SPRING INTO SUMMER!

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2019 - 2020

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First, I would like to thank everyone for attending the Annual General Body Meeting last month. In everything we do, our company thrives on its members participation and your input and feedback is greatly appreciated. I want to thank all of the company’s board of directors for their contribution and wish those board members who are leaving the board this year great success. Their voluntary commitment to this company continues to inspire me! I look forward to working with the newly elected board members and implementing some of the great ideas you all have undoubtedly entrusted to them. A special thank you to Shahinda Maredia for her work in coordinating the event and making it such a success.

As the spring selling season is upon us, it behooves us to stay prepared. We anticipate sales to be very good this year. Your warehouse and distribution center is ready for you to stock up your store and stay in stock throughout the selling season! Your support during the first quarter has been strong. Our first quarter DSD programming is doing exceptionally well while our warehouse and distribution center continued to see solid sales growth in Q1. Thank you for your continued support of the programming GHRA works so hard on to deliver to its members.

Lastly, the 7th Annual Greater Houston Retailers Charitable Foundation Golf Tournament (GHRCF) will be held at Sweetwater Country Club on April 22nd. I encourage every GHRA member to participate as this is just one of the ways we can give back to the Houston area community that provides so much to our businesses and families. This event has become a premier golf event in Houston and is the largest fundraiser for the GHRCF. Registration can be done online at https://www.ghrcf.org. Members are our mission! Thank you for your business.

The following is a paid advertisement

**Fundraising Event - Registration is required to participate**
THANK YOU for coming out and joining the 3rd Warehouse Anniversary Celebration

Express Food Stop #5
Salim Satyani

A M Mini Mart #23
Zeeshan Ali

Aldine Food Mart
Karim Ali

Kwik Check Drive In Grocery
Asmita Karowalia

Holland Grocery
Ali Merchant

Congratulations to the all the $200 Warehouse Credit Raffle Winners!

Special Raffle - MacBook Pro Winner

Handi Stop #21
Aslam Ali
Spring Into Summer!

By Debbie Briese, GHRA Procurement & Marketing Manager

RIGHT NOW is the time to get stores in great shape before the high traffic of summer begins.

To make this project manageable, concentrate on one category/section each day. Stand in front of each category/section in your store and fix what you find that is not “right”...

1. **Right Merchandise** – Your store is full of products. But, are they the RIGHT products? Does your store include the top selling items that customers are looking for? Are the newest flavors offered? Keep close to the GHRA warehouse for the newest products!

2. **Right Place** - Maximize sales with the right placement on the sales floor. Snacks and candy should be on the path to the cooler to add to the sale of a cold beverage. Shippers and displays can be cross-merchandised with common “go-together” items (example: Salty Snacks with Beer display, charcoal with foam ice chests, etc).

3. **Right Time** – Be sure you have the right product for the season. Summertime product needs include Suncare, toys, water, snacks, and outdoor grilling items. The summer provides a good opportunity for impulse sales – but consumers can’t buy it if you don’t have it! GHRA has a number of “Seasonal” Merchandising products for you to carry.

4. **Right Quantity** – Be sure quantities are sufficient on high-demand items as well items with above average margin so you won’t miss a sale or the chance to increase profit.

5. **Right Condition** – Product packaging should be clean, in date, and front faced.

6. **Right Price** – Be sure that a price (tag or sticker) is on every item. Promo signage should be in place for all items being featured for the month.

The GHRA warehouse is excited to announce the introduction of planograms. Planograms are being built for all product categories stocked at the warehouse. The planograms will be available on the GHRA Member Portal. The first planogram features a new category for the GHRA Warehouse! The Deli planogram includes a great assortment of lunchmeat, cheeses, and protein snack items which have become very popular.

GHRA is on track for another very successful summer. Your warehouse and distribution center is quickly creating new and competitive programs and offerings to generate a great summer selling season!

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**The following is a paid advertisement**

![Saman Distributors LLC](https://example.com/saman-distributors.png)

Please contact Saman Distributors LLC for your snack and candy needs at (323) 786-7865
Retail Foodservice Is Powered by Protein

By Jennifer Strailey

Retail foodservice—one of the food industry’s fastest-growing segments—is booming, as evidenced by its whopping $34 billion sales estimate by Winsight Grocery Business’ sister research company, Technomic Inc., which finds proteins increasingly playing a larger role in rising sales.

“Consumers want more protein in their diets,” says Megan Speas, foodservice marketing lead for Cargill Protein in Wichita, Kan., a processor of beef, poultry, value-added meats and egg products to foodservice companies and retailers. According to Cargill’s Power of Protein research study, 7 out of 10 consumers are making high-protein food and beverages a part of their diet and 40% of the protein they choose is animal. The independent research was conducted by Reach Brand Strategy to provide insight on protein market trends.

