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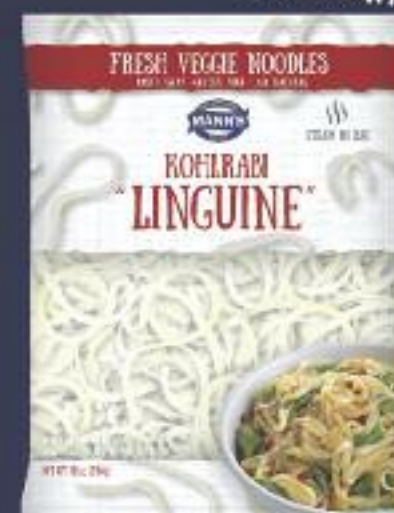
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### 10 The Most Delicious Time Of Year

*Food is the focus of every celebration and a bridge between cultures and traditions — and as a grocery retailer, you are an integral part of it all.*

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## publisher's perspective



### Is There a Grocery Retail Opportunity with Cannabis Legalization?

With the impending legalization of cannabis in Canada, there has been a lot of speculation about how the grocery industry will develop a presence in this new market.

Loblaw, for example, first applied for a license to dispense medical marijuana in 2016. Shoppers Drug Mart has lined up supply deals with several licensed medical marijuana producers including Aurora Cannabis and Aphria.

But that was for medicinal not recreational cannabis. Now, there is discussion of grocery retailers getting into recreational cannabis.

Loblaw has applied to sell recreational marijuana in Newfoundland and Labrador. Loblaw's applications for 10 potential locations were among the 24 selected by Cannabis NL., including grocery stores under the Dominion banner and Shoppers Drug Mart locations. The company has also applied and got approval for seven Real Canadian Superstores in Alberta. Calgary Co-op has also received 11 approvals to sell cannabis.

In a recent statement to Global News, Superstore parent company Loblaw said, "As an established retailer with a secure supply chain and decades of experience selling controlled products, including alcohol and tobacco, we believe there may be very select opportunities for our stores to sell recreational cannabis."

Reports from media, however, have led many to believe that cannabis will be sold right alongside your milk and cookies. This is clearly not the case. In fact, in a clarifying statement, Loblaw spokeswoman Catherine Thomas said the retailer does not plan to sell recreational cannabis on its grocery store shelves in Newfoundland and Labrador, and this would apply to Alberta as well. The plan would be to make it available behind the counter, in small, existing tobacco shops, adjacent but separate to their grocery stores. Just look at the laws surrounding tobacco sales in grocery stores to get an idea of how cannabis would work.

Meanwhile, there is the whole question, to be resolved next year, of how to deal with edibles. Here too, there is much confusion about whether grocery stores could sell cannabis infused products. If a manufacturer added trace amounts of cannabis in a given product to enhance its health profile, could it be sold on the shelves?

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Michèle McMillan Joins Thomas Fresh

Thomas Fresh has appointed Michèle McMillan, as director of national accounts. With 37 years of industry experience, McMillan comes from a multitude of roles including operations management, and category/procurement management across the retail landscape on behalf of two major Canadian grocery retailers. Most recently, she held the position of director of private label procurement for bakery/deli/home meal replacement/produce/grocery non-food at Sobeys.



Michèle McMillan

Costco Wholesale Opens 100th Warehouse Club in Canada

Costco Wholesale opened its first membership warehouse club in Nisku today – the 100th Costco location in Canada. Located at 2584 46th Avenue East, the new warehouse has created more than 150 jobs and an opportunity for local residents to benefit from the convenience and savings provided by a Costco membership.



The new 149,610 square-foot location features a variety of convenient specialty departments including an on-site bakery, fresh meat, fresh produce and rotisserie chicken sections, an optical centre – including an on-site independent optometrist – hearing aid centre, photo centre, tire centre, food court, liquor store, gas station, propane station and a pharmacy.

Acuity Brands Opens Interactive Grocery Store Innovation Center

Acuity Brands, Inc. has launched its Grocery Store Innovation Center, where grocery retailers can receive a demonstration and interact with the latest Internet of Things (IoT) technologies, such as indoor location-based services. Located in Acuity Brands' Center for Light + Space in Atlanta, the center features lighting-based IoT solutions that can enable a frictionless, omnichannel experience for shoppers, and can enhance front and back-store operations for grocers.

"The center allows grocery retailers to test and explore indoor positioning, wayfinding, spatial analytics, as well as asset tracking and management that can improve operations," said Audey Cash, senior vice-president, Enterprise Solutions, Acuity Brands Lighting. "Connecting the physical store with the digital environment can help retailers reduce operating costs, enable the deployment of loyalty programs, empower front-line employees, and provide for a more efficient and enjoyable shopping experience."

Acuity Brands has successfully deployed location-based services in nearly 200 million square feet of indoor retail space across 2,500 buildings and was recently recognized by Frost & Sullivan with its Product Innovation award, Enhancing IoT Applications for Connected Buildings.

For more information, visit <http://www2.acuitybrands.com/grocery>



Ali Davies

Davies Joins Clorox

Ali Davies will be joining Clorox Canada's sales leadership team, effective immediately. A bold, resilient and creative leader with over 15 years of experience, Davies has had a track record of success with a number of Tier 1 companies including Kraft Heinz (customer vice-president regional), Mars Canada and most recently at Solutions 2 Go (Vice-President Sales).

Chickapea Recognized for Highest Standards of Social and Environmental Performance with B Corp Certification



Chickapea, a fast-growing brand of high protein pasta made from organic chickpeas and lentils, is now certificated as a B Corporation. The prestigious designation solidifies Chickapea's mission to create good for the world through nutritious, organic meal options and impactful social contributions.

Bothwell Cheese Carves Out Spot on National Stage

Bothwell Cheese recently competed at the American Cheese Society (ACS) Conference & Competition held in Pittsburgh, PA where they received the following two awards:



SILVER - Jalapeno Monterey Jack (Category: Monterey Jack with Flavour Added);

BRONZE - Non-GMO Project Verified Medium White Cheddar (Category: Cheddar - Aged through 12 months).



This year, the ACS Judging & Competition welcomed 1,954 entries of cheeses and cultured dairy products from 259 companies representing 35 U.S. states, five Canadian provinces, Mexico, Columbia and Brazil.

A total of 364 medals were awarded, including 103 gold medals, 124 silver medals, and 137 bronze medals.

In Memorial — Annette Brause, Super Valu

Super Valu owner/operator Annette Brause has passed away. Brause was the second generation of the Scotch Creek store which was also the only liquor outlet, gas station and post office in the area. The operation of the store has for some time now been the responsibility of Amanda, Anette's daughter so Anette



Annette Brause

could concentrate all her focus battling cancer.

Anette was a dynamo and sat on the provincial advisory board for independent liquor stores. She supported many charitable causes and was a true pillar in her little community and an inspiration to all business-minded people. The store was the focal point of her life. Anette was 59 years old.

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## The 2018 Canada Independent Grocer Financial Survey Has Been Released

The Canadian Federation of Independent Grocers and FMS Financial Management Systems LTD, a subsidiary of FMS Solutions Holdings LLC., have released the 2018 financial survey of independent grocers.

2017 profits held steady at 1.5 per cent of sales and EBITDA increased to 1.8 per cent. Labour expense increased by .7 per cent. This cost increase was anticipated given legislated wage hikes in some areas in late 2017 and early 2018. However gross margin performance was strong as respondents realized 1.9 per cent year over year growth. Depreciation was up .4 per cent prior year which factors into the EBITDA growth.

Food inflation for the survey period was +1.6 per cent. The survey results however yielded a .3 per cent decrease meaning sales decreased in real dollars by 1.9 per cent year over year. Notably, Quebec and Ontario posted positive gains of 1.1 per cent and 0.6 per cent respectively before adjustments for food inflation.

The battle for top line sales continues to escalate and we were surprised to note 70 per cent of respondents do not have an online ordering offering. "Click and pick" is the most popular form of online shopping amongst the balance of respondents. As retailers try to grow sales and retain parity with competitors, the 'click and pick' online solution offers a quicker rollout and is a much lower cost alternative compared to online shopping coupled with delivery.

Overall survey results were positive. Independents are faring well in an increasingly competitive landscape. Additionally, retailers have had to absorb the cost of legislated wage hikes. Stable profit, improved EBITDA, and margin growth reflect the resilience of the independent retailer segment. Growing top line and managing labour will be the key to success as we move forward. Understanding labour metrics and continued increases in labour efficiency coupled with adopting a viable online shopping platform will be crucial. Robert Graybill of FMS stated, "It will be critical that retailers develop good labour management solutions and begin to research the feasibility and payback of investing in online ordering as this is the next real threat to top line sales."

## Walmart Launches Grocery Pickup



Grocery Pickup, grocery delivery, free shipping to store for non-grocery items (electronics, apparel, etc.), and more than one million items available on walmart.ca.

## BrandSeed Marketing appoints Kerry Somerset-Williams

Kerry Somerset-Williams will be joining BrandSeed Marketing Inc. in the position of senior brand manager based in Vancouver.

Somerset-Williams has been in the CPG Industry for 20+ years and brings with her a vast knowledge of the Canadian retail market. She has managed key accounts in both the conventional and natural and organic market in the West and has worked with many distributors.



## events calendar

October 21-25, 2018

**SIAL Paris**

Paris Nord Villepinte

Paris, France

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

October 23-24, 2018

**Grocery Innovations Canada**

Toronto Congress Centre, Toronto, ON

<https://groceryinnovations.cfig.ca>

October 24-25, 2018

**Security Canada Central**

Toronto Congress Centre

Toronto, ON

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

November 6, 2018

**Coffee Association of Canada 2018 Annual Conference**

Steam Whistle Brewing

Toronto, ON

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

February 21-24, 2019

**CHFA West**

Vancouver Convention Centre,

West Building, Vancouver, BC

<https://chfa.ca>

## Don't miss SIAL Paris!

*SIAL Paris 2018 will have representatives from over 104 countries with 160,000 professionals from around the world attending the five-day show.*

Arranged into food sectors and geographical regions, SIAL's one-of-a-kind layout lets visitors customize their experience, and explore the exhibition according to their own needs – something that no other fair can offer to such a wide-ranging public.

### SIAL PARIS: THE CHEFS RENDEZ-VOUS... LED BY YANNICK ALLÉNO!

In 2018, "cuisine moderne" will take pride of place at SIAL, as testified to by the fact that the patron of this edition will be none other than Yannick Alléno. As part of a highly select circle of the world's greatest chefs, Yannick Alléno enthusiastically devotes his life to his passion, and militates for strong French cuisine, rich in its legacy and ambitious in its creations.

### A TELL-TALE RENEWAL: THE ORGANIC, DIET AND START-UP ZONES

Following a successful initiative launched in 2016, SIAL Paris continues to promote emerging food sectors by offering designated display areas. This year, the organic and diet zone will take pride of place alongside the Gourmet sector.



In addition, beverages and fresh products will be under the spotlight, as will a "tech" zone, allowing SMEs and microenterprises to present their latest technologies and equipment products. And because SIAL Paris is an ideal showcase for the French food industry, there will once again be a designated "Made in France" area, which will host a start-up French Village for the first time.

Going beyond its status as a professional networking and trade event, SIAL Paris continues to be the food sector's main information hub, offering profound insight into the mechanisms of a market worth 1.5 trillion dollars.

