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JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2022

A NATURAL ADDITION TO THE FAMILY

**COPPERSIDE FOODS
GROWS STRONGER BY ADDING
SHOPPERS FOODS WHOLESALE TO
ITS SUPPORT OF BC'S NORTH**

*(L-R) Blaine Kluss, vice-president in
charge of warehouse operations and
Joseph Lavoie, president*

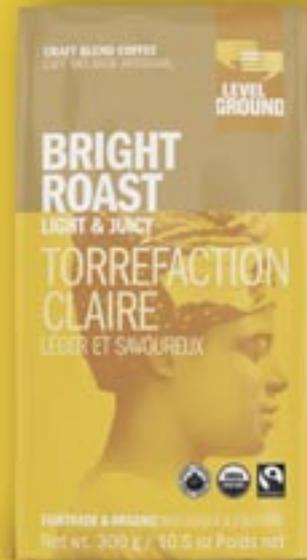
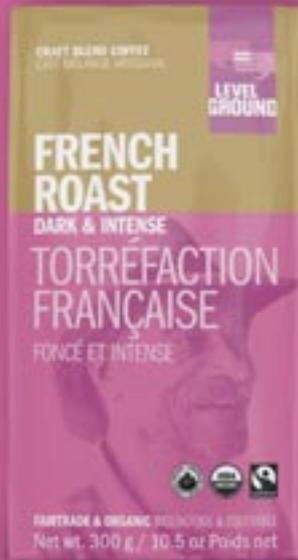
**STORE
STRATEGIES
DESIGN DIFFERENTIALS**

**TOP TEN TIPS
TO MAXIMIZE
IMPULSE BUYS**

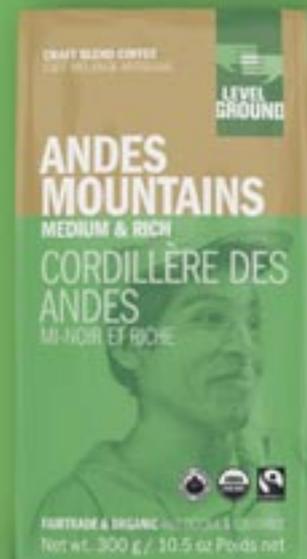
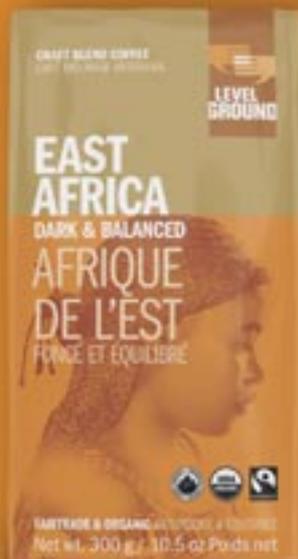
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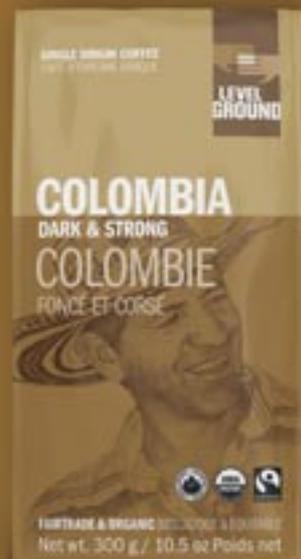
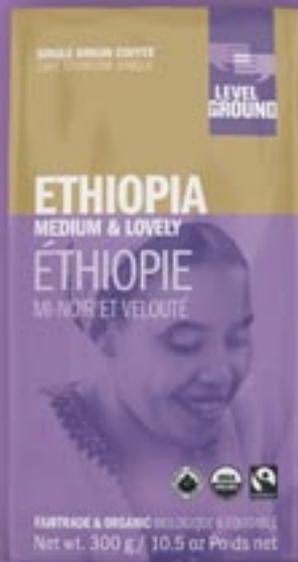
+ HEALTH & WELLNESS UPDATE - PLANT-BASED FOOD & BEVERAGES

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WHICH ONES WILL YOU CHOOSE?





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Grocery Store Footprints are Shrinking



This issue we bring you our special store design feature. One of the most discernable long-term trends is the shrinking size of the grocery store, which has been accelerated by the growth of online grocery store sales. The rule of thumb used to be the bigger the better, with some supercentres approaching over 100,000 sq. ft. The more time customers spent perusing the aisles, the bigger the basket, the principal driver of profitability.

But things are changing considerably with new competitive formats, shifting demographics and shopping patterns with consumers purchasing their groceries at different retail channels and basket size shrinking. Stores are adding amenities to attract shoppers, chef-prepared ready-to-eat meals, juice bars, gourmet bakery items, dietitian services, cooking classes, and health, wellness, and beauty products.

Even traditionally larger grocers like Whole Foods are testing new concepts centred around the smaller store footprint. Whole Foods Market 365 features lower prices, smaller spaces (about half the size of a typical Whole Foods) and digital pricing capabilities. The idea is to appeal to those customers who are making several quick shopping trips per week to pick up fresh or prepared foods.

The smaller stores are in part a reflection of how grocers are responding to increasingly dense urban cores. While many stores in rural areas or suburbs remain larger and act as supercentres, closer to urban areas, limited physical space and expensive real estate have combined to force grocers to think creatively. While the average size of a grocery store clocked in around 40,000 square feet a few years ago, many modern outlets are under 20,000 square feet. Urban grocery stores must keep inventory low to reduce operational costs because they simply don't have the economies of scale of a larger space. This means maximising sales per sq. ft.