“We see themes emerging around how and when consumers are eating proteins, and which ones they prefer,” Speas says. Everything from snacks as meals to real food with transparency and authenticity and a growing demand for unique eating experiences/global cuisine is shaping the types of protein menu items that consumers seek from the supermarket deli. “While most consumers are not particularly focused on the specific quantities of protein, providing protein volume information on menus is welcomed by most.”

While beef is the top protein in foodservice and accounts for about a third of fresh meat and poultry volume in retail, it represents just more than 5% of volume for retail foodservice, according to Technomic, which says beef is an untapped market: Its data finds 69% of the most frequent prepared foods shoppers hankering for more beef on the menu.

Grocers and suppliers alike have awakened to the tremendous potential for foodservice sales at breakfast time and beyond. Offering tasty proteins that consumers can eat on the go, from egg and sausage tacos to protein-packed breakfast burritos, is critical to success.

“Breakfast continues to be an area of growth and innovation in foodservice, with almost half (46%) of consumers enjoying breakfast foods outside of the breakfast daypart,” Speas of Cargill says. “In addition, breakfast is a stable part of our routine. On average, consumers eat breakfast 301 days per year.”

When it comes to weekday breakfast, Cargill finds that habit and convenience drive most consumers. However, younger consumers (ages 18-34) are more willing to try new locations.

“Taste of the food and convenience of location are the top motivators for consumers when they are selecting an away-from-home location for breakfast,” says Speas, pointing out that 33% “eat their weekday breakfasts in transit.”

Of the reasons cited, “healthy” doesn’t make the list. “We’ve seen a decline in consumers looking for ‘healthy options’ from retail foodservice menus,” says Byrne of Technomic. The amount of consumers seeking healthy options from prepared foods has dropped from 36% to 33% in the past three years.

“With the steadying of the economy and a nearly full employment rate, what happens is that people start indulging,” Byrne says. “Taste and flavor is on the rise, whereas healthy options are less important drivers.”

• Convenience—quick and easy option: 76%
• Taste and flavor: 46%
• Don’t want to take the time to do at home: 33%
• Variety, something different: 30%
• Quality and value of the products: 19%

Big Madre Tacos y Tortas only makes sense for you to cash in on this growing trend. People are eating in Convenience stores more and more, mainly for the convenience. But Big Madre Tacos y Tortas gives them the best of both worlds; Quality Product plus the Convenience. Talk about a WIN!

To get started email or call:
Doug Boone
GHRA Food Service Manager
dboone@ghraonline.com
281-295-5300
EDI Expansion at GHRA

EDI helps you save time and money, and improves the timeliness and accuracy of your pricing and purchasing. The GHRA Warehouse, in addition to several of our supplier partners, have been sharing invoices electronically with Members for some time now.

GHRA is happy to announce that testing is now complete for EDI with Pepsi. You will receive your Pepsi delivery notification electronically from GHRA (through the email on file at the GHRA Warehouse). Contact GHRA Warehouse Customer Service to update your email if you are not receiving your Pepsi delivery notification electronically.

The IT team continues to work with Frito-Lay, Coca-Cola, and Dr Pepper to on board them to our EDI process. Once finalized, your purchases will be communicated electronically.

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We Serve You Better
Soft Skills Training Every C-Store Employee Needs

By Ready Convenience

An effective convenience store training program covers a lot of ground. Your employees obviously need to be trained on equipment specific to your business, compliance topics such as age-restricted sales, and safety issues such as robbery and skimming prevention. These are all examples of hard skills that employees must master to help keep your business running. They’re important, for sure, but they aren’t all-inclusive. For employees to implement those hard skills in conjunction with taking care of customers and working with their teammates, they also need a strong soft skills training foundation.

Top 10 List of Soft Skills for Employees

Soft skills are sometimes referred to as “people skills” or “interpersonal skills.” These skills relate to how employees handle interactions with others, rather than with a machine or a process. Soft skills training can often be challenging because it must teach subjective skills such as flexibility, judgment, and temperament. To improve the collective soft skills of your staff, make sure you’re training on these top 10 soft skills topics:

#10 – Situational awareness. A cool buzzword for paying attention to your surroundings, situational awareness is important for convenience store employees because it enhances safety and tunes employee into customer needs.

#9 – Attention to detail. When employees are trained to pay attention to details, they are more likely to follow procedures methodically and complete their tasks thoroughly.