### PARIS 2018: THE WORLD FOOD CAPITAL

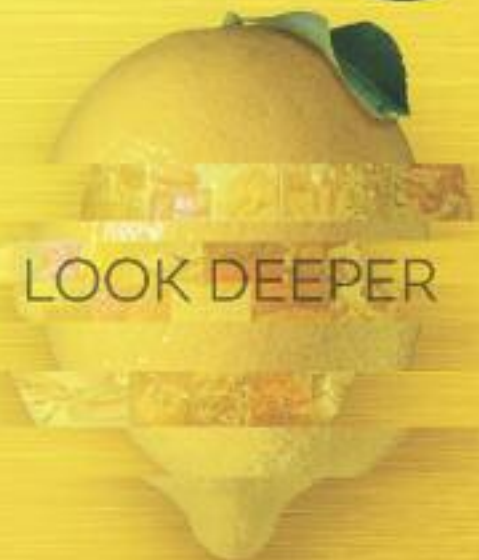
Representatives of the entire global food industry will be in Paris from October 21 to 25, eager to discover and share the solutions required to feed consumers and meet their expectations over the next 30 years.

"The food industry is one of the most dynamic industries in most G20 countries," says Nicolas Trentesaux (SIAL network director). By discovering new trends and business opportunities, participants will find the tools they need to achieve their objectives. SIAL Paris is a unique platform for stakeholders to test new markets, launch new products and meet today's main players to discuss the challenges of the future. It is also something of a laboratory: R&D departments from around the world frequently finalize their products in time to test them in the aisles of SIAL Paris. Over 2,500 new products will be presented at the SIAL Innovation feature next year, inspiring the food and beverage industry even more than ever before."

For more information: [sialparis.com](http://sialparis.com)

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# The *Most Delicious* Time of the Year

**W**hether people are celebrating Hanukkah or Winter Solstice, Christmas or Kwanzaa, all these celebrations have something in common — food. The focus on food over the holiday season makes your role as a grocery retailer significant in every single celebration, from Diwali in early November through to Lunar New Year and Valentine's Day in February.

While holidays are often about old family traditions, Canada's culturally diverse population and increasingly global culinary tastes mean that, more than ever, people are craving exciting new flavours and products. A look at what some of the country's top suppliers have on offer for the holiday season will get you thinking about what your customers may be looking for.

## Viva Italia

Anthony Morello, president of Aurora Importing, says the holiday selling season is a sales driver for Aurora with many traditional product offerings from Italy, such as panettone, torrone, Baci chocolate, sweet goods, dessert classics, and festive baking favourites, as well as dried figs and nuts for the produce department.

And he would know. "We are the largest importer of authentic dry grocery products from Italy to Canada, importing over 700 containers per year," says Morello. "Our portfolio consists of the largest selection of key, established heritage brands from Italy with global recognition housed under one roof."

This year, Aurora has some very exciting new products for the holiday season, which, Morello says, they like to refer to as "Limited Additions."

For example, for Valentine's Day 2019, Aurora will be bringing in Baci "Ruby" chocolate, a rare, natural, pink chocolate available in very limited quantities: only 3,500 cases are allocated to Canada.

Another example: Lindt Panettone for Christmas.

"Everyone knows Lindt," says Morello. "However, many never realized that Lindt sells panettone only in Italy every year."

This year will be different. Aurora is bringing 1,500 cases to Canada.

Perhaps the most iconic "Limited Addition" is Aurora's award-winning Fiasconaro panettone from Sicily.

"The company is a family owned and operated business led by renowned master baker Nicola Fiasconaro," says Morello. "His products have been voted 'Best in Class' throughout Italy and globally in recent years."

To celebrate Sicilian heritage, Fiasconaro has partnered with another Sicilian duo: Domenico Dolce and Stefano Gabanna, known worldwide as iconic fashion designers Dolce and Gabanna.

"For this upcoming season, D&G has designed an exclusive tin for the season that will contain a Fiasconaro Panettone made exclusively with natural Sicilian citrus fruits and a hint of saffron, again, in celebration of their Sicilian roots and culture," says Morello.

Aurora, the exclusive importer and distributor of Fiasconaro in Canada, has secured 800 cases, expected to arrive in early October. An additional 250 cases of D&G Fiasconaro Pistachio Panettone will arrive late November.

To make the most of retail opportunities, Morello recommends showcasing seasonal products with large, off-shelf, prominent displays dressed for the occasion.

*Food is the focus of every celebration  
and a bridge between cultures and traditions,  
— and as a grocery retailer, you are an integral part of it all*





Italian Centre Shop knows that panettone is very popular during the Christmas season.

"Whenever possible, engage the consumer with education, with trials and with a reason to buy," says Morello. "We introduced Baci chocolate-making demos about five years ago, panettone-cutting events two years ago, torrone-cutting events last year, gavioli-popping events this year, all to help create atmosphere in store, engage the consumer, and build incremental profitable sales."

Teresa Spinelli, president of the Italian Centre Shop in Edmonton, says "Panettone



Aurora Importing has exciting new products for the holiday season including Lindt Panettone, Fiasconaro panettone and Baci 'Ruby' Chocolate.

is very popular at Christmas in Italian homes. It's an Italian Christmas cake, and we sell tons of those."

The Italian Centre Shop also gets a giant panettone from Aurora.

"One of the things we do with the products from Aurora is we have this big opening where we cut the panettone into pieces so people can sample it," says Spinelli. "We make a big event out of it. We send out invitations to our customers to come and see the opening. We show

them how to cut the panettone and show them videos of how it is actually made so they can see the authentic ingredients and that is all natural."

Spinelli says for big life events and holidays, everything is around food — all over the world.

"There is always a party and there is always food," says Spinelli, adding that at the Italian Centre Shop, they want to share Italian culture with their customers. "Gathering around the table — it is where friendships are made, where bonds are established, and deals are made. It is about sharing some of our culture with others."

Morello also comments on sharing culture, especially through in-store events, which he calls, "the key secret ingredient, as they take ethnicity out of the selling equation and broaden the appeal of the product across an entire audience versus a segmented group."

## European Warmth and Tradition

Holiday season products from Jan K. Overweel offer a mix of Italian and European specialties.

"Milano, our brand of baked goods, ties in perfectly for the holidays," says Patrick (Pat) Pelliccione, president of Jan K. Overweel. "We make a variety of cookies and traditional Italian biscuits right here in Canada."

Jan K. also produces its own line of panettone.

"It's yeast-based, with real butter, and filled with raisins and dried fruits specially imported from Europe," says Pelliccione. "We've been producing it for a number of years now, and we've recently right-sized it to 800 grams to align with industry standards."

The 800-gram Milano Panettone is available in fruit/raisin, chocolate chip, and also cranberry. Arthur Jr (Art) Pelliccione, executive vice president at Jan K. Overweel, says theirs is one of the few companies that offers cranberry. "We introduce it at Thanksgiving, but we carry it on through Christmas," says Art. "It is just amazing for flavour."

Something else that's special: "We have these mini-panettone — 100-gram mini-panettone in a box," says Art. "It can be used as a tree ornament because there's a little hook on it or as an extra to a Christmas gift. It's really cute."

Pat adds that because the mini-panettone are excellent gifts, merchandising at the end-cap is a great way to remind consumers they're available.

For the 800-gram boxes, Pat says retailers in Italian-centric communities use them to decorate their stores. "They stack them



Jan K Overweel offers a variety of Italian and European specialties during the holiday season including panettone, Caffarel, Milano Terrone and cheeses.



## The nostalgia lives on this holiday season





in the shape of a Christmas tree, they hang them from the ceiling, they'll build a huge display... We love to see how creative retailers get."

They recently developed a pallet program to show the breadth of Milano's seasonal offerings and provide a more convenient approach to merchandising. The branded displayer fits on a pallet to house 20 cases of panettone or biscuits or both.

"It's covered with holiday-inspired images and branding, and all retailers have to do is bring it on to their store floor and open the top of the box," says Pat.

For the holiday season, Jan K. has also sourced a superb product line of premium Italian gianduia, which is dark or milk chocolate combined with roasted hazelnuts, called Caffarel.

"Caffarel has been in business for almost 200 years. They are, in fact, the inventor of gianduia and hail from Piemonte in Northern Italy," says Pat. "We're honoured to represent such a prestigious and respected brand and to share it with our Canadian customers."

And then there's Milano Terrone, a bar of either hard or soft nougat, available

with roasted almonds and honey, gianduia, and limoncello.

"We've seen Milano Terrone merchandised alongside the pre-cut fruit section, because it makes an excellent addition to a holiday dessert platter," says Pat.

Cheese is another holiday dessert platter favourite and, thanks to CETA, the new Canadian European Trade Agreement, Jan K. is introducing several new products. Oak Manor, Jan K.'s brand of English and Irish cheeses, is introducing some festive cheddars and wensleydales with flavours including salted caramel, orange and

the newer, more special items that are for sale," says Pat. "There's no better time to do this than over the holidays, because almost every consumer's shopping habits are geared towards finding something exceptional to share with friends and family."

Jan K. also has a roster of in-house chefs on staff to educate buyers on product application. However, Pat says there are methods beyond the tried-and-true in-store product demos and seminars to enhance sales.

"We like to think outside the box, by participating in holiday-related events for consumers and trade, like tree-lighting ceremonies, holiday markets, and trade-oriented cocktail events," says Pat. "We believe in a 360-degree approach to drive sales. It's important to us for consumers to keep our brands at the top of their mind."

Great Pasta and More

Frank DeMichino, COO at Italtasta, says they have always believed in producing the best pasta possible.

"We proudly use only 100 per cent Canadian grade No.1 durum semolina to create our wide range of pasta from our Tradizionale line to our Wholesome Grains lines," he says. "During the festive season, we focus on our baked range — Italtasta lasagne, cannelloni, manicotti, jumbo shells — which are staples for feeding large crowds and making entertaining easy over the holidays."

Italtasta recently launched their Oven Ready Gluten Free Lasagne and are expecting to see some accelerated growth in sales during the holidays.

"It looks and tastes like regular lasagne, which makes it easy to feed everyone, regardless of their dietary needs, without a lot of work," says DeMichino.

He adds that Italtasta continues to work on new innovations centred around health and functional pasta products that add value to a retailer's sales and profitability and to introduce new products, both under the Italtasta brand and well-known Italian brands, to allow a retailer to cross merchandise displays creating the perfect Italian meal. To boost pasta sales, DeMichino recommends cross-merchandising lasagne, which is available in whole grain, spinach, gluten free, and oven ready, with dairy products and vegetables.

"It's always a good idea for a retailer to have displays of our baking pasta range for incremental sales during the festive season," he adds.

Traditional Italian seasonal products are a key part of their import range during the holidays.

"We have done the legwork for retailers when it comes to choosing their seasonal offerings," says DeMichino.

And that means covering a spectrum of festive products, from value to gourmet. For example, Italtasta offers consumers on a budget a delicious taste of Italy with Italtasta Panettone, made from soft dough and candied fruit and raisins and imported from Italy.

"We also offer a range of Bauli Christmas specialties from the Italian leader for over 40 years," says DeMichino.



Italtasta recently launched an Oven Ready Gluten Free Lasagne.



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champagne, fig and honey, and hops. Their premium imported brand from Italy, Piaceri D'Italia, has expanded their portfolio to include three beautiful varieties of Pecorino pressed with dried flowers.

"These are, of course, all in addition to the rest of our amazing selections of cheeses from Italy, England, Ireland, France, Spain, and Switzerland," says Pat.

"We support retailers during the holidays — the busiest part of the year — by organizing product demonstrations, where consumers can taste and be educated on



To place an order, please contact your Aurora sales representative



www.auroraimporting.com



Long natural leavening is the secret to Bauli's Pandoro range, he says, and high-quality butter and very fresh eggs give these traditional cakes an unmistakable and inviting aroma. New this year from Bauli is Stracciatella Pandoro — made with rich cream and chocolate — and Pistachio Panettone — an authentic Italian recipe — made with pistachio cream and chocolate chips.