As grocery stores shrink, how they use the limited space they have becomes even more important. That starts with illuminating the space efficiently and strategically: For example, LED lighting in the produce section can help grocers show off the quality of their goods. The brighter light can bring out the colors in natural foods, increasing their appeal and helping shoppers choose the freshest items. This type of environment could hook customers who value high-quality goods and encourage them to return to the store.

Frank Yeo, Publisher & Editor



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On Our Cover

12 A Natural Addition to the Family

Copperside Foods grows stronger by adding Shoppers Foods Wholesale to its support of BC's North.

Cover Photography: Focal Point Studios



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SABROSO FOODS EXPANDS DISTRIBUTION

Sabroso Foods is entering a new market to distribute its products by adding CO-OP Pembina Barrhead to its list of Albertan retailers.

For a few years, Sabroso Foods has distributed its products to Latin stores in Edmonton and Calgary, but it wasn't until this year that Sabroso Foods began its expansion process



to supply to other retailers and help them improve their ethnic food products offering.

"Our goal at Sabroso is to bring the flavour of home to all those Latins who have migrated to Canada, as well as inviting other cultures to experience the Latin flavour," said Patricia Salazar, CEO & founder. Currently, Sabroso Foods' efforts are focused on reaching the multicultural food consumer market in Canada. Thus, distributing their products to retailers such as CO-OP Pembina West is one of the first steps they have on their way.

EMKAO Foods Now GMP/HACCP Certified!

EMKAO Foods, manufacturer of Organic, Single Origin Cacao Beans is now GMP/HACCP certified! To learn more about EMKAO's premium quality, traceable and sustainable cocoa ingredients from villages in Cameroon, Equatorial Africa visit www.emkaofoods.com



BrandSeed Marketing Appoints Director of Sales

Sheila Farah has joined BrandSeed Marketing Inc. as director of sales. She has 20+ years in the CPG/Health and Wellness industry and her most recent role as senior director, national customer development overseeing Loblaws, Shoppers Drug Mart, Sobeys, Walmart, Metro Inc. Jim Pattison Group, London Drugs, Georgia Main Food Group, Whole Foods, Longo's to name just a few.

Tree of Life Management Changes

Tree of Life Canada, a subsidiary of KeHE Distributors, announced that Patrick Heffernan will be appointed as senior vice-president of customer and client development. Come May 2022, Chris Powell will be retiring as senior vice-president of customer development from Tree of Life after a successful 31-year career. Making impactful contributions to not only Tree of Life, but to the industry as well, Chris Powell has received numerous recognitions, including acknowledgement of excellence from the Canadian Federation of Independent Grocers (CFIG) with the prestigious Life Member award in Industry Builder Category in 2021.



Chris Powell

"We are grateful to Chris for driving success at Tree of Life and thank him for his role in development and progress

of the company," stated Lisa MacNeil, president of Tree of Life Canada. "During his tenure business has doubled and he has been a mentor to many. His Influence has made an indelible impact." Heffernan will join as senior vice-president of customer and client development reporting directly to Tree of Life President, Lisa MacNeil. Prior to joining Tree of Life, Heffernan has an expansive background in the grocery industry, foodservice, and drug industry, with more than 20 years of experience in senior executive roles. His previous experience also includes holding the vice-president of supply chain and supplier relations position at United Natural Foods Canada Inc. (UNFI Canada) until 2020 and most recently holding a role as managing partner with REMBrands. Powell and Heffernan will work closely over the next several months to ensure a smooth transition.



Patrick Heffernan

KINDRED CULTURES RINGS IN 2022 WITH NEW UNFI LISTING

Kindred Cultures, a BC-local fermented foods producer specializing in Water kefir production, is excited to be ringing in the New Years with UNFI! As of January 2022, their entire lineup of delicious, nutritious, probiotic Water Kefir is available for wholesale purchase through the UNFI distribution channel.

"Partnering with UNFI is such an incredible opportunity for us to reach more consumers," said Lyndsay Scott, founder, and CEO of Kindred Cultures.

With their sights set on the shelves of grocery stores nationwide, this listing will help prepare the small Richmond-based business for successful big-time distribution when it goes national.

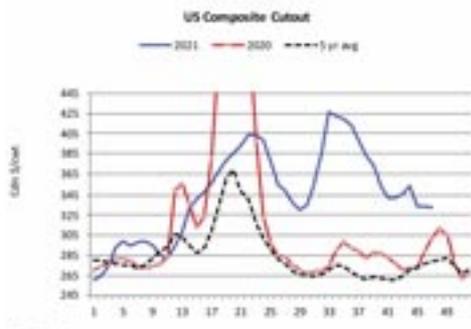
"Not only will their support allow us to more efficiently serve our existing customers in BC, but it will also make our launch into the national market possible — we're so excited and grateful that they will be helping our Water Kefir enter the Ontario market later this year," Lyndsay continued. "We look forward to working with UNFI and bringing good gut health to consumers all across the country in 2022."



Whole Beef Carcass Higher at Wholesale

Sustained, surging beef demand from retail, foodservice, and exports is historically rare, but it is what we are seeing right now.