#8 – Flexibility. Being flexible may seem contrary to being methodical, but it doesn’t have to be. Teach your employees how to adapt to changing circumstances within the boundaries of your policies and procedures.

#7 – Active listening. As a leader, your communication style should be one in which you listen more than you speak. Teach your employees active listening skills as well. This will lead to more questions, two-way communication, and a deeper understanding of each other.

#6 – Time management. Convenience store employees have to juggle shift-specific tasks along with taking care of the needs of customers. To do this, they need time management skills in organizing, prioritizing, and multi-tasking.

#5 – Problem-solving. There’s no shortage of problems that come up in convenience stores. Employees may face problems with customers, teammates, vendors, or managers. Teaching employees a problem-solving strategy they can apply to many different situations will help them keep small problems from becoming big ones.

#4 – Product knowledge. Knowing the ins and outs of your product offerings may seem like a hard skill rather than a soft skill. However, answering customer questions, recommending complementary products, and fitting customers’ needs to the right products are all soft skills that you must teach.

#3 – Sensitivity. For the sake of your business, your team, and your customers, you must make sure you cover issues of diversity, sensitivity, and productive work environment as part of your soft skills training program.

#2 – Collaboration. Convenience store teams must work together toward common team goals. This requires collaboration, a soft skill that may not come naturally to all your employees. Even lone wolves can learn how to run with a pack, you just have to show them the benefits of teamwork.

#1 – Customer service. The number one soft skill for convenience store employees is customer service. All the soft skills in the list before this one relate to how employees handle interactions with customers, both positive and negative. It all comes down to exceeding customer expectations, and you can’t accomplish that without soft skills.
Convenience Store Security Mistakes to Avoid

Adapted from: Total Security Solutions

As a business owner of a convenience store or gas station, your first priority is the safety of your employees and customers. The good news is that you can minimize danger by being prepared. Consider creating a comprehensive security plan for your employees follow. But first, take a look at our list of most commonly-made security mistakes below.

**Inconsistent Employee Training**
The convenience store and gas station industry (and all retailers for that matter) experience a high level of employee turnover. It's important to stick to a regular training schedule to make sure everyone knows what to do in the event of a robbery or other crime.

**Blocking Views and Visibility**
While it’s important to make sure your store is stocked with merchandise and floor displays, make sure they do not block your view to the outside. A clear line of sight into and out of the store will make a would-be criminal less comfortable following through with the robbery. Just make sure your employees are not counting cash in areas that are visible to the public. This could put your employees in danger even if they are behind a bulletproof barrier.

**Dim or Little Lighting**
Dim parking lots provide opportunities for criminals to hide and plan. A well-lit, landscaped exterior, and a clean, bright interior creates a safer and more pleasant environment for employees and customers.

**No Employees Uniforms**
To minimize confusion, your employees should always wear an approved store uniform. This will help differentiate them from customers or criminals.

**Too Much Money in The Register**
If you’re not using a Smart Safe system, or you have one and you’re not using it correctly, you’ll be left with more money in your register than necessary. If you’re robbed with a large amount, then the perpetrator will think they can get the same score at another store and it will encourage them to try again. If you work for a franchise store, this could put your colleagues at risk.

**Not Having Proper Signage**
Advertise your store’s safety features with stickers on the front door. It can discourage criminals from eye-balling your location. Conversely, don’t bluff. If a criminal finds out, it could put employees in danger.
How C-stores Can Meet the Needs of Multicultural Shoppers

By Angela Hanson - 03/06/2019

NATIONAL REPORT — Catering to the changing needs of convenience store customers doesn't just mean examining their current wants and needs; it requires looking into the future and anticipating how those wants and needs will change. This is particularly relevant for millennials, who are not only poised to overtake baby boomers as the largest generation, but also are the most diverse generation.

That diversity will continue with the generations that follow — projections show that by the year 2044, the United States will be dominantly multicultural.

While the rate of change will vary by region, convenience store operators in particular are likely to observe the movement firsthand, and it will bring both challenges and opportunities.

"Multicultural shoppers make up 37 percent of all [c-store] visitors, but 43 percent of core (weekly or more often) shoppers — and their share of core shoppers continues to grow, up two points from 2014," Coca-Cola North America's Doug Middlebrooks, group director, shopper marketing, told Convenience Store News. "Tailoring your offering and message to your shopper is not a new idea, but the notion of having a more fragmented and diverse shopper base is a new reality."

Best practices for meeting the needs of multicultural shoppers include:

With a more diverse generation comes more diverse tastes. A strong interest in ethnic food is currently among the top menu trends, with food from Asia, Latin America and the Middle East showing particularly notable menu growth.