"We have found that conducting professionally organized product demonstrations in-store during the festive season has helped to introduce consumers to products that might not be familiar to them," says DeMichino. "We like to demo a neutral-flavoured Christmas cake with one of the new flavours to ensure more consumers will stop and try at least one of the products. Using this strategy often results in 100 per cent sell-through of our festive range."

## Berry Beautiful

Fresh, beautiful raspberries, those quintessential summer berries, are so rare during the holiday season — or they used to be.

"The newest thing we're offering is year-round availability of our raspberries in all packaging sizes," says Jim Grabowski, vice-president of marketing for Well-Pict Berries. "We've been doing this with our strawberries for a long time now, and it just made sense to perfect a way for our raspberries to be offered during the typical 'off season' as well."

He explains that it took Well-Pict a long time, because they wanted to be sure the raspberries offered in the fall and winter lived up to the taste and quality of their seasonal berries.

"Through our patented and proprietary research and development methods, our independent growers can now recreate the premium flavour profile our customers know and love, no matter what time of year it is," says Grabowski.

And strawberries and raspberries are so versatile.

"Berries pair so well with other holiday flavours, whether they be sweet or savoury," he says. "You can use both raspberries and strawberries on salads, in glazes, and sauces of main entrees, or baked into desserts or breakfast items.



Well-Pict Berries are versatile and pair well with other holiday flavours.

They're great as gifts, too!"

The best way to promote sales: sampling.

"We know that sampling our berries is a near-guaranteed way to earn lifelong customers — they're just that good," says Grabowski. "We are also big advocates of using promotions, contests, specials, and recipes on social media to entice customers."

Cross-merchandising enhances sales and helps customers with recipe ideas. Grabowski suggests enticing customers to make homemade raspberry jam, chocolate-dipped strawberries, and decorated cupcakes and cookies.

"If retail owners cross-merchandise our berries with related recipe items — whipped toppings, salad kits, chocolate, sparkling wine, spices, etc. — they can increase their chances of not only selling more berries, but selling additional items as well," he says. "We also think the colour of our berries naturally lends itself to holiday-themed displays, particularly red-and-green Christmas ones."

## Sensational Seafood

Seafood is always popular at holiday parties or as a featured item at celebratory meals.

"Just in time for seasonal entertaining at the highest level, Ocean Mama Organics is introducing two new Black Tiger Organic Shrimp platters,"



Ocean Mama Organics has introduced Black Tiger Organic Shrimp platters.

says Andy Cheslock, vice-president of sales.

Ocean Mama Organic Black Tiger Shrimp are Ocean Wise recommended bred from non-GMO broodstock and raised naturally in shoreline forests of mangroves. The saltwater immersed mangrove roots are the foundation for a healthy aquatic habitat for the shrimp where they grow free of pesticides, fertilizers, antibiotics, hormones, and irradiation. At the Ocean Mama Organics website ([www.oceanmamaorganics.ca](http://www.oceanmamaorganics.ca)), you can see a video featuring Vancouver celebrity chef and long-time sustainable seafood advocate Ned Bell demonstrating how Ocean Mama shrimp are harvested.

Cheslock says the new platters are offered in two convenient formats: 340-gram ring of 31/40 count cooked, peeled, and deveined shrimp (approximately 27+ shrimp per ring), and a great "shrimp cocktail for two" 228-gram half ring, using 16/20 count jumbo-size cooked, peeled, and deveined shrimp (approximately 8+ shrimp per platter).

"For anyone sensitive to some of the more common seafood ingredient additives, our organics use the finest shrimp available and only sea salt is added for a natural flavour," says Cheslock.

The packaging is designed for easy display.

# IT'S A WELL·PICT WORLD



## Well·Pict Jams

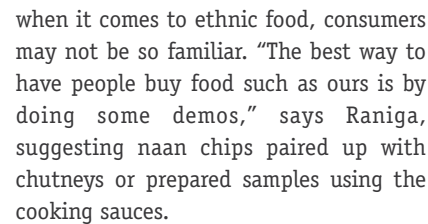
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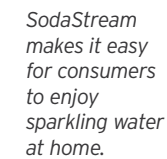


"Last year, as a company, we created a one-month advertising campaign from the first of December until the 31st of December, and we put, I believe, maybe up to 20 unique items into that campaign, and I had basically all Ocean Mama," he says.

People don't mind spending a little bit more for better quality, he adds. However,



Make sure you have the right assortment for your shopper, she adds. "Most important is the carbonator, as it's the heart of the system, and carry a good mix of bottles, flavours, and machines to capture various segments."





## A Perfect Mix

Nestlé Canada has launched a new confectionery line sure to be a big hit this holiday season.

"Our new line of Nestlé SNAX brings together our largest brands that consumers love with Canada's favourite snack foods," says Aahona Banerjee, marketing manager in confectionery for Nestlé Canada. "Nestlé SNAX provides the perfect mix of nuts,



Nestlé SNAX provides a mixture of nuts, pretzels and milk chocolate.

pretzels, and milk chocolate to create a deliciously sweet and salty combination that will satisfy any craving. We're leveraging some of the hottest ingredients: think caramel popcorn — the No.1 candied snack in North America — and honey-almond clusters to deliver on this proposition in

fun, tasty, and differentiated ways."

Banerjee adds that retailers should know mixes have strong repeat purchase rates with consumers and over-index with the increasingly influential millennial group, who embrace the tasty balance and are highly incremental to the category.

"We leverage harmonized retail-ready packaging across the Nestlé SNAX lineup, making it easy to activate the shopper and display for impulse purchase to increase sales and margins," says Banerjee. "The lineup consists of both impulse and sharing formats that would make for great stocking stuffers and holiday party snacks. Merchandising with clip strips throughout the seasonal aisle will allow for incremental basket top-ups."

This year, Nestlé has partnered with the NFL to make each touchdown even sweeter.

"Positioning Nestlé SNAX® as the perfect game-time snack and bundling it with game-day staples such as sodas and crisps is a sure-fire way to enhance sales," says Banerjee. "For entertaining during game time or holidays, picking up the Nestlé SNAX® Kitkat 120g and Nestlé SNAX® Smarties 160g makes for easy sharing."

## Sweet and Salty Snacks and Gifts

New and notable brands in Tree of Life's entertaining category run the gamut from sweet and salty snacks to luscious cheeses and preserves. Neysa Davies, senior marketing insights manager for Tree of Life, says Angie's Boom Chicka Pop is back by popular demand in Holidrizzle Boom Chicka Pop flavours.

"Angie's non-GMO popcorn is drizzled in dark chocolate and sprinkled with sea salt or drizzled in white chocolate and crushed peppermint," says Davies. "The perfect holiday indulgence."

A contemporary twist on a classic, Organic Candy Canes are non-GMO, organic, with natural flavouring and colours made



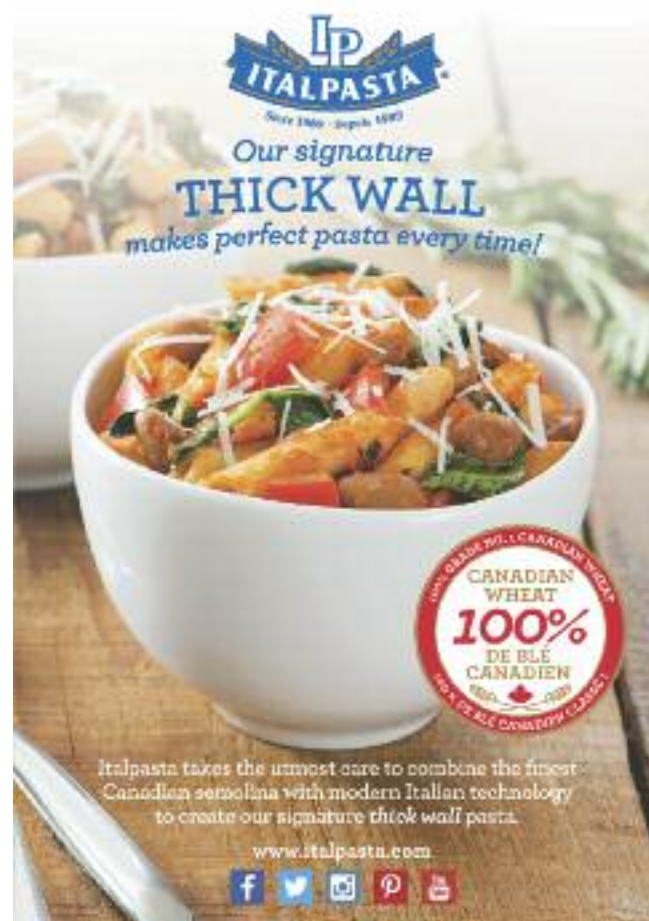
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with organic fruit juice. Of course, the holiday season would not be complete without Walkers iconic holiday tins and boxed shortbread.

“Walkers will once again be releasing an assortment of holidays tins of luxury shortbreads, including their ‘wobbly tins’ of shortbread,” says Davies. “They really do wobble!”



Tree of Life provides many sweet and salty snacks as well as cheeses and preserves to enjoy during the holiday season.

Another treat that also makes a great gift, Caramoomel, a line of delicious all-natural homemade jams, jellies, and vegetable spreads inspired by heritage family recipes.

“Produced in B.C., this is the perfect gourmet addition to a hostess gift or your holiday cheese board,” says Davies.

The Preservatory is another made-in-B.C. line, ideal for gifts or entertaining. Davies says these preserves are not only an accompaniment for a charcuterie board but can also be used in savoury and sweet dishes.

“A must read is The Preservatory Cook Book, by passionate jam master, Lee Murphy,” says Davies.

Tree of Life is also featuring two dairy-free cheese lines this season. Faux-magerie Zengarry is a line of beautifully crafted vegan cashew cheeses from Ontario available in several luxurious flavours: aged cumin, creamy

Swiss, double cream, garlic and herb, smoky jalapeno, and tomato and basil. The second is Sheese, a vegan, non-GMO cheese hailing from the Isle of Bute in Scotland. The Sheese selection is wide, including everything from cheddar, mozzarella, Greek-style, and blue-style to a cranberry wensleydale.

Davies encourages disruptive merchandising in the form of end caps and displays as the best way to showcase holiday themed and inspired brands.

“Entertaining and indulgence is such a significant part of the holiday season,” says Davies. “Help customers get creative through in-store sampling and demos, pairings with wine, or even cross-promoting in flyers.”

Another tip: “Bring focus to the perimeter of store and the deli, as customers are drawn to fresh categories for inspiration,” says Davies. “Build displays that incorporate fresh categories as well as centre-of-store items.”

Don’t forget indulgence doesn’t always have to be for when company comes over, Davies adds. “A cozy night for one or two can include a beautiful piece of cheese, a selection of olives, and crispy crackers for a charcuterie and antipasto platter.”

Whichever holidays your customers are celebrating, and whether those celebrations are tied to cultural traditions or a personalized blend of global favourites, food will certainly be a focus for them and an opportunity for you as a retailer.●

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1. Aggregated in-store consumption data, SodaStream Carbonators, 52 weeks to Dec 2017 / 2. Nielsen MarketTrack, Carbonated Water, National all Channels, 52 weeks to Apr 1, 2017 / 3. Euromonitor, Bottled Water Category, 52 weeks to Dec 2016 / 4. SodaStream internal sales data to Feb 2017





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## BAKERY DEPARTMENT

In Canada, bakery sales hardly paint an accurate portrait of the value of this department to the overall grocery store experience.