The trifecta is supporting higher values in the wholesale cutout. With Canadian wholesale prices unreported since March 2020, the US cutout provides a good indication of what is happening in the wholesale market. From January through November 2021, the US composite cutout value was up eight per cent from 2020 and 19 per cent from 2019. The US Choice cutout averaged US\$280/cwt (CDN\$350/cwt), up 17 per cent from 2020 and 26 per cent from 2019. The Select cutout averaged US\$261/cwt (CDN\$327/cwt) and was up 16 per cent from 2020 and 26 per cent from 2019. The average



cutout value is expected to remain at current high levels in 2022.

The higher cutout values were largely driven by Choice and Select short plate (+32 per cent) and brisket (+30 per cent and +28 per cent). Choice ribs (+24 per cent) and loins (+19 per cent) were also in demand. Brisket experienced a counter seasonal price rally in late summer, perhaps presenting an alternative to surging rib and loin prices. Demand cascaded to support Choice flank (+19 per cent), chuck (+11 per cent), and round (+8 per cent) prices, and further to Select flank (+19 per cent), loin (+18 per cent), rib (+16 per cent), chuck (+10 per cent), and round (+7 per cent). Even edible offals and variety meats are up with strong international demand. The whole carcass is higher in value and supporting the cutout.

It is hard to gauge exactly how much of these higher wholesale prices are being passed on to the consumer. Canadian beef retail prices from January through October 2021 were up five per cent from 2020 and up 11 per cent from 2019, with the price for all food purchased from Canadian restaurants up three per cent during the same period. Canadian beef exports were up 25 per cent in volume and 38 per cent in value from January through September 2021.

Kraft Heinz to Combine U.S. and Canada Businesses to Form the North America Zone

The Kraft Heinz Company will combine its U.S. and Canada businesses to create the North America Zone, which is expected to be effective in the second fiscal quarter of 2022. The move is meant to advance the global food and beverage leader's long-term, sustainable growth plans — which were first outlined at its Investor Day event in September 2020 — by bringing increased agility to its innovation agenda, operations, and go-to-market approach. The company's U.S. and Canada businesses accounted for approximately 80 per cent of its 2020 consolidated net sales.

In the last 12 months, Kraft Heinz has taken multiple steps to transform its overall growth profile, strategic focus, and financial flexibility, including divesting certain assets in its global cheese and nuts businesses. The company has also centred its business around a consumer-first approach, significantly investing in its portfolio, digital solutions, customer relationships, and people.

The company believes the creation of the North America Zone will further fuel Kraft Heinz's vision to leverage its scale through improved agility for competitive advantage. Structural changes to support the strategic plan are aimed at streamlining and synergizing the U.S. and Canada businesses. This evolved model is expected to help the North America Zone pilot high-value products, processes, and service innovations, backed by the resources of the two countries, while also increasing speed to market.

"As consumer, customer, and employee needs change, we must be in a position to anticipate, adjust, and respond with speed," said Miguel Patricio, chief executive officer of Kraft Heinz. "Combining our U.S. and Canada businesses — two dynamic zones — gives us a distinct advantage and will produce faster, more effective results so we can continue investing in our strategic plan and driving sustainable growth. While this is an evolution to our structure, it is part of a broader revolution in how we will work at Kraft Heinz going forward."

As a result, the following leadership changes are being made:

Kraft Heinz's new North America Zone will be led by Carlos Abrams-Rivera, currently U.S. Zone President. Since joining Kraft Heinz in February 2020, Abrams-Rivera has been instrumental in reigniting growth in the U.S. business, the company's largest zone. Abrams-Rivera will assume the title of North America Zone President.

The North America Zone structure will include three commercial business units that will be organized around the Company's consumer-driven product platforms and geographic needs, including:

- Taste, Meals, and Away From Home will be led by Pedro Navio, currently president of Latin America, and includes the Taste Elevation and Easy Meals Made Better consumer platforms as well as the U.S. foodservice and ingredient businesses
- Fresh, Beverages, and Desserts will be led by Steve Cornell, currently president - Enhancers, Specialty, and Away From Home, and includes the Fast Fresh Meals, Easy Indulgent Desserts, Real Food Snacking, and Flavorful Hydration consumer platforms
- Canada and North America Coffee will be led by Adam Butler, currently president - Kids, Snacks, and Beverages

The company has also appointed Robert Scott as president of research & development - North America. Scott joins Kraft Heinz from Abbott Nutrition where he most recently served as divisional vice-president of global product development. In this role, he successfully delivered a wide range of product solutions that met the diverse needs of consumers and retailers, as well as led the development of products to support Abbott Nutrition's medical, institutional, and clinical businesses globally. Prior to Abbott Nutrition, Scott was vice-president of research & development - Latin America for The Coca-Cola Company where he delivered consumer-centric product innovations, as well as packaging solutions to support environmental and sustainability goals.

Long-time company executive Bruno Keller, currently Canada Zone president, will assume the position of president of Latin America, part of the company's international zone.

Navio, Cornell, Butler, and Scott will report directly to Abrams-Rivera under the new structure.

The North America Zone will begin structural transitions in early 2022 with full organizational and financial reporting changes expected to take effect at the start of its second fiscal quarter next year.



Greg Mohr

Bee Maid Honey Limited Announces Greg Mohr's Retirement

Bee Maid Honey Limited announces the retirement of Greg Mohr from his position as vice-president of business growth coming this March. Mohr, who has been working with Bee Maid since 2008 has been instrumental in helping the organization achieve substantial growth over the past decade. He came to the company with significant experience working for McNeil, Johnson and Johnson, Merck

Frosst and 7-up Canada and brought a fresh perspective to approaching retail, foodservice and industrial honey sales.