In the beverage aisle and at the fountain area, the popularity of tropical flavors and drinks with unique flavor offerings is on the rise. Think aguas frescas.

Candy and snacks that tend to do well with multicultural shoppers include non-chocolate and gummy items, as well as hot and spicy and sweet and spicy flavor profiles.

On average, multicultural shoppers prioritize product selection more highly than other groups, and Hispanic shoppers may make it the deciding factor in which store they choose.

Product reviews, deals/coupons and online shopping convenience are the three main trends driving Hispanic purchasing in the U.S. today.

Higher involvement in digital is common among multicultural shoppers. Research shows that multicultural shoppers who visit c-stores at least weekly are 75 percent more likely to utilize social media related to their shopping. This includes reporting on their experiences, interacting with brands and more.

Today, Hispanic-American and African-American shoppers are primary convenience store shoppers, with 65 percent and 56 percent, respectively, visiting c-stores at least once a week. These core shoppers tend to be more loyal to particular stores, especially if they can get genuine value via rewards programs. However, that loyalty isn't limitless, cautioned Middlebrooks.

"Our perspective is that the answer lies in how quickly retailers want to maximize their business results. This notion goes back to catering to local shoppers," he said. "Multicultural shoppers are important to every store in every market, and they are the primary shopper in many areas already."
Basic Marketing Concepts Every Convenience Store Manager Should Know

by Ready Convenience

Marketing, put quite simply, is what you do to generate sales. Every industry, and every business within an industry, has its own marketing strategy based on its unique customer makeup. As a convenience store manager, you may not control every element of your store’s marketing strategy, but you are an integral component of its success. Start by understanding these basic marketing concepts.

Gaining New Customers Vs. Creating Repeat Traffic
You already know the difference between new customers and repeat customers, but have you given much thought to how you market to each of these groups? You should. Basic marketing research suggests that it costs up to five times more to gain a new customer than to retain a customer you already have. From a convenience store manager’s perspective, this is good news. Strategies that build customer loyalty are often more within your control than those that help you gain new customers.

External Vs. Internal Marketing
External marketing is what you do to get customers to choose your store. Externally, this might include advertised loyalty programs, EDLP products, co-branding efforts, and product specials. Internal marketing is what you do to sell to the customers who walk in your door or pull up to your pump. This includes optimizing non-fuel purchases, merchandising efforts, planogram implementation, and store care.

Over-promising Vs. Over-delivering
The risk of over-promising on a promotion is a marketing concept that many managers, especially new convenience store managers, fail to grasp. This happens when you launch a promotion and then are not prepared for the response it receives. A shiny new loyalty program, for example, won’t mean a thing if your employees don’t know how to recommend it and sign people up. Convenience store training is key to ensuring you exceed customer expectations by over-delivering on a promotion, instead of disappointing them by advertising promises your staff can’t keep.


Government Relations: News Update

By Steve Koebele – Attorney & Government Relations Counsel

Austin, Texas – This month, let’s examine legislation in the state Capitol relating to customer service and the use of drones or unmanned aviation vehicles (UAVs). Some retailers and merchants envision using UAVs to fly and deliver goods to the doorstep of consumers. To that goal, the stated purpose of one bill, SB 59, is simply to document the delivery of goods to the doorstep via the UAV photographing the package at the door and sending that proof of delivery to the consumer.

In the “Bill Analysis,” the author of the bill correctly notes that current state law prohibits the use of UAVs to capture an image of a person or property with the intent to conduct surveillance. The author says, “it is anticipated that such companies would wish to retain images captured by those drones as proof of delivery.” The author adds, “clarification is warranted lest Texas law be construed to prohibit a convenient, federally sanctioned practice.”

However, the actual language in the originally filed version of the legislation is much more broad and vague. First, the legislation related only to consumer goods that are ordered through an Internet website or mobile application. So, if the customer walked into a retail store and the employee completed the order process on the store’s inventory control system for later delivery via a UAV, that purchase would not be eligible for an image-capturing proof of delivery. Second, the bill contemplates “operations within the airspace from which the image is captured,” rather than focusing on capturing the image of a package specifically at the delivery site. Third, the bill language would authorize “images captured for purposes of navigation” when taken for the purpose of delivering consumer goods. If the purpose of the new law is to show proof of delivery, images taken during navigation go far beyond that limited purpose.

The version of SB 59 that passed out of the Senate is a slight improvement than the originally filed version because it struck the “navigation” provision. However, as a bottom line, the Senate version would allow Internet retailers to capture and keep images “for the purpose of delivering consumer goods.” The Government Code chapter where this new law would be placed provides a detailed definition of the key word at issue: “image means any capturing of sound waves, thermal, infrared, ultraviolet, visible light, or other electromagnetic waves, odor, or other conditions existing on or about real property in this state or an individual located on that property.”

Why are the words, definitions, and meaning of words in legislation so vitally important? If the above bill successfully became law in its originally filed version, consider a future retailer using a UAV – flying as a crow would fly – to legally take images of a residential backyard for the UAV’s purpose of delivering consumer goods while flying to ultimate delivery. For example, the captured images may observe two very young children, a dog, and a swimming pool in the backyard. Days later, perhaps, the residential owner might receive advertisements or coupons for children’s toys, dog food, and swimming pool supplies.

Thirteen separate bills have been filed during the current legislative session relating to UAVs. Legislation, for example, contemplates that UAVs would be useful when identifying and managing emergencies or helping during the recovery of a natural disaster. Also, UAVs might help protect humans from danger when assessing unsafe environmental conditions, such as a chemical spill. The Texas Legislature is now fully engaged in deliberations of these important situations.

As always, the Board of Directors and professional staff at GHRA will closely monitor new laws, policies, and other matters that are of interest to you.
Egg-cellent marketing ideas for retail stores

Here at GHRA Warehouse, we make the most of seasonal events by carrying products through our various categories to provide your business and brand the visibility it needs. Holidays and seasonal events are a great time to create marketing campaigns that produce consumer activities which is effective in building a loyal customer base and fostering the community amongst your consumers.

It’s important to set a budget on how much you would like to spend on the marketing campaign. Our goal here is to assure you have profitable sales, you’ve gained loyal customers as well as adding value to your customer shopping experience without over spending on your marketing budget. The question we always ask is, ‘our customers have the option to go shop anywhere, why should they come to us?’

Here are a list of marketing ideas to use during seasonal events:

**Advertise**
Marketing works in many ways as long as you are executing it right to suit your customer’s needs. Prepare for the event by generating flyers, hosting local blog posts, advertising on your website, or making an appearance on social media. In-store promotions should complement the offers featured on the GHRA spanners and window posters.

**Decorate**
Seasonal decorations are what change consumer behavior and lead them to shopping the goods in your store. While advertising for the promotional event, be sure to have a theme generated that resonates the seasonal event, for example, decorating your store windows with Easter window decal, creating flyers and placing Easter candy and novelty in customer’s sight.

**Promote**
Increase your daily, weekly and monthly sales by hosting several promotions in your store. As mentioned earlier, you can use this opportunity to move inventory quickly or advertise a new item in your store. You can host bundle deals on candies, hot food items and coffee to ensure customer satisfaction. Upsell these bundles at the checkout.

**Get Creative**
Have your staff be involved by dressing up with accessories such as bunny ears, clip on buttons or jewel pieces. This will be added value in terms of increased brand awareness and improved insight. In-store marketing can help set the tone and turn your promotional campaigns into profitable sales by theming your store to mark the occasion. By giving your business an Easter feel, you can link the festivity of the holiday with your product or service. Give whatever bargain deal or offer you come up with an authenticity and linking it to a known holiday you give consumers a reason to shop. In addition, a well decorated and inviting store can draw in potential customers.

GHRA Warehouse and Distribution Center has all of your spring essentials. From beverages to ice coolers, sun screen and novelty items for the beach, we’ve created a one-stop shop for all of our members. Be sure to check our weekly new items announcement in your e-mail to get insights on what’s new at the warehouse along with hot promotional items! Be sure to check the GHRA App for product updates and monthly deals! Stay tuned for more with GHRA! ■

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The following is a paid advertisement

**A WINNING COMBINATION!**
Contact Kirby Selman
Mobile: 832.390.7308
E-Mail: Kirby.selman@bordendairy.com

If it’s Borden it’s got to be good!!!

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Vol. 6 Issue 4
Welcome Members

On behalf of the board of directors and staff at GHRA, please welcome our newest members as of April 2019:

IM FOOD MART #5
IM FOOD MART #6
TIME MAXX #7
KIRBYVILLE CONOCO
IMPERIAL FOOD MART

ALWAYS MARKET
FUEL EXPRESS
RITESTOP
PIK’S FOOD STORE # 2
OASIS MARKET

COYOTE FOOD STORE
SMILEY’S EXPRESS # 4
POP IN 6
BERNARD GROCERY

The following is a paid advertisement

$1.89 Ruffles Zesty Cheddar, Ruffles Hot Wings, Sabritones
*Place on All-In-One Rack*