For example, Statista data of monthly sales of baked goods in large Canadian retailers from January 2014 to January of this year reveal numbers that are, at best, stagnant. This was evident in December, traditionally a strong month for bakery: 2014 saw sales of \$261.5 million, followed the next year by \$271.8 million, then \$294.4 million in 2016, and \$249.7 million last year.

Yet, ask any grocer how important the bakery department is today, and the response will be enthusiastic. "It's a destination," says Anne Marie Damjanovic, bakery & deli merchandising manager for Buy-Low Foods. "A good in-store bakery signals freshness — and this sets the tone for the rest of the store in terms of supporting a good shopping experience."

She adds, "The best bakeries cater to indulgence as well as health concerns. The gluten-free movement remains strong every year, and there is a push to reduce sugar and artificial ingredients. A good bakery department will rely on local specialty/gourmet suppliers for items that can't be made in-store — which is the case with gluten-free products, which are made in dedicated facilities."

Earlier this year, Puratos Canada undertook a Global Wholegrain consumer study, which included the input of 323 Canadian respondents, and its findings reveal some of the expectations consumers have for bakeries. "Among other things, we learned that 77 per cent of Canadian consumers buy their baked goods in the retail stores/supermarkets," says Liesbet Vandepoel, director of marketing for Puratos. "About 34 per cent of consumers eat white bakery items more than once a week; and 31 per cent of consumers eat wholegrain bakery items more than once a week, with 25 per cent of consumers having increased their consumption of wholegrains compared to two years ago."

Vandepoel goes on to note, "In general, people are asking more from their bakeries than ever. Consumers want to get more information — whether it is an ingredient list, nutritional information, the time the product is made or even a brief description of the item itself. For example, young shoppers really show a growing interest in traditional sourdough breads, and they also support the on-going trends of freshness and healthy, natural ingredients, which are the two biggest purchase criteria in addition to taste."

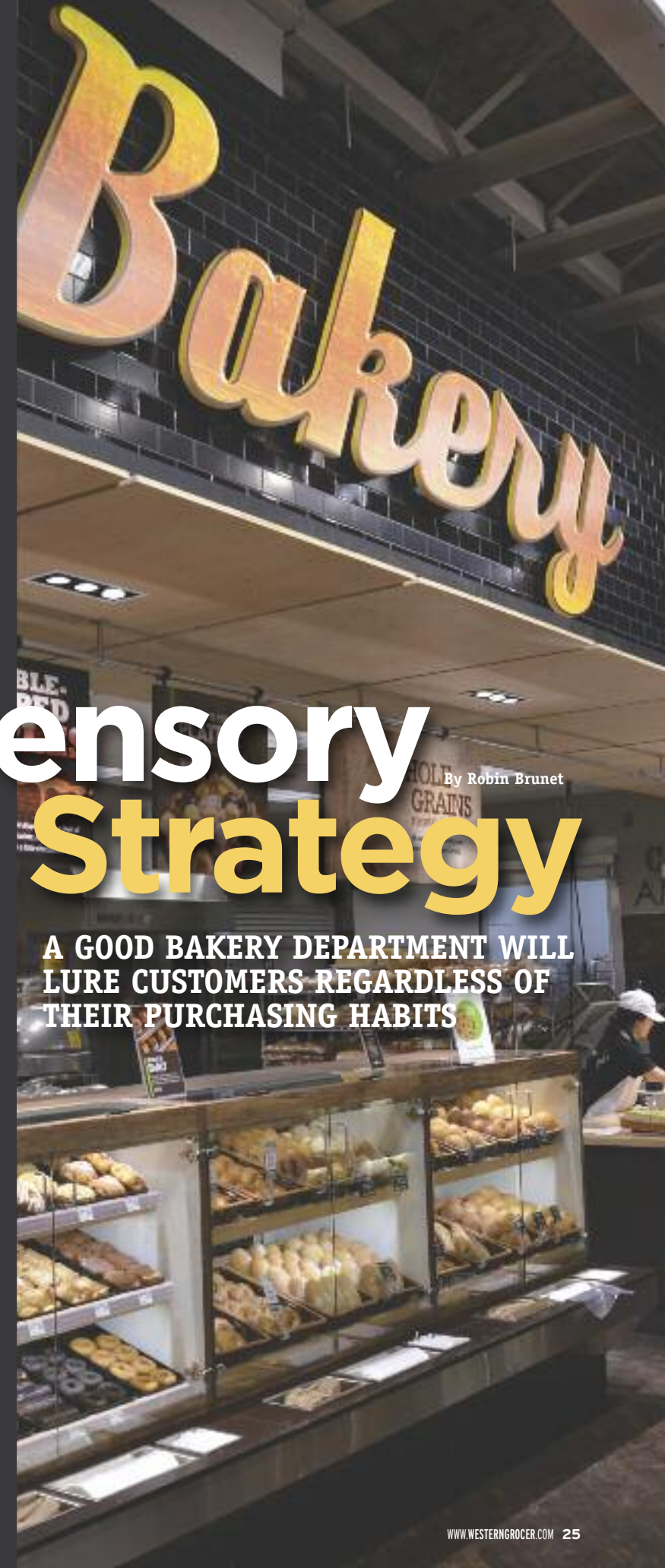
Damjanovic notes, "Our customers are driving some really interesting trends, including the growing preference for smaller portions of gourmet offerings. While this also means smaller price points, smaller portions encourage multiple purchases, so it's a beneficial trend to any bakery's bottom line."

"We're also noticing flavour trends including a desire for Mediterranean-style food as well as Middle Eastern fare. There's a big interest in flat breads and crisp breads, Armenian style cookies, and many other items that just a

# Sensory Strategy

By Robin Brunet

**A GOOD BAKERY DEPARTMENT WILL LURE CUSTOMERS REGARDLESS OF THEIR PURCHASING HABITS**





Stong's Market notes that consumers want to get the impression of what the bakery specializes in.

few years ago would have been confined to specialty ethnic stores. Again, this is an opportunity to work with local specialty suppliers, and if a bakery department draws attention to these suppliers in merchandising it enhances one's reputation for sourcing locally."

Generally speaking, bakery trends in Canada are similar to those in the U.S., and Progressive Grocer's 2018 Retail Bakery Review released in July shows that cookies are the top-selling and most profitable



bakery item, partly because they tend to have a longer shelf life than other popular products like doughnuts or bread — which also contributes to the profitability factor.

Cori Bonina, president of Stong's Market,

says, "Consumers are also looking for gourmet cakes made from scratch, which are very hard to find in the grocery industry due to high wage rates. However, I think there is big opportunity to capitalize on sales: most young parents that I know purchase specialty cakes in the \$60 - \$200 range for their child's birthday."

Similarly, "Exotic and fancy doughnuts are also a huge trend," according to Bonina.

As Damjanovic points out, calling out local suppliers is a merchadising strategy that can benefit any bakery department. "But the core merchandising should emphasize established items front and centre that are made fresh in store, daily, and in abundance," she says. "These are the key draws for customers and far more important than packaged goods."

While cross-merchandising opportunities abound, Bonina warns that "Adding too many cross-merchandising products may give customers the impression your bakery does not specialize in anything. I would say upscale cards and candles are the best way to cross-merchandise."

Another strategy pertains to staff. "A successful bakery must have knowledgeable and passionate people who can answer customers' questions and introduce them to new products and flavours," concludes Damjanovic.

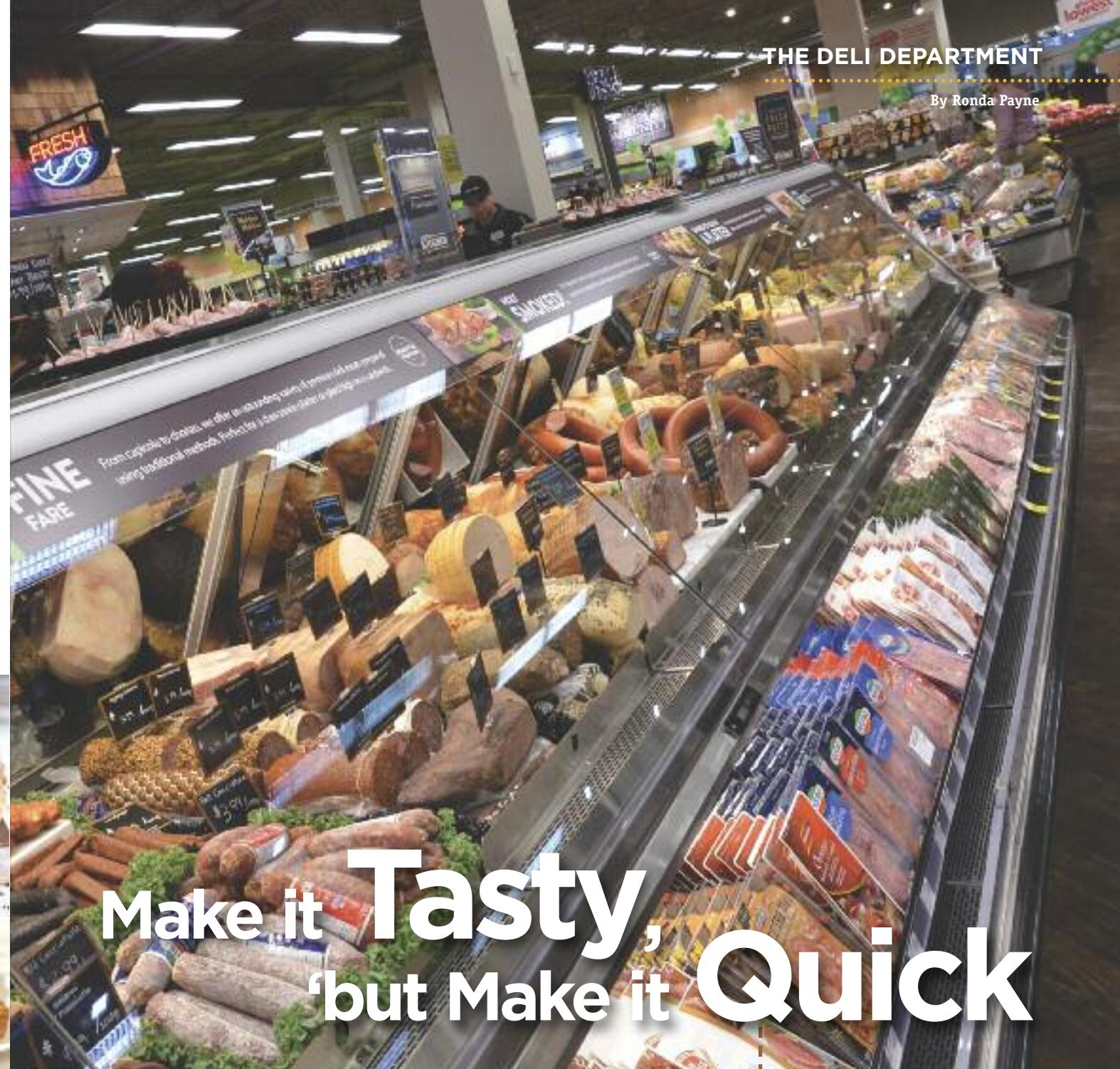
It could be argued that even if customers don't purchase products from the bakery, the sensory elements of the department encourage them to explore the rest of the grocery store and perhaps even share their good experience with friends. Keeping things fresh and providing a good balance of decadent and healthy items is the simple recipe for success. ●



Puratos Canada knows that consumers are asking more of their bakeries than ever.

## THE DELI DEPARTMENT

By Ronda Payne



# Make it Tasty, 'but Make it Quick

Today's deli department can best be described as a cultural food hub that delivers to a diverse range of tastes for snacks and meals throughout the day. It's an area of a retailer's store that should receive special attention in order to meet customer needs, grow sales and create a go-to hub of food selections.

In fact, this department is so important, it can make up from 15 to 20 per cent of store revenue depending upon how the department is stocked, its size, merchandising, staff knowledge and other key factors.

Andy Shay, director of deli meats and cheese strategy with Jan K Overweel notes that due to the high margins of delis, it's the ideal place to maximize sales and add to the overall mix of the store.

"The deli is an opportunity to sell more good and better quality goods," he says. "Deli is often seen in the store as the difficult department to run: lots of people, lots of goods and lots of shrink, but if you do it right, it can differentiate the store."

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Urban Fare Yaletown has a traditional deli with primarily meats and cheeses and provides home meal replacement options in their in-store restaurant.

At Urban Fare Yaletown, Store Manager Michal Huhn is constantly aware of the need to meet customer desires to maintain the store's popularity in the community. Here, the deli remains similar to a traditional deli by stocking primarily meats and cheeses, while the adjacent in-store restaurant is responsible for the home meal replacement (HMR) options. Yet, even in that space of meat and cheese, things have changed and evolved, including the customer's demand for grab and go.

"Our deli has evolved into more of a



grab and go where stuff is prepackaged into trays," he says. "Charcuterie is now grab and go. Single serving trays are now huge."

While customers look for options they can take on the run, they certainly aren't prepared to sacrifice on taste and look for a variety of flavours. Sean Lewis, retail sales manager with Inform Brokerage notes that customers are continuing to look for variety in the deli case.

"Artisan cheeses and meats are becoming more popular," he says. "Farm-to-table is

more recognized. Ethnic flavours are always popular and trending. Wider varieties of salads, HMR ingredients such as roasted peppers, caramelized onions, etc."

Jason Brandes, director, marketing and innovation with Bothwell Cheese is seeing trends in local products that offer traceability and transparency to ensure product safety and proper business ethics. It's another way for consumers to feel good about what they are buying. They want great taste that's convenient and comes from sources that are ethical.

"Cured meats for charcuterie trays are becoming more popular for entertaining," Brandes adds. "Cheeses that are local, fresh and made with only milk. Having a story behind these products is critical for trial."

Educated staff are also critical and at Urban Fare

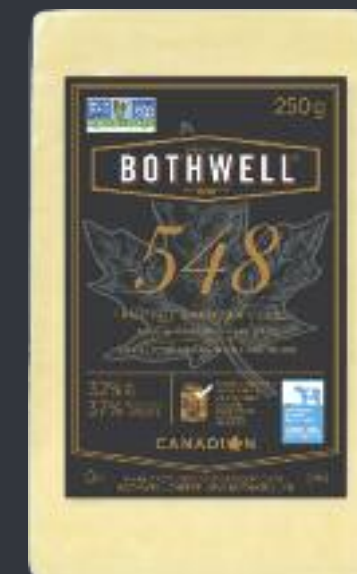
Huhn notes consumers need guidance to learn what they like. The deli and restaurant combined contribute more than 20 per cent to the store's revenues which is a strong number, especially considering the Yaletown store also has a pharmacy. It's attributed in part to staff who know the products.

"I know we're often in the top 10 in the [Overwaitea] company [for the two categories]," Huhn says. "Which is nice because we're still a relatively low volume store."



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He sees deli as the strongest part of the business in his store and notes keeping the deli and separate HMR sections full and fresh are what make them successful. If staff wait until later in the morning to fill the sections with grab and go items, they will miss people looking to pick up lunch on their way to work.

The trend of HMR began with sandwiches and roast chickens, but has since evolved. The NDP Group estimated the HMR market in Canada at \$2.3 billion in 2014. A figure which was thought to stay flat at the time, but which retailers are growing.



The deli department is a cultural and experimental meal replacement source for many consumers.

"If you think about it, deli was meat and cheese and it was a place where you had people behind that counter and good retailers want to keep those people busy. If you have meat and cheese you already have two-thirds of a sandwich. It's a no brainer," he notes. "In the early 90s, when I was in New York City, that was where roast chicken kind of started. And soon you're cooking and preparing these salads. These are all just natural and super easy to serve up. Today it's just about convenience. Another way to think of that is consumer solutions."

Brandes agrees that convenience has driven much of the HMR market. "The demand on people's time by their jobs often made it difficult (or impossible) to meal plan or prepare meals," he says. To deal with this time crunch, grocers learned that a large portion of the busy consumer's disposable income was being spent on fast-food/take-out, which in turn, cut into the money spent on weekly grocery shops."

It's a reality all-too-familiar to most consumers and grocers are responding. In a 2017 food and drink study, Mintel finds that in the prior three months to the study, 85 per cent of Canadians had purchased prepared or made-to-order foods from a grocery retailer. When the study focused on a younger age group — those age 18 to 34 — the percentage pops up to 92 per cent.



Jan K Overweel recommends pre-packs to provide the ability to grab and go with deli-quality food options.

Half (51 per cent) of these purchases are intended as take-home meals, rather than eating out.

"The quality [of HMR] has gotten much better," notes Huhn. "People are put off by frozen and they want that fresh, daily-made. The quality has increased substantially and the value. The value in these grab and go meals is phenomenal."

The makings of a good grab and go meal varies. As in the case of Huhn's store it could be a single-serve charcuterie platter or an HMR option like mac and cheese, butter chicken, wraps or a grilled veggie platter. For Russ Benwell, one of the co-owners of Red Barn Market, sandwiches drive the deli and a significant part of the seven-store chain's success.

"We have a very large sandwich program. We'll sell probably about 1.25 million sandwiches this year," he says. "Our sandwich bar program is fueled from our smokehouse with three different varieties of ham, three different varieties of turkey breast roast, roast beef."

All sandwiches are prepared to order using, primarily, meats produced by Red Barn's smokehouse. Recently the company began wholesaling their custom-crafted products outside their own stores.

"We manufacture 100 different products that are gluten-friendly and are made with pure ingredients," he notes. "We are just really starting to embark in outside wholesale."

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Understanding the deli customer's shopping behaviours is key in merchandising this department. As Shay notes, if price is the motivator, customers will shop in other parts of the store for meat, cheese and HMR products. However, for those looking

Bothwell Cheese is seeing trends in local products.



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for more variety and tastes and experience, the deli is where it's at.

"It's really important to know that customers are choosing to enter the deli because they want something better or something different," Shay says, then quotes the International Deli Dairy Bakery Association on what drives consumers into the deli. "Number one is that it looks clean and number two is that it's interesting."

He points to using a variety of heights, shapes and colours in the deli to create visual interest as well as a mix of pre-pack and store-cut products. Perhaps of



most importance — at least from a cheese perspective — is trial.

"Cheese is our biggest strength. But people just don't know," says Huhn. "They look and they see and then once they taste and once they see how it can pair with this or they see how these 3 cheeses can work together for a great charcuterie at home."

Huhn adds that product knowledge is also important because it arms customers with information for future purchases. Plus, offering unique products not available anywhere else doesn't hurt. Urban Fare Yaletown has an in-house made signature ragu beef and signature ham. The deli also carries a balsamic sphere made in



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\*Consumer Goods & FMCG, Food & Nutrition, Most popular ethnic cuisines among consumers in Canada as of March 2017, by eating location



Italy that is ready to be grated on various foods. They are the only store to carry this unique flavour addition.

There's a need to understand consumer stressors and behaviours in order to better merchandise for their shopping experience.

"Consumers want to see what they are eating," notes Lewis. "Freshness and up-to-date recipes and products. Healthier and better-for-you options. Younger generations don't want to cook from scratch, they want convenience."

Benwell agrees that a fresh and clean deli makes a world of difference.

"It's really based on the appearance of the department," he says. "It has to be neat and it has to be clean and tidy and well signed. It comes down to the customer perception and interpretation of the reputation of the product and the cleanliness of the brand."

Keeping complementary products close together is important according to Brandes.

"Place complementary products next to one another, even if they also exist in another part of the story," he says. "Convenience is key for this rushed shopper."



Red Barn Market notes that sandwiches drive the deli and are a significant part of the chain's success.

Shay advises retailers to consider pre-packs (it's a successful strategy for Urban Fare Yaletown) because they help to reduce costs while also giving consumers the ability to grab and go with deli-quality food options.

"Being able to go and really try things and have a real experience is a real strength," he notes.

Today's deli has evolved into a cultural, experiential, meal replacement source. Demands continue for local and clean foods, but also new and exotic flavours. By acknowledging the consumer's desire for quick and easy on some visits, but tastings and information on others, retailers will build a loyal following and become the go-to supplier for great options in food for a variety of occasions. ●

## RETAIL COLLABORATION

By Jeff Doucette

# Why is HMR Stuck In The 1980s?

Home Meal Replacement (HMR) is a key part of the retail mix for any full-service supermarket. It's often occupying prime real estate in the store and the aroma of roasted chickens is a clearly recognizable temptation for shoppers.

There has been a lot of buzz in the industry about "Grocerants" lately, a term that describes the elaborate restaurants or food courts that are popping up in new grocery stores.

Whole Foods has been an innovator in this space and you will find their stores packed at meal times with customers grabbing a quick lunch or assembling dinner from the "hot-bar". Most recently we have seen the new T&T Supermarkets flagship which allows you to choose your seafood from the tanks and shelves in the seafood department and then they will cook it and serve it to you in their restaurant.

Grocerants will continue to pop-up and play a niche role in Canadian supermarkets but are not likely to become the norm. These operations need high traffic flows to generate the volume required to support a restaurant, which is really what they are – a restaurant inside a grocery store.

If there is a business that is even more cut-throat than the grocery industry, it is the restaurant industry. Just think of the restaurants that have failed in your community in the past 10 years. Grocers really need to think long and hard before attempting to become a Grocerant. There is a lot of risk.

On the other hand, Canadian consumers are busier than ever. This on-the-go lifestyle has put tremendous pressure on the traditional prepare-at-home, eat-at-home, sit-down meal. The direct effect on supermarkets is a shrinking "share-of-stomach" as shoppers buy less ingredients for their favourite recipes (if they have any at all) as they shift meal purchases to restaurants.

Adding pressure to in-store sales is the arrival of "meal-kits" over the past two years which are delivered to Canadian homes with all the ingredients to make a



## It's time to mix it up and provide better options for consumers on the go

new, tasty and often healthy meal in just 30 minutes. They even do the chopping!

The front line defence against the out-of-home and meal-kit threats to supermarket sales is HMR. While HMR is big business for supermarket operators and these operations deliver solid margins, the overall product offering is really stuck in the 1990s. The last big innovation in Canadian HMR – sushi. That's so 2004.

This is not to say that there are no glimmers of hope out there. Calgary Co-op's curry bar is a unique approach bringing in flavour and variety to the HMR offering. Save On Foods' new Calgary store has hand-stretched pizza and a "chicken wing bar". Fresh St. Market has a wide array of Ready To Eat Meals including chef prepared sandwiches.

However, the majority of HMR offerings are centred around the chicken. Roasted chickens are ubiquitous everywhere from Sobeys to Costco and have spawned other grab-and-go hot offerings that use the same equipment such as roasted turkey breast, roast beef and ribs. These are usually the "healthy" choices.

The other main offering of Canadian supermarkets is a range of fried goods: chicken (again), chicken fingers, wedges, onion rings, fries, and there's also pizza.

We are kidding ourselves if we think that this offering is appealing to Canadians who are more often eating healthier, gluten-free, natural, vegan, keto or a whole other

range of food restrictions that make the current HMR offerings a "cheat night" at best and "off-limits" at worst.

Of course, the standard HMR fare is easy to prepare, store for long periods and still make some money. But if it does not change sales will suffer.

Foodservice providers to supermarkets need to be pushed to come up with new tastes that are in-line with the modern Canadian diet and still work within the capabilities of an HMR section. Complacency in developing new innovative products seems to be at the heart of the problem.

Two interesting examples come from the U.S. market. Publix, has created a curated meal program called "Aprons Simple Meals" where busy shoppers can arrive in-store in the drive home rush and find a full meal solution all in one cabinet that includes main, side and even desserts. The offering changes weekly and is built to minimize prep and maximize taste and variety. A great solution to the "what's for dinner" dilemma.

HEB, located near the border with Mexico in Texas has adapted its offerings to better serve the large Hispanic communities near its stores as well as offering unique flavour offerings to all shoppers looking for a delicious take-home meal.

HMR innovation can drive store loyalty and increase sales. We need to start thinking about HMR 2020 and put a plan in place to deliver. Build it and they will come. ●



Jeff Doucette is the founder of "Field Agent Canada" a smartphone driven audit service that is revolutionizing how retail audits and mystery shops are completed in Canada. He can be reached at [jeff.doucette@fieldagentcanada.com](mailto:jeff.doucette@fieldagentcanada.com)

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**By Graeme Houssin**

# From Mexico to the Table

***Mexican food producers are getting creative and putting a spin on the ethnic food market***

But gone are the days when salsa and tortilla chips met the needs of Canadians with Mexican food cravings, and companies have been quick to respond, releasing more and more products with unique twists on classic flavours.

For Renfro Foods, experimenting with new and heightened flavours has paid off in spades. A year and a half ago, they paired with a microbrewer and released a craft beer-flavoured salsa that rapidly climbed to the top of their sales chart.

Renfro Foods followed with more ventures to satisfy consumers' demand for red-hot flavours, including a ghost pepper-flavoured nacho cheese and a salsa infused with Carolina Reaper peppers — the hottest chili pepper in the world, as declared by Guinness World Records.

Meanwhile, Canada's own Fresh Is Best Salsa & Company have been experimenting with fresh and more natural ingredients. Their salsa can be found in the deli or produce departments, as they contain no added preservatives, and a soon-to-be-released corn chip option will contain no GMOs.

"We get noticed because the whole Mexican food aisle is all about that yellow and red colour," says Lisa Graham, co-owner of Fresh Is Best Salsa & Company.





*Fresh Is Best Salsa & Company have been experimenting with fresh and more natural ingredients.*

Not only do Mexican food options stay popular with consumers, but they can engage every department of the grocery store, from produce to meats.

"That's definitely one of the great things about Mexican," says Kyle Leslie, co-owner of Star Marketing, the exclusive distributor of Teasdale Foods' Mexican-themed Casa Fiesta line. "You need to buy seasonings, shells, then you head to the produce department and buy tomatoes and lettuce, then you go to the meat department and buy ground beef and chicken, then go to the dairy department and buy sour cream and cheese, so it's a real nice basket-builder."



*Renfro Foods has been experimenting with flavours, and is meeting consumers' demand for red-hot flavours.*

Cross-promotion works especially well in tandem with key Mexican holidays, such as Cinco de Mayo. Around the May 5th holiday, Casa Fiesta is celebrated by creating a display contest for stores to build displays not only focused around the Casa Fiesta line, but including other Mexican food product to take advantage of the versatility of Mexican foods.

"What's nice is when stores get creative in allowing consumers to see first-hand all of the products that they need to put together to make a nice Mexican fiesta meal," says Leslie.

Renfro offers an alternative, and still creative, way to merchandize the Mexican staple of salsa: "I really wish people would more often feature it next to the seafood or fresh chicken display because it really does, as a marinade, work fantastically, and the consumer has to use the entire bottle. It's good for the retailer, it's good for us, the consumer loves it, [and] it's a healthy option because there's no fat or cholesterol in there."

Several leading sources — including Mintel, the USDA Foreign Agriculture Service, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, and Statistics Canada — suggest the success of the ethnic food market, and Mexican foods by extension, is related to Canada's diverse population and increase in immigration.

"Food is intertwined with culture, traditions and family," states Statistic Canada's 2009 Human Activity and the Environment report. "Canada's diverse food choices reflect history and immigration patterns."



*Star Marketing knows that cross-promotion and displays work well.*

Graham offers up an alternative explanation. "I think Canadians — because we travel south all the time — get that warm feeling of travelling or relaxation they felt. It seems to be a happy thing for them by association. Canadians are looking for that warmth Mexico has, whatever it is — or that memory or that connection."

Mexican foods are still holding onto a reigning spot in ethnic foods shelves and in consumers' hearts, but with a bit of creative merchandising and the help of innovative producers, retailers can push even better sales and give customers the ethnic flair they're craving. ●

# Mugging It

## Canadians Reach for Warmth

When the temperature drops, Canadians collectively reach for hot beverages, not just for comfort, but for warmth. Coffee, tea and hot chocolate dominate the market. What are the consumer trends today and how can grocers drive these sales?

Coffee is leading the way accounting for 1.4 billion dollars in grocery/retail sales. The Coffee Association of Canada commissioned a Coffee Drinkers Study on

behalf of members in 2017, finding that 71 per cent of Canadians consume the beverage. The study further found 71 per cent of Canadians are drinking coffee in their homes, as opposed to out-of-the-home drinkers at 44 per cent.

"With new innovations there are more types of coffee than ever before," says Lesya Balych-Cooper, president of The Coffee Association of Canada, in Don Mills, Ontario. "For many Canadians and

millennials in particular, it is a statement of environmental responsibility and that is driving growth."

Stacey Toews, co-founder of Level Ground Trading, in Victoria, British Columbia, a company that prides itself on trading fairly and directly with small scales farmers in developing countries says, "Grocers still sell more ground coffee than beans and more dark than light. Blended coffees and a mix of origins combined are popular."

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“Consumers love to be able to combine quality, variety, convenience, and sustainability,” says Caroline Losson, vice-president of marketing at Keurig Canada, a company that makes beverage systems for home and commercial use and represents brands such as Van Houtte, Green Mountain, Timothy’s, Tim Hortons, Starbucks and Folgers. “Dark roasts are gaining in popularity, which is why we are now offering

Van Houtte House Blend Dark in various formats, along with a variety of others.”

At Level Ground Trading the very dark French Roast coffee made with Columbian beans is a top seller. Toews also notes an increase in sales of East African coffees, particularly from Ethiopia, Tanzania and DR Congo. The coffee named Winter blends the beans of all three countries and is available from October to February.

“Pods have given consumers an opportunity to enjoy their favourite coffee brands without having to wait to brew a whole pot,” says Ari Sefton, manager, brand



Lesya Balych-Cooper, president, Coffee Association of Canada

build & innovation — coffee at Kraft Heinz Canada in Don Mills, Ontario. “Whether they prefer Maxwell House House Blend or Nabob Full City Dark, pods and single serve machines allow for individualization. We’re really excited about our Max Boost pods, the first coffee with one and a half times more naturally occurring caffeine than other leading brands.”

The Coffee Drinkers Study confirms the number of single cup brewers in Canadian homes increased to 36 per cent, in 2017, up from just 15 per cent, in 2012. “The single-serve coffee maker segment revitalised the entire coffee category. It also offers variety and the ability to pick and choose various beverage options every time,” says Losson. Smaller urban living spaces and kitchens were the inspiration for the new K-Mini coffee maker.

Then, Losson adds, “Sustainability also needs to be part of everything we do: from responsible coffee sourcing to offering

recyclable K-Cup pods that the consumer can easily recycle at home.”

The Coffee Drinkers Study also saw substantial growth in espresso drinkers from only 13 per cent of Canadians in 2013 to 23 per cent in 2017. The Espresso Craft Blend from Level Ground Trading, made from a bean blend from Bolivia, Peru and Ethiopia has been selling very well for example.

And what is the best way to sell coffee in a grocery store? “Sampling,” says Balych-Cooper, “It helps customers to taste before they buy something new.”

A Neilson 2017 report confirms hot tea dominated all tea sales at 71 per cent. Black tea sales made up 35.4 per cent of the market, while specialty teas accounted for 60.0 per cent.

“Overall there has been a decline in black tea consumption,” says Shabnam Weber, president of the Tea and Herbal Association of Canada, in Toronto, Ontario “Baby Boomers still drink black teas such as Orange Pekoe and English Breakfast.”

“Flavoured tea bags such as Masala Chai are becoming popular,” says Braham Teja, director of Teja Foods, the sole western representative of Wagh Bakri Tea, a company that has been a trusted brand in India for



Canadians reach for hot beverages for comfort and warmth when the temperature drops, and retailers need to be ready.

more than 120 years.

“Darjeeling is a more refined tea,” says Teja. It’s also considered one of the finest teas in the world.

“Millennials have caused a shift in tea drinking with herbals, flavoured and green tea,” says Weber. “But, herbals are where we see the most growth. Flavours like honey lemon, rooibus with vanilla and sleepy time teas like chamomile peppermint.”

Teja points to flavoured green teas such as Wagh Bakri Green Tea with Mint, Green Tea with Tulsi (Basil), Green Tea with Honey Lemon, Green Tea with Jasmine.

At Level Ground Trading the Lemongrass Tea uses organically grown Sri Lankan lemongrass, ginger, cinnamon and cardamom, blended and packaged in India.



Shabnam Weber, president, Tea and Herbal Association of Canada

Weber reminds grocers that January is National Hot Tea Month and January 12 is Hot Tea Day. “This gives grocers the opportunity to showcase tea within their grocery store.”

Camino is a Canadian brand of fair trade organic food products, including a popular hot chocolate owned by La Siembra Co-operative, in Ottawa, Ontario. “We have been working with organic cocoa and sugar farmers for nearly 20 years,” says Tom Hanlon-Wilde, co-executive director of the company.

“One of our favorite reasons to share Camino hot chocolate is the incredible chocolatey rich taste due to higher quality cocoa beans,” says Hanlon-Wilde. The top seller remains Dark Hot Chocolate, with sales of the new Maple Hot Chocolate growing.

He has some suggestions for grocers on how to merchandise and boost sales.

“Build an end-cap display after the first frost, with all tins priced at two-for-one. Shoppers get adventurous with the second flavour and will find something new they like.”

Additionally, Camino also offers free single-serve sachets to hand out at store events or community events.

Grocers who stock their shelves with a variety of coffees, teas and hot chocolates will be ready for the influx of shoppers looking for warmth during cold Canadian days. ●







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## STORE FIXTURES

By Anne-Marie Hardie



# An Enticing Environment

RETAILERS STRATEGICALLY USE STORE FIXTURES TO MAXIMIZE THE CONSUMER EXPERIENCE

With the continued push to online and food delivery service, grocery retailers need to entice shoppers into the store now more than ever. One way to do this is by strategically placing store fixtures to help with the overall traffic flow and the consumer's interaction with their products.

"The key is implementing a range of solutions that will enable the retailers to design their stores in the most appealing way for their customers," says Ravinder Sangha, marketing manger, Halo Metrics Inc. "It is about creating an in-store experience." To get there, Sangha emphasizes that retailers need to take a deep look at how consumers are currently interacting in their store environment. This includes looking at the way that they move through the

store and the overall time spent in areas.

Halometrics' product Ripple is one tool that grocery retailers can use to provide insight on foot traffic enabling retailers to learn both the path that consumers tend to take, and where they tend to linger.

"Traffic data adds a new dimension to the sales data providing a full picture of what is truly happening in the store," says Sangha. "This information can then be used to tailor the location of store fixtures." In addition, the data could be used to determine the placement of end cap displays and other seasonal merchandizers. "Placing these displays in heavily trafficked areas of the store will help maximize their sale opportunity," says Sangha.

Understanding how your consumers interact in your existing environment will

help determine the placement of store fixtures and enhance overall store flow. These analytics can be used to determine the overall floor plan and the type of fixtures that will best respond to your consumers' needs.

### Responding to your Pain Points

There is no question that the core functionality of a store fixture is to provide a space to hold products. However; instead of just stacking products retailers should be considering how they can use these fixtures to showcase key features of the products.

"One pillar that I view as core to our business is food safety," says Jessica Moore, senior product lead, core cases, Husmann. "The technology in our store fixtures ensures a stable product, which not only shows





Hussmann's Insight Merchandizers features include dual air curtain design, shorter defrost cycles and uniform product temperatures.

better but increases the product shelf life and the overall consumer experience." Hussmann's Insight Merchandizers are equipped with several features including unique dual air curtain design, shorter defrost cycles and uniform product temperatures which help protect the overall integrity of the food.

Retailers are typically tasked with the challenge of maximizing the number of products without compromising the

shopper's esthetic experience. Store fixtures that are specifically constructed with space conservation in mind are essential for retailers that are looking to maximize space without impacting the overall flow of the store. One option, shares Moore, is a fixture with an ultra low front, that will provide an extra row for the retailer to showcase their products without compromising the experience for the consumer.

mullions narrow on the Zero Zone CoolView™ doors," says Carl Peterson, marketing and advertising manager, Zero Zone Inc. To prevent condensation, the cases are equipped with heaters in the doors, door rails, mullions and sills. While, the wide open, multi deck shelving of the Zero Zone's Reveal Merchandiser is ideally suited for displaying produce providing consumers an eye-catching environment.

Providing store fixtures that provide an esthetically appealing environment while also making it easy for the consumer to engage with the products are key. "Our Zero Zone cases provide a wide-open view of product by keeping door rails and



## Create a Sense of Confidence

Interactive store displays create a sense of confidence and comfort in your shoppers. However, retailers need to also consider how their store fixtures could be adapted for loss prevention.

The challenge for retailers who have high theft products is finding ways to display them in a customer friendly way. Locked cabinets deter not just thieves but also consumers who are simply wanting a quick transaction. Thankfully, technology has enabled retailers with tools that can still maintain an esthetically pleasing atmosphere while also protecting key merchandise.

One such tool, shares Sangha, is Halometric's product Smart Shelf which has sensors equipped directly into the shelving unit that will detect the removal of product. "The sensing technology recognizes the molecular density of the product," says Sangha. "If there is a theft attempt of a



Smart Shelf from Halo Metrics has sensors equipped directly into the shelving unit that detect the removal of the product.



Halo Metrics' Ripple allows retailers to provide insight on foot traffic and learn the path that consumers take around the store.

significant amount of product it will trigger an audible speaker requesting customer service in the area." When it comes to theft prevention, Sangha, encourages retailers to consider integrating multiple solutions within the store including strategically placing at risk products in the higher traffic areas.

## Future Forward

When considering store fixtures, retailers should be considering not only today's need but how their business may evolve in the future. Opting for store fixtures with flexible configurations will enable retailers to change the appearance in response to shifting consumer demands.







The Reveal Merchandiser from Zero Zone is ideally suited for displaying produce.

Husmann's Insight Merchandiser responds to this store fixture need providing retailers with a multi deck platform that can be modified to the needs of the retailers. "The cases are designed to be convertible," says Moore. "This enables the retailer with a uniform appearance throughout the store, whether it's produce, cheese or dairy, and the flexibility to change the configuration over time."

There is no question that trends, and customer preference, will continue to evolve over time. One dilemma that often confronts retailers is determining whether they should

opt for open or doored cases. Today's, consumers are showing a preference for purchasing beverage and dairy products from doored cases as there is a perception that the product would be cooler.

However, in the case of meat and produce, the preference continues to lean towards open cases. "Meat and produce seem to be the final frontiers with open cases," says Moore, "But at any moment, this trend could shift, presenting a potential major investment for retailers." Reconfiguring a case for either the addition or a removal of a door could end up being

a significant investment. Opting for flexible store fixtures, such as the Insight Merchandisers, which can be easily adapted will help alleviate this concern.

### Test it Out

Prior to launching a company wide change, Sangha recommends choosing one store as your lab environment and evaluating if the change has achieved the desired results. "A high-density data solution equipped with several sensors to track store movement will help retailers determine if the change made has been effective," says Sangha. "Once the optimal results are achieved the retailer can then take this information and apply it to their other locations."

In-store grocery shopping is no longer a necessity. The challenge is cultivating an environment that encourages consumers to get away from their keyboard and into the store. Strategically placed store fixtures are key to cultivating an esthetically pleasing environment. Technology, adaptive fixtures, and partnerships with suppliers will help retailers respond to the needs of the consumer today and into the future. ●

## What is your profitable path?

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# Putting the Healthy in Spreads

## What Do Consumers Really Want?

Consumers are keenly aware of what goes into their food; they fear additives, extra sugar, preservatives and want healthy choices.

Nowhere is this more important than in the spreads aisle where convenience is the key that opens the door to a diversity of natural, gluten-free, plant-based, vegan products. The spreads aisle plays a big role in grocery shopping, and forward-thinking retailers will leverage this expanding category.

### Traditional isn't Backing Down

At the same time, consumers long for stability and functional food they can count on. Peanut butter has been around for almost 125 years and is holding onto its ranking as one of the top 10 food items in Canada where 91 per cent of households have a jar of the popular spread on their pantry shelves.

Baby boomers to millennials are shining the consumer spotlight on healthy living and wellness, and peanut



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butter comes through with satisfying levels of plant-based fibre and protein. Keeping on trend, manufacturers are making sure this comfort food doesn't lose popularity. Kraft Canada's All Natural peanut butter has zero trans-fat, no sugar, preservatives, or artificial ingredients. For those consumers who want to indulge in a bit of salt, there is the Sea Salt version. For sweet-seekers, this savvy manufacturer carries another choice that has just a touch of all-natural honey. For the two per cent of the population that is allergic to peanuts, specialty



photos courtesy of Shutterstock



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manufacturers have developed tasty, healthy alternatives. "NoNuts pea butter is made in a dedicated facility in Alberta, so our customers don't have to worry about cross-contamination," says Caryll Carruthers of Mountain Meadows Food Processing (2004) Ltd. "More people are looking for nut-free spreads for various reasons, and we've expanded our reach to all the western provinces, as well as into Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick." At Buy-Low Foods/Nesters Market in

*Retailers can leverage on the spreads aisle as the category diversifies with natural, gluten-free, plant-based and vegan options.*

Langley, B.C., Grocery Merchandising Manager, Bruce Hanna says "Plant-based vegan spreads are increasing in popularity as many schools and workplaces have nut-free restrictions, and the spreads aisle continues to evolve with more natural and organic products available for the customer." Hanna notes that nut-butters remain strong in the category, almost all-vegan, with no additives, preservatives, considered to be rich in protein, essential vitamins and minerals — just all round good for you. Although categorized as nut-butters, not all are made from actual "nuts," but they do offer an attractive plant-based source of protein, feeding directly into what Baum + Whiteman has named the trend of the year — plant-based dining.

Last year, Google reported a 90 per cent increase in vegan searches, and although Canadians aren't likely to give up meat altogether any time soon, they are definitely looking for more diet flexibility.

## Having Sweet without the Sugar

Meanwhile, good old honey is not only holding onto its sales as a healthier alternative to refined sugar, those sales are going up. Statista predicts that retail sales of honey in 2020 will be about \$172 million in Canada up from \$118 million in 2011.



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*“Sampling is a good way to introduce some of the new choices.” And if it tastes good while being perceived as healthy, customers will pay the higher price.*



“People are seeing more uses for honey these days, so they’re looking at the larger sizes,” says Shannon Bowden, brand and communications manager at BeeMaid. “In fact, we’ve discontinued one of our smaller sizes and are considering doing the same with the 250g size.”

Bowden notes that the one kg liquid honey is BeeMaid’s biggest seller, but the two kg creamed version is also doing very



photos courtesy of Shutterstock

well. “I think part of that is because some retailers have chosen to compete a little more head-on with the likes of Costco.”

Last year BeeMaid introduced their Raw Honey brand to the market. “It’s been doing very well,” says Bowden. “Earlier this year it really took off with more stores getting on board as the trend in spreads continues toward more natural products.”

BeeMaid honey has one more consumer trend going for it — it’s locally produced, 100 per cent Canadian. “Locally-based honeys are gathering more attention of late,” explains Hanna. “And consumers understand the health benefits these honeys can provide.”

**Bringing it All Together**

The spreads aisle is growing as retailers bring more choices to customers, but success depends on letting them know what’s available.

“People often don’t want to spend money on products they haven’t tasted,” says Carruthers. “Sampling is a good way to introduce some of the new choices.” And if it tastes good while being perceived as healthy, customers will pay the higher price.

Bundling products is always a good strategy as shoppers view combined products as having more value when purchased together. Hanna finds breads are always a popular choice to cross-merchandise with spreads. “Either in an auxiliary rack down the aisle or having spreads displayed close by the bread section itself.”

As consumers continue to shift toward natural, healthy foods, and manufacturers offer new and exciting products to fill the shelves of the spreads aisle, mainstream grocery stores can strengthen their position in one-shop shopping for their customers. ●

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Toronto Congress Centre – North Building

#### CANADA'S PREMIER GROCERY CONFERENCE & EXHIBITION

##### TUESDAY, OCTOBER 23

**Toronto Congress Centre NORTH – Farm Credit Canada Main Stage**

9:00am – 10:00am Annual General Meeting;  
FMS/CFIG Financial Survey Results

10:00am – 11:00am Keynote: Google Canada's Natalie Green,  
Head of Industry for Food, Beverages and Restaurants

11:00am – 4:30pm TRADE SHOW (Hall 1)

##### Workshops - Interac Trade Floor Stage

11:30am – 12:00pm A.I. & Grocery Decision Making

12:15pm – 12:45pm Cheese/Wine Demo

1:00pm – 1:30pm Merchandising Magic for Fresh

1:45pm – 2:15pm Meal Kits: A Grocery Opportunity

2:30pm – 3:00pm Preparing for Cannabis Edible/Infusion Market

4:30pm – 6:30pm **EVENING EVENT – ALL INVITED** – Farm Credit Canada Main Stage

**MERCHANDISING AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE** with MC Pete Luckett

Awards will be given out to:

- \*Master Merchandiser
- \*Top 10 in Grocery
- \*Best Booth Winners

Mix and Mingle with Colleagues and Industry Leaders

**REGISTER AT: [GROCERYINNOVATIONS.COM](http://GROCERYINNOVATIONS.COM)**

**FREE VIP RETAILER TICKETS: [EVENTS@CFIG.CA](mailto:EVENTS@CFIG.CA)**



Puratos Canada meets consumer demands with Clean(er) Label.

Puratos strives to be allies with their customers in the clean label movement by continuously researching new technologies to make their products cleaner. Results from the global consumer survey Taste Tomorrow reveals 65 per cent of world-wide consumers are demanding more transparent communication on their labels. Sixty-nine per cent of Canadian consumers are actually reading their labels. While 52 per cent of Canadian consumers expect more innovative food.



Puratos Canada opts for the term "Clean(er) Label" because the movement is evolving and so are their solutions. In bakery, Puratos Canada offers a range of bread improvers and bakery mixes that use enzyme technology, and has no artificial colours, flavours and preservatives. They also have a full range of sourdough products based on natural fermentation. Even though patisserie is about indulgence, consumers still want to be aware of what they are eating. Therefore, Puratos continues to develop cleaner solutions to evolve their patisserie products in supporting customers' and consumers' expectations in this ever changing trend. They offer a range of fillings, cake mixes, and decorations that are free from artificial colours and flavours, and do not contain fructose corn syrup or partially hydrogenated oils.

For more information: [www.puratos.ca](http://www.puratos.ca)

Anna's Country Kitchen Muffaletta

Anna's Country Kitchen line of Muffalettas have blends of briny green and black olives combined with toothsome celery, peppers, and other vegetables. These bright and tangy salads are available hot and mild and traditionally have been used in muffaletta sandwiches and appetizers.



For more information: [www.bosafoods.com](http://www.bosafoods.com)

Nando's Launches PERinaise in Canada

Following its success in restaurants, Nando's have launched their PERinaise in grocery stores for consumers to enjoy at home. Available in the three most popular flavours - PERinaise Hot, a blend of their famous PERi-PERi from African Bird's Eye chilli with mayonnaise style spread, PERinaise Mild, the same combination in a milder version, and PERinaise Extra-Mild, with lemon and herb.



For more information: [nandos.ca/perinaise-locations](http://nandos.ca/perinaise-locations).

Beaver Brand Extra Hot Horseradish Now Sold in Canada

Oregon's 89-year-old specialty condiment manufacturer is now selling the Beaver Brand Extra Hot Horseradish throughout Canada. This long-time product is also the recipient of a ChefsBest 2018 Award of Excellence. Domonic Biggi, CEO of Beaverton Foods, said he is excited to continue to offer more Beaver Brand products in Canada. "We are pleased to offer another popular Beaver Brand specialty condiment in the Canadian marketplace," Biggi said. "The Beaver Brand Extra Hot Horseradish is a quality product that has been around since the 1930s. A great example of its quality is illustrated well with this year's ChefsBest Excellence Award."



New Bonta Tuna Salad

Bonta is proud to introduce two ready-to-eat prepared salads. The hearty tuna vegetable salad features large chunks of tuna mixed in with a delicious assortment of vegetables and prepared with a light oil. The Mexican-Style salad combines a range of flavour profiles for an authentic Mexican-style meal.



For more information: [www.bosafoods.com](http://www.bosafoods.com)

Rock Ridge Dairy Organic Jersey Cow Milk and Cream

Give your customers what they are looking for with this line of specialty cow milk. Jersey milk typically contains 18 per cent more protein and 20 per cent more calcium than your average Holstein cow milk. More importantly Jersey milk predominately contains the A2 Beta casein protein. Research suggests milk containing more A2 Beta casein may be healthier than milk with higher levels of the A1 type of protein, and that it is easier to digest for some people with dairy and lactose sensitivities.



For more information: [www.rockridgedairy.com](http://www.rockridgedairy.com)

Mrs. Renfro's Craft Beer Salsa

Tree of Life introduced Mrs. Renfro's newest taste sensation: Craft Beer Salsa, a unique, one-of-a-kind salsa, made with classic spices and Texas Red Amber Lager. Delicious, versatile and perfect for grilling, dipping, meals and snacks. Mrs. Renfro's Salsas are authentic and all created to bring a variety of deliciously fresh ideas and unique flavours to your family table.



Nestle Introduces SNAX

A little sweet, a little salty, and a whole lotta crunch! Nestle's new line of snack mixes bring together our largest brands that consumers love with Canada's favourite snack foods. Nestle SNAX provides the perfect mix of nuts, pretzels and milk chocolatey goodness to create a deliciously sweet and salty combination that will satisfy any craving! Nestle SNAX Now in three flavours: KIT KAT, ROLO, SMARTIES.



Tree of Life Introduces Busha Brown Sauces and Condiments

Busha Browne's authentic sauces and condiments utilize the great variety of exotic fresh Jamaican fruits and vegetables. All natural, healthy, spicy and delicious. Prepared and bottled in small batches as they were 200 years ago. These award-winning artisan products reflect the right heritage of Jamaican Cookery. All Busha Browne's products are grown in the heart of the bountiful and beautiful island. Their farms harvest fresh fruits, vegetables and spices in the most modern and natural conditions.



Splendor Garden Introduces New Dip Mixes

Are you looking for a Canadian supplier of organic spices, herbs & seasonings? Splendor Garden is a Canadian brand manufactured in Saskatchewan which sources only the highest quality organic spices, herbs and flavours from around the world. The brand now consists of a full line of over 80 spices, herbs and seasonings along with a new line of five organic gluten free Saskatchewan-grown and -processed oat products: a thick rolled oat, quick rolled oat and a steel cut oat. Colleen Haussecker, owner of the Splendor Garden brand, says the Splendor Garden brand will be continually launching new quality whole food products "so stay tuned for new exciting products on the way." The latest new additions are the three new dip mixes. Dill-icious dip mix, Smokey Chilli Pepper dip mix and Onion dip mix.



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Aurora Brings The Best

**Vicenzi Tin Biscuits**  
Vicenzi products are premium pastries made in Italy since 1905, using the best quality ingredients. The Vicenzi family continues the tradition of making Italian fine pastry using family recipes that are reserved in Matilde Vicenzi's original recipe book.



**Bertagni Pasta**  
Bertagni is the oldest stuffed pasta producer in the world. Bertagni is one of the last producers to prepare the dough with fresh cage free hen's eggs, premium flour, and a pinch of semolina.

**Allessia Mint Bon Boms**  
For over 25 years, Allessia has set the standards for excellence in fine foods. An amazing chocolate taste with a hint of mint in every bite.

**Tucillo**  
Trucillo has been spreading the culture of coffee for more than 60 years. They go beyond just producing quality coffee, they aim to spread Italian culture. Trucillo only selects the finest and most aromatic beans to create excellent blends.

**Barbera**  
Caffe Barbera is one of the oldest coffee-roasting companies in Italy. As a family-run business, the passion and experience for the world of coffee has played a significant role in their lives and it is reflected in their coffee.

Ditch the Stress and Savour a Moment of Serenity with Loacker



As part of their first Canadian marketing and public relations efforts, Loacker, the Italian Heritage brand specializing in premium wafer biscuits under Aurora Importing and Distributing, is tackling the over-stressed, on-the-go lifestyle of Canadians. The company is sharing their Italian roots and relaxed mentality with Canadians, encouraging all to step out of their daily routines and find moments to Savour Serenity. "We want to share our cherished values with Canadians and encourage everyone to take the time needed to create and share special memories in the kitchen and at the dinner table. We crafted Loacker with the idea of making those special moments even more enjoyable," says Andreas Loacker, grandson of the company founder Alfons Loacker.



## TAKING STOCK

**What sort of opportunity does the holiday season bring to retailers in terms of product lifts and profitability?**

The Festive Season is the biggest opportunity within the calendar year to drive incremental sales lifts but more importantly it is a time of year where a retailer can differentiate and become the HERO partner with their customers in fulfilling their entertaining needs.

Consumers more than ever are wanting to be the "Food Expert" among the crowd, looking for easy ways to entertain and tell

and several Independent food retailers to conduct over 350 Panettone Cutting / Sampling Events, Torrone Cutting / Sampling Events, Gavioli Juice Popping / Sampling Events, & Baci Chocolate Making Events across the country from Richmond B.C. to Dartmouth, Nova Scotia.

These events were all about storytelling and introducing consumers in many cases to products they knew little about and perhaps never tried and the trial turned in to incremental sales. But let's be clear: these are NOT demos, these are truly EVENTS with no "PRICE" ad. We are just advertising

You must also have a champion on staff in the office and in retail to coordinate and execute. With Fortinos, Italian Centre Shop and Longo's we created a consumer call to action by promoting that the cutting Events would take place simultaneously at every store at NOON on a specified day...it was amazing to see how many people were gathering prior to noon to hear the story, experience the cutting, taste and most gratifying of all buy merchandise at full price with pleasure. And in most cases I think it's a safe bet to say that Panettone, Torrone or Gavioli were not on their shopping list making the sale truly incremental and building the basket.

**Retailing today seems to be more and more about creating excitement to draw the customers in and provide an unforgettable experience. Can you describe some of the events at store level that you have done with Torrone?**

One of our key account managers refers to it as "Infotainment" and he is absolutely right. Tell the story, the history, the heritage and the what and why this particular product is different. In the case of Torrone where it is from (Authenticity), Who makes it (The Family Heritage, The Craftsman, The Generations of Crafting), Seasonality (a festive Treat in Italian Culture but an everyday confection in the Middle Eastern Culture), The different Styles of Torrone (traditional nut Nougat, Soft Fruit Nougat, Nut Brittle, Bakery Style Nougat), The usages (Dessert, Sweet Snacking, Entertaining, Recipe Ideas). Consumers

# In-Store Holiday Season

the story to their friends & family about a particular dish or even product and this opens up a HUGE opportunity for retailers to stand out and capture the occasion. Do this a few times and you can become their "go to" partner to fill their shopping occasion, especially for conventional supermarkets where variety, quality, product romance and knowledgeable staff must trump price putting a different meaning on delivering value...not an easy task in today's economy.

There are winning examples of this all over the world and as it relates to authentic Italian Cuisine the best example I can think of is Eataly who really stands out as a high-end conventional food retailer going to business in a very UNCONVENTIONAL way by educating, engaging, and delivering food experience to all their patrons. We at Aurora are attempting to bring examples of what these world-renowned retailers are doing to life here in Canada with our business partners. Last year we worked with Fortino's, select Loblaw Inspired stores across Canada, Longo's, all Italian Centre Shop locations

## *An Interview with Anthony Morello, President of Aurora Importing & Distributing*

the events and locations that we have been fortunate enough to work with our willing partners to bring to life and deliver an UNCONVENTIONAL store experience that helped differentiate and cut through to the consumer by engaging them, exciting them, delighting them and delivering the unexpected. Nothing but incremental, profitable sales with the added sizzle of in store entertainment with the EVENTS.

**What should retailers do to make the most of the period?**

Like any good result you need to properly plan and to communicate internally with stores, customers and the community. You need to have adequate inventory and to devote adequate space for display-cutting customers and create a destination in-store.

take it all in, they love it and when they taste it they become fully engaged.

**What other holiday in-store demos do you offer retailers to help draw excitement over the holiday season?**

We are entering year five with Baci Making Events, year three with Panettone Cutting Events, year two with Torrone Cutting Events, year two with Gavioli Popping Events, year one with Loacker Wafer Making Events and we have several more that we are working on to extend throughout the year instead of just the festive season. All you need is a creative approach, an open mind, a willingness to differentiate, and passionate people that love what they do... the consumer will do the rest. ●

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# Grow sales and profits

Since 1990 we've helped grocers grow their dips category sales with innovative and great tasting products, capitalizing on market trends.

## Not all hummus is created equal

- Give your shoppers the real all-natural choice and let us help you increase sales and expand your hummus consumer base
- Reach the other 80% of consumers looking for product attributes not available with current hummus brands
- All of our products are made using only the highest-quality, 100% all-natural ingredients and are completely preservative-free

## Taste the difference

- No artificial preservatives, ever
- Made with only fresh and all-natural ingredients
- Made with dried chickpeas grown in Western Canada
- High standards means high quality products



## Free discovery kit

To receive your free discovery package, please email : [discoverykit@fontainesante.com](mailto:discoverykit@fontainesante.com)