"There's no question that Greg has helped our company grow into being a leading packer of Canadian honey. Under his guidance, the company has forged strong relationships with Canadian grocery retailers, established BeeMaid as a top-selling national brand and helped us reach new markets both domestically and internationally," said Guy Chartier, CEO of Bee Maid Honey Limited. "Everyone at Bee Maid sends him best wishes as he embarks on this new chapter of his life."



DISCOVERY ORGANICS OPENS NEW FACILITY

After opening January 3rd, 2021 in Calgary with a 12,000 sq ft facility, Discovery Organics has built and moved into a larger 25,000 sq ft facility in SE Calgary that is dedicated to wholesaling certified organic fresh fruits and vegetables. The new location at 4216 54 Ave SE. Calgary has multiple temperatures zones and banana ripening rooms to accommodate cold chain requirements for all certified organic produce items.



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Calgary Co-op Celebrates Milestone 65th Anniversary with New Food Store Grand Opening in Sage Hill

Calgary Co-operative Association Limited is celebrating their 65th anniversary of business. Since inception, Calgary Co-op has been known for supporting local and helping to positively shape the local community. To celebrate this achievement, Calgary Co-op celebrated the grand opening of their 24th food store location in Sage Hill.

One of North America's largest co-operatives, Calgary Co-op has been community-minded since day one. Their first location was established by Calgary and area farmers and ranchers who wanted to serve Calgarians with fresh, local food. Today, Calgary Co-op serves more than 440,000 members across its service area in Calgary, Airdrie, Cochrane, High River, Okotoks and Strathmore, and employs more than 3,850 team members.

According to Ken Keelor, CEO of Calgary Co-op, "Celebrating the opening of a new food centre with our team is the perfect way to celebrate 65 years of business. Calgary Co-op has seen many changes over the decades, but our values and community-minded approach remains the same. I would like to acknowledge and congratulate the dedication of our employees and members who continuously show commitment and loyalty to our brand."

The new Sage Hill food store location is a state-of-the-art grocery store with self-checkout, streamlined bakery, sushi services and a robust natural choice selection.

Today, with more than 440,000 members, 3,850 employees, assets of \$627 million and annual sales of \$1.2 billion, Calgary Co-op has been recognized as one of Alberta's Top 75 Employers and is committed to delivering an exceptional customer experience through inspired team members.



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NuStart Appoints National Key Account Manager

NuStart has announced the appointment of Sophie Davidson as national key account manager based in Toronto. Davidson brings a wealth of experience having senior management roles with UNFI and Loblaw. Her insights into the grocery industry and keen understanding of consumer trends are on-point with today's everchanging marketplace.



Sophie Davidson

Crew Expands into US Market with Dallas Office

For the past 15 years, the Crew marketing agency has helped Canadian food and beverage clients grow their brands across North America and is now deepening their reach in the United States. With their honed expertise and thought leadership on export marketing, distribution, and regional targeting and branding, Crew is now even more well-equipped in supporting the success of Canadian food brands looking to expand into the US, with boots on the ground.



As the third largest food and beverage manufacturing metropolis in the US, Texas is a hub for innovation, investment, and expertise. It gives Crew a home base as they work with both East and West Coasts, as well as the Midwest.

Crew will be working with a Dallas strategic and creative agency partner to leverage their capabilities and network.

Ferrero Appoints Vice-President

Ferrero Canada, a global confectionery leader, has promoted David Rabu to vice-president, trade marketing and category management. In this newly created role, Rabu will lead the development and implementation of Ferrero Canada's sales strategy across trade and shopper marketing, revenue and category management, and e-commerce, for its portfolio of brands including Nutella, Nutella & Go, Kinder, Tic Tac, and Ferrero Rocher. He will report to Alessandro Natola, president, Ferrero Canada, and will be a member of the Canadian Leadership Team.



David Rabu

Rabu has been with Ferrero Canada since 2010, most recently as senior director sales, national accounts and e-commerce. During his tenure, he held roles of increasing responsibility across brand marketing, sales, and customer marketing. Prior to joining Ferrero, Rabu worked at Procter & Gamble, Gillette and Duracell, in various sales and brand marketing positions. He brings more than 20 years of experience in consumer packaged goods. "David's broad experience across sales and marketing will be a valuable asset as we continue to drive sustainable, profitable growth across all categories, with a concerted effort towards instore and online execution," said Natola.



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ACC Halls A-E March 10-12, 2022

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FCL EARNINGS STRONG THROUGH CHALLENGING CIRCUMSTANCES

By focusing on its core business areas, and through the inspiring efforts of local Co-ops, Federated Co-operatives Limited (FCL) successfully navigated changing market conditions and the continued challenges of the pandemic to improve its financial results in 2021.

FCL recorded nearly \$9.1 billion in revenue and \$495 million in earnings for the financial year ending Oct. 31, 2021, up from \$7.9 billion in revenue and \$177 million in earnings in 2020. From our earnings, FCL will return \$353.5 million to local Co-ops across Western Canada.

“There’s been a lot of change and uncertainty impacting our work and our lives in the last year, including the pandemic, global supply chain issues and distressing



weather conditions across the Prairies,” said FCL CEO Scott Banda. “It’s remarkable how the Co-operative Retailing System continues adapting to ever-evolving circumstances to remain steadfast supporters of Western Canadian communities that Co-op members can depend on.”

FCL also announced its emission targets, committing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 40 per cent below 2015 levels by 2030, while also aspiring to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. This will be achieved through major investments in the coming years, such as those in carbon-capture technology at the Co-op Refinery Complex and Co-op Ethanol Complex.

“To be sustainable, we must continue to invest in our Co-op retail assets and in our future as a provider of transportation fuel in the low carbon economy,” said Banda. “Our profits are returned to our members and our investments in the future of our business will happen right here in Western Canada. That is something our entire Co-operative can be proud of.”

In the past five years, FCL has been able to return a total of more than \$2.3 billion to local Co-ops across Western Canada.

Lactalis Canada Makes \$145K Value Donation to B.C. Food Banks

Canadian dairy leader Lactalis Canada has donated more than 34,000 family-sized yogurt tubs – the equivalent of 22 tonnes of Olympic yogurt – to various local food banks and charitable organizations including the Abbotsford Food Bank, CityReach Care, Lotus Light Charity, Quest Food Bank and the Richmond Food Bank to support communities impacted by the recent flooding disaster in British Columbia.

As part of Lactalis Canada’s support, the company has committed to a weekly product donation of its organic yogurt which is inspired by the true west coast spirit and made in Delta, B.C. The donation will continue until the end of 2021 to help offer support during this incredibly difficult time.

“From farms and properties completely washed away to loss of livestock and crippling supply chain issues impacting food availability, the people and communities of British Columbia have been deeply affected by the recent severe flooding events,” said Mark Taylor, president & CEO, Lactalis Canada. “Lactalis Canada’s purpose is to enrich and nurture the lives of Canadians and in this situation, and for us, that means doing whatever we can to get nutritious dairy products to all those impacted. Our thoughts continue to be with B.C. including our suppliers, partners and customers and our many dairy farmers in the region that have been particularly hard hit by this devastating event.”

Additionally, Lactalis Canada’s Foodservice division has also offered to donate dairy ingredients to local restaurants preparing complimentary meals for community members.



Calendar of Upcoming Events

March 8-12, 2022 Natural Products Expo West

Anaheim Convention Center
Anaheim, California, USA

For more info: www.expowest.com

April 5-7, 2022 CPMA Convention + Trade Show

Palais des Congrès
Montreal, Quebec

For more info: convention.cpma.ca

April 10-11, 2022 Bakery Showcase 2022

Toronto Congress Centre
Toronto, Ontario

For more info: <https://baking.ca>

April 21-24, 2022 CHFA West

Vancouver, BC

For more info: <https://chfa.ca>

April 25-26, 2022 Grocery & Specialty Food West 2022

Vancouver, BC

For more info: <https://gsfshow.com>

April 20-22, 2022 SIAL Canada

Palais des Congrès
Montreal, Quebec

For more info: <https://sialcanada.com>

May 23-26, 2022 Sweets and Snacks Expo

McCormick Place
Chicago, Illinois, USA

For more info:

<https://sweetsandsnacks.com>

By Ronda Payne

A Natural Addition to the Family

Copperside Foods grows stronger by adding Shoppers Foods Wholesale to its support of BC's North.

It wasn't always a straight line to success for Copperside Foods, but last year's addition of Shoppers Foods Wholesale to the business made perfectly-aligned sense. With their thriving organization contributing to the needs of northern BC communities, Copperside Foods partners Joseph Lavoie (president), Chris Moldenhauer (director) and Blaine Kluss (vice-president in charge of warehouse operations) have rolled with the changes to continue supporting people and businesses.

"Our strength comes from being vertically integrated," says Lavoie. "We aren't like traditional wholesalers, we

have retail locations. It was a natural extension for us; Shoppers Wholesale, we've always had kind of a handshake agreement, so it's a natural progression for us."

The partners thought Shoppers Wholesale might be up for sale at some point and knew they wanted to add it to the organization. Discussions with then owner, Larry Hyette, revealed the opportunity to buy sooner than expected and a deal was made.

"It was a marriage made in heaven, if you will," says Kluss. "Very similar organizations, distribution setups, trucking contracts. It was a very easy fit."

With the addition, Copperside Foods has three trade names under its umbrella: Copperside Foods, which encompasses six retail locations, J&F Distributors and Shoppers Foods Wholesale which became part of the fold in August 2020.

"We took on all the employees. All the customers that are coming in are still seeing the same faces," says Lavoie. "Although there have been a few changes, it's still basically the same operation."





Now, the wholesale side of the business can cover from the western BC islands of Haida Gwaii to Mackenzie as the northernmost point and south to Williams Lake. Having two warehouses in northern BC makes it possible to supply customers in the region more quickly than companies based in the Lower Mainland can. Adding Shoppers Foods Wholesale brought efficiencies and advantages to both warehouses, taking the best practices and applying them across the board.

“We look at each one of them [Shoppers Foods Wholesale and J&F Distributors] as a hub that covers a range of territory,” Kluss says. “From a trucking perspective, you can’t make a day trip from Prince George to Terrace in the same day.”

And that is where the company’s advantage lies. They can supply restaurants in less than 24 hours. But, they also bring the knowledge of the north’s communities to the table.

“There are still quite a few small communities of 500 people or smaller and some of those are off the

main highways,” he says. “There are delivery challenges. Our advantage is we know these people, we know these communities.”

A second warehouse also means stronger buying power which translates to goods people of northern BC want. Product lines like Red Bull, Pinty’s, Saputo and Ben & Jerry’s may be common-place to larger communities, but they haven’t always been available to the smaller regions or the independent retailers the wholesale side of the organization focuses on.

“We started partnering with Saputo and Red Bull, Transcold and different partners we’re representing today,” says Lavoie. “It really started to put us on the course to where we’re coming at it today.”

Between the two warehouses, the leverage has increased. What may have been 1,000 cases a month is now 3,000. And those suppliers that had minimums that the northern company couldn’t meet can now be accessed which brings desired goods to a ready market.

*(Above - L-R)
Joseph Lavoie,
president and
Blaine Kluss,
vice-president
in charge of
warehouse
operations*



While wholesaling to independent restaurants had been the focus of J&F in the early years, the shifts in communities led the organization to look more to small, independent retailers as their audience.

“We started focusing a lot more on retail,” says Moldenhauer. “The wholesale market was changing.”

The market in the north has always seen some flux. Consider the hard '90s when the forestry industry dropped off, shutting many communities down. Moldenhauer became a minority owner of the company in 1992 after having been a manager for a few years.

“We had a lot of hair-brained ideas,” he says. “It’s just been an interesting ride.”

But those hair-brained ideas kept the company moving forward to what it is today. The changes have created strength and solidarity and what is both literally and figuratively a family company, according to Kluss.

“The north is where we live and where all of us were born and raised. It’s important to us,” he says. “That’s kind of our mantra, if you will, we want to continue expanding and providing our service.”

Taking care of the north is Coppertside Foods’ team of dedicated employees that seem to stand behind that mantra.

“Just at the one warehouse in Terrace, we celebrated four people with 25 years with the company,” he notes.

He’s been on board since 1989 and is obviously not a rarity when it comes to tenure among the 169 employees. Lavoie is the new kid on the block. Although he was coming in as a partner to help Moldenhauer start his exit, his dad, Ed, unexpectedly passed away and moved Lavoie into the integral role of president a few years ago.

As for the future, Kluss explains that there will always be a vision of taking care of northern communities.

“I see growth,” he says. “I see a richer mix of products. I see a constant creeping expansion. We’re looking at every community that is under or non-served. Even if it means another small warehouse... we’re continually looking at that kind of stuff.” ●



Coppertside Foods has six retail locations.



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HEALTH and WELLNESS UPDATE



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PLANT-BASED FOODS

By Carly Peters

Getting Their Grow Up

It has become abundantly clear that plant-based products are not just for vegans or vegetarians. More Canadians are looking for clean, great-tasting foods that don't come from animals — be it for health, environmental, or ethical reasons. In fact, according to recent Leger research commissioned by Plant-Based Foods of Canada (PBFC), two-thirds of Canadians say they eat plant-based foods at least several times a month. This desire for alternative options has driven both growth and innovation (think amping up taste and texture) in the category, giving grocers more almost-like-the-real-thing options to list across numerous categories.

“The growth [of plant-based products] is indeed impressive,” says Leslie Ewing, executive director at PBFC, referencing Nielsen stats (Ntl Excl Nfld – GB+DR+MM – 52 weeks to January 2, 2021) which show plant-based foods outpacing total food and beverage products (+25 per cent versus +12 per cent).

The most developed category — plant-based beverages — now represents 10 per cent of total milk sales, while meat alternatives have seen 34 per cent growth, and non-dairy cheese and non-dairy yogurt have jumped 38 per cent and 49 per cent, respectively.



**PLANT-BASED FOOD AND BEVERAGES
OPTIONS CONTINUE TO INCREASE AS THEIR
POPULARITY SOARS WITH CANADIANS**

health and wellness update



Ewing states that ‘flexitarians’, those Canadian who are adding plant-based options into their diet, and an increase in people who are adopting vegan and vegetarian lifestyles, have certainly driven this growth, but product innovation has also helped.

“The technologies at play in plant-based foods are now starting to roll over to other types of plant-based options,” she says, pointing to new protein sources that are being incorporated like pea, hemp, and fava bean. “These new products are helping plant-based food

manufacturers reach into entirely new audiences. There are exciting launches happening almost every month, and they are impacting the majority of categories in the grocery store. All this innovation has curious consumers trying and repurchasing plant-based.”

Over the last couple of years most of the focus in North America has been on burgers, ground, meatballs, and a little on sausages, explains Tony Morello, chief executive officer for Zoglo’s Incredible Food Corp. However, ever-improving technology that is helping to create products that come remarkably close to traditional alternatives has now made it possible to create amazing chicken-like products, with and without coatings, souvlaki and kabobs, and even fish-like products. The company recently launched a canned tuna style option and are working on a “shrimp” offering.

“These innovations we believe will be the first of their kind for North America,” he states, adding in 2022, Zoglo’s will also be introducing six plant-based, vegan, ready-to-eat meals, including Penne with Chicken Parm, Sheppards Pie, Butter Chicken, and a Mac & Cheese Burger, along with a fishless burger and fishless sticks format, and fun-shaped meatless nuggets for kids.

Along with familiar formats, flavour innovation has vastly improved to help boost the category with customers who still want that meaty taste.

“I can tell you from personal experience, as someone who grew up vegetarian, this category has come a long way. I’ve eaten a lot of not-so-great veggie burgers in my lifetime,” says Mitchell Scott, co-founder and CEO of The Very Good Butchers, which recently launched Butcher’s Select, a premium line of gluten-free and soy-



Zoglo’s will be introducing six plant-based, vegan, ready-to-eat meals in 2022.

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health and wellness update



free burgers, sausages and meatballs, that pack an extra meaty taste and texture and contain nothing but recognizable plant-based ingredients such as navy beans, pea protein, and organic veggies. “And basic options are no longer cutting it. Vegans and flexitarians alike are looking for premium, high-quality options that are good for you as they are delicious.”

A great example, he states, is their most popular

“You’re now seeing products like ours in grocery store fridges, directly beside animal meat — that’s a huge leap forward in normalizing plant-based foods for a broader, more mainstream part of the population.”



Butcher’s Select is a premium line of gluten-free and soy-free burgers, sausages and meatballs that are made from plant-based ingredients such as navy beans, pea protein and organic veggies.

seasonal product — the festive “Stuffed Beast,” a delectable beast with fluffy sweet potato and cranberry stuffing wrapped in a plant-based roast. He also adds they are seeing a growing demand for plant-based snack and charcuterie options. “This is really interesting to see in a space that is usually heavy in animal products,” says Scott, adding in response they’ve developed a charcuterie box which features meatless “meats” along

with the company’s cashew-based cheeses from their Very Good Cheese Co. brand.

“You’re now seeing products like ours in grocery store fridges, directly beside animal meat — that’s a huge leap forward in normalizing plant-based foods for a broader, more mainstream part of the population,” he states.

Normalization hopefully equals convenience, which helps those who are just starting to make some dietary switches.

“When for generations most of our recipes have contained meat, dairy, and eggs, it’s not the easiest transition to make on top of a full and busy life so assistance is required. People need quick easy dishes to feed their families, even if they are only replacing a couple of meat based meals a week,” says Connie Marples, founder of Boosh Food, which is diversifying their plant-

based options from frozen to chill to shelf stable. “The common thread amongst all Boosh products is they are either ready to eat or easy to prepare, solving the challenge for people trying to transition to a more plant-based diet.”

In that vein, the company is launching a new shelf-stable Mac N Cheese product in two flavours, Better Cheddar and Nacho, featuring Boosh’s proprietary cheese powder made from pea protein, nutritional yeast, tapioca, and special spices. Marples says they are also currently working with a local producer of a chicken-like product to incorporate into a ready-to-eat dish — perfect for lots of recipes especially in a gravy or sauce.

Making sure those interested in plant-based foods had new, interesting, and easy-to-prepare options, was one of the main reasons Myrna Selzler launched BABz, a line of clean, nutrient-dense, plant-based flatbread and meat-alternative dry mix products.

“‘Non-cook’ consumers can make this and create a great product. The more adventurous consumers can make all kinds of creations. Today, for example, I made a vegan stuffing for Christmas from two of our products,” she states, adding whatever the creation, customers just need to add water (or beer or wine) to the dry mixes and within 30



Very Good Cheese Co. provides cashew-based cheeses.

minutes they’re eating nutritious, high-protein, high-fibre food. “We want our customers to prepare nutritious foods for and with their family and friends with ease. And they don’t need to compromise quality, flavour, or family time.”

Selzler urges grocers who are adding more plant-based options to try the products so they know what they are selling and can assure consumers more easily about preparation, nutrition, and flavour profiles.

Temporary out-of-section displays are a great way to generate unplanned purchases and trials adds Scott. He suggests placing high-quality plant-based versions alongside their meat counterparts.

As more people are looking for that variety plant-based is now able to offer, grocers should think outside the veggie burger, and offer more unique plant-based products to meet the growing need across all grocery categories. ●

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Boosh Food Acquires Pulse Kitchen

Boosh Food adds to their lineup of plant-based comfort foods with the acquisition of Pulse Kitchen. Pulse Kitchen's dairy free, soy free, gluten free line of vegan cheese comes in seven flavours and is perfect on a cheese platter, sandwich or cracker.

For more information: booshfood.com



So Veggie “So Wise!” Hits Market

So Veggie “So Wise!”, a new brand of ready-to-eat plant-based protein, has hit the market. The product boosts a very short list of five ingredients, with water and textured soy protein at the top. Available in two forms — meatless fillet and meatless ground — its plant-based protein is an excellent source of iron and fibre, and it's low in sodium. Neither form contains GMOs, preservatives, or artificial colours. A quick, versatile solution sold in easy-to-open two-serving packs, it doesn't need refrigerating or rehydrating. Meatless fillets can replace both beef and chicken in stir-fries, salads, wraps, Asian soups, stews, and subs, while meatless ground is easily used in any ground-meat dishes, including tacos, shepherd's pie, chili, burritos, pasta, and casseroles.

For more information: amelie@natapr.com

New Sesame Snaps Seeds and Grains Bars

Sesame Snaps, Canada's favourite on-the-go snack since the '70s, has introduced new Seeds & Grains bars, which offer the same sweet taste with the added benefit of whole, ancient grains.

Packing a powerful punch, new Sesame Snaps Seeds & Grains bars merge the dietary benefits of sesame seeds with the even more robust health benefits of puffed ancient grains including amaranth, millet, quinoa and buckwheat, all in a convenient single serving that is both vegetarian and naturally gluten-free. Made with natural ingredients, they contain no artificial flavours, colours or preservatives. A source of fibre and Omega-6, the gluten-free crispy snack provides 4g of protein per bar to propel you through the day.

“There's a difference between snacking and purposeful snacking,” explains Svetlana Vnučko, marketing director at Unitop — the producer of Sesame Snaps. “Fuelling your body to give it the energy it needs is about making more balance choices and shifting away from restrictive no carb diets. Simple, more natural ingredients such as seeds and ancient grains support your heart health as well as your immune and digestive systems.”

For more information: www.sesamesnaps.ca



A Kelowna Woman Has Concocted a Recipe for Burgers for a New Age

Bodacious Artisan Foods Inc. is a Kelowna, B.C. company launching its plant-based flatbread and meat-alternative dry mix products — under the trademark BABz, a name that started as a nickname for their Burgerz and Breadz.

Just add water (or beer or wine) to the dry mixes and within 30 minutes you are eating nutritious, high-protein, high-fibre food. The products contain only whole foods; there are no additives or preservatives. The packages have labels you can read and contain ingredients you can trust.



“Our mission is to provide high-quality, easy-to-prepare plant-based foods,” says Owner Myrna Selzler. “We want our customers to prepare nutritious foods for and with their family and friends with ease. And they don't need to compromise quality, flavour or family time.”

Selzler has teamed up with Martin McDermott, a chef with 15 years of whole-food manufacturing experience in the health/energy bar-and-protein-powder industry. McDermott's extensive industry experience and

connections have fast-tracked BABz products from a concept into consumers' bellies in record time.

The seasonings for the five plant-based meat alternatives were created by Selzler's brother, Wayne and contain minimal salt and sugar, maximizing the flavour profile of other spices.

“We source our products across Canada and the globe, seeking ethical, sustainable and natural ingredients that meet BABz high standards,” says Selzler. Products are gluten-free, dairy-free, soy-free, nut-free, vegan and high in protein and fibre.

For more information: buybabz.com.

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GROCERY INDUSTRY GETS READY TO GATHER LIVE! IN-PERSON AT **GSF West 2022**

Western Canada's premier B2B grocery and specialty food conference and exhibition, Grocery & Specialty Food West (GSFW) returns April 25 and 26 at the Vancouver Convention Centre East Building (999 Canada Pl, Vancouver, BC).

Grocery retailers, distributors, vendors, wholesalers and more will be able to network, meet, and do business over two days at the event. Due to overwhelming demand, this year's show has newly expanded its exhibition space to over 90,000-sq.-ft. taking over three halls in the Vancouver Convention Centre, enabling a one-stop event for all your exhibition and conference needs. This year also marks the 60th anniversary of the Canadian Federation of Independent Grocers association and will be marked with an awards dinner celebrating the best grocers in Canada on April 25th.

Exciting new and enhanced programs create an all-inclusive collaborative, networking and educational experience for everyone in the grocery and specialty food industries. From the retail tour on Sunday, April 24, to the networking reception the same day, there are numerous opportunities to connect with the industry.

In addition to workshops and keynotes across several stages on the exhibition floor, there will be a wide-ranging array of leading grocery and specialty food suppliers that showcase their latest innovations and services to attendees. Not to miss are the local vendors from Ontario in Choose Ontario Pavilion, and as well the new-to-grocery companies in the First-Timers Pavilion.

As a fast-paced industry valued at \$120-billion, grocery stakeholders are always on the lookout for the latest innovations, insights, and trends to differentiate themselves from their competitors. The GSFW show has become the trusted epicentre where thousands of key decision-making retailers and manufacturers converge to discover insights and new products, share conversations, and build relationships.

New Product Showcases, Top 10 in Grocery, the direct meeting program, Retailer Connect are some of the value-added programs available to maximize brand impact at the event.

New Product Showcases: The New Product Showcase prominently displays your products and services in the main hallway by the Show



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Entrance and are the first things attendees will see. Spaces limited! Contact Rolster Taylor: Rtaylor@cfg.ca

Top 10 in Grocery Contest: This exclusive contest is reserved for companies participating in the New Product Showcase. Top 10 Winners are chosen by trade editors and get additional invaluable promotional marketing. Contact Rolster Taylor: Rtaylor@cfg.ca

Retailer Connect Meeting Program: Retailer Connect is a unique opportunity for exhibitors to meet one-on-one with select retailers from coast-to-coast. Dedicated time slots in a speed meeting format allow for maximum efficiency. Contact Joe Sawaged: Jsawaged@cfg.ca

Sponsorship Opportunities: On-site contests, speaker session sponsorship and workshop opportunities and more are available to even further bolster your brand's exposure. Contact Joe Sawaged: Jsawaged@cfg.ca

All attendees can take advantage of the free workshops and networking receptions to make new connections and sell your brand across the country. ●



To learn more about the full panel of speakers, conference details, Top 10 Products In Grocery for 2022, tips for attending the show and more, go to www.GSFShow.com

photo courtesy shutterstock.com



Leveraging SOCIAL MEDIA at the Store Level

USE OF DIGITAL TOOLS FOR GROCERY RETAILERS IS LAGGING OTHER CHANNELS

Last year was a very interesting year of exploring the power of social media for our team at Field Agent Canada. We were able to see a lot of the pros and cons of using various social media platforms to engage with shoppers right across Canada, through a lot of experimentation in 2021.

In general, it seems that social media is not being leveraged in grocery retail as it is in other retail channels. Obviously, there is a strong use case for social media in e-commerce channels and in retail categories such as fashion or sporting

goods that may be targeted to a younger demographic.

But in grocery, efforts in social media tend to be coordinated by big chains and are at a national level. I think that there is an even greater opportunity for the grocery channