent of suppliers are confident that supply disruptions will improve in the second half of the year.

Compounded by inventory challenges, three in four retailers (76 percent) said it was difficult to fill available positions. Only 2 percent of survey respondents said they did not face hiring challenges.

However, despite the challenges, in-store sales have rebounded to pre-pandemic levels at convenience stores, according to NACS CSX sales data ending April 2021. Fuel sales also have largely recovered. Finished gasoline supplied, which is tracked by the U.S. Energy Information Administration and is a proxy for supply, is only 1.8 percent lower the last two weeks of June 2021 than the same period in 2019.

Another positive to come out of the disruptions throughout the supply channel is the heightened level of collaboration



between convenience retailers and their suppliers. Sixty-six percent of supplier companies noted that their overall relationship with convenience retailers is better than a year ago and 44 percent said their level of partnership and collaboration with the convenience retailing channel is better than other channels.

“Our industry’s resilience has been on display throughout the pandemic and is even more apparent now as the economy continues to bounce back,” said NACS Chairman Kevin Smartt, who operates 48 TXB and Kwik Chek stores across Texas and Oklahoma. “The value of convenience has never been higher, and the innovation within our channel to continually reinvent convenience to benefit our 165 million daily customers astonishes me. I look forward to a strong rest of 2021 and beyond.”

The NACS Retailer and Supplier Member Pulse Surveys were conducted in June 2021 by NACS Research. Overall, 56 retailer members, representing a cumulative 1,497 stores, and 83 supplier member companies participated in the survey.

Based in Alexandria, NACS advances the role of convenience stores as positive economic, social and philanthropic contributors to the communities they serve and is a trusted advisor to more than 1,500 retailer and 1,500 supplier members from more than 50 countries. ■

# WE'RE HIRING

## Think Outside the Help Wanted Box

By *ReadyConvenience.com*

Need employees? Who doesn't these days? With today's labor market, competition for good employees is just as fierce as competition for loyal customers. To fill the open positions at your store, you have to go beyond the traditional "help wanted" system. Keep reading for some different ideas on convenience store employee recruitment.

### STEP UP YOUR REFERRAL INCENTIVES

If you don't offer an incentive for employees who refer people for open positions, start one. If you do offer one, but it's not producing results, re-think it. The most common incentive is cash for an employee who refers someone who is hired and then stays for over three months or so. That can be an effective tool in employee recruitment, but it usually gets stale fairly quickly. Consider non-cash incentives, such as a preferred schedule or a comp day. Employees aren't the only source for employment referrals. Give your business card to vendors, customers, and people in other industries who provide you with exceptional customer service. You never know who might be looking for a job or know someone who is.

### CATCH THE BOOMERANGS

With turnover so high in the convenience store industry, you probably have a long list of previous employees who left your store to pursue other opportunities. Use this list as an employee recruitment tool. Keep in touch with employees who left on good terms and who you'd like to have back on your team. They may have found that the grass isn't greener wherever they went and would prefer working for someone who appreciates them enough to think about them for open positions.

### DEVELOP AN INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

A job in the convenience store industry has a lot to offer to students. Reach out to high schools, community colleges, and universities in your area to find out how you can offer paid internships where students earn a wage and get credit for their time at your store. If you recruit through internships, make sure your interns have opportunities to learn about various aspects of your business, such as merchandising, supply chain, loss prevention, and logistics.

### TOOT YOUR OWN HORN

What do you offer that other employers don't? Effective employee recruitment is about selling yourself. Offering higher pay isn't the only way to attract new employees. What can be equally appealing are things like a productive work environment, a robust employee training program, career opportunities, flexibility for family, or even the simple feeling of being part of a team.

### GET INVOLVED WHERE YOUR EMPLOYEES LIVE

A little community service goes a long way. Many business owners and managers tend to focus their community service in their immediate area, but it could help your employee recruitment efforts to fill needs where your employees live, not just where your customers live. Survey your current employees about needs in their neighborhoods, churches, and schools. Fill the need as best you can and spread the word about employment opportunities while you're at it. ■

# 5 Convenience and Fuel Trends to Watch in 2021

By Convenience Store News, CSNEWS.com

Contactless shopping options will remain mainstays, while convenience retailers should emphasize prepared foodservice.



ATLANTA — Visits to convenience stores have changed significantly, impacted by safety concerns, EMV payment rules, vehicle types, fuel offers and more.

According to data from NACS, the number of convenience store transactions decreased 13.9 percent in 2020, while industry inside sales increased 1.5 percent as customers visited local convenience stores for daily shopping needs.

Despite the struggles fuel battled in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with the summer of 2021 in full swing, more than 47.7 million Americans took to the nation's roadways and skies this Independence Day (July 1-5), AAA reported.

NCR Corp., a software- and services-led enterprise provider in the financial, retail and hospitality industries, shared insights on the convenience retail industry and what technology trends are expected to play out over the rest of the year and beyond:

## 1. CONTACTLESS REMAINS KING

Contactless payments, self-checkout and curbside pickup will remain mainstays in 2021. With COVID-19 accelerating c-stores' adoption of many types of technologies and practices that reduced contact between store employees and customers, consumers have liked and become accustomed to the convenience of these practices so much that many retailers will extend these capabilities in 2021 and beyond.

## 2. NON-COMPLIANCE INCREASES THE CHANCE OF FRAUD

As of April, retailers — rather than credit card providers — became liable for any card fraud committed at fuel pumps that do not accept EMV payments. Even so, a significant portion of fuel industry retailers still have not

upgraded their pumps to be compliant with the new rules, leaving them open to potential financial loss if their locations are compromised by fraudsters.

Fuel retailers in areas that have traditionally experienced significant card scams and fraud at the pumps are more likely to have made the expensive but necessary enhancements to their pumps. Retailers in traditionally lower-fraud areas have likely been slower to roll out new pumps. Rather, they have chosen to spend money on other upgrades, such as ways to improve customer experience.

## 3. FOODSERVICE INCREASES IN C-STORES

According to NACS, 58 percent of c-stores plan to emphasize prepared foodservice, while 51 percent will focus on fresh prepared meals. Adding food can make convenience stores more than just a necessary stop: It can make the store a destination, particularly for consumers who've become accustomed to cutting down on shopping trips this past year, NCR said.

## 4. CAPITALIZING ON ELECTRIC VEHICLES

With just 100,000 charging plugs at approximately 41,000 public stations, c-stores will be considering adding them to their forecourts to cater to more drivers and to increase sales inside stores.

According to NCR, convenience retailers that also offer fuel could do well expanding into electric charging. Because charging a car takes more time than fueling one, savvy retailers will entice drivers into the store while they charge their vehicle. If that average charge takes roughly 30 minutes, consumers will be drawn to locations that offer enough entertainment and shopping to occupy their time.

However, c-store operators should also keep an eye out for connected car technology that allows drivers to make pump payments from inside their vehicle.

## 5. DELIVERY KEEPS DELIVERING

C-stores were increasingly adopting third-party delivery services before the coronavirus, but the global pandemic propelled its growth even more. Many convenience brands offset declining fuel sales through services things like digital ordering and delivery and will continue to look to quicker delivery services as another way to serve customers and improve sales.

"Consumers have become accustomed to popular services like curbside, delivery, contactless and better foodservice options that c-stores increasingly offer. They'll no doubt expect these trends to continue in 2021 and beyond," said Paul Kern, executive director of product management for NCR. "The more sophisticated retailers are really paying attention to customers' purchasing patterns and how they interact with store employees. The next step is figuring out how to get to know those consumers even better, so retailers can add more value, sell more and keep consumers coming back." NCR is based in Atlanta. ■



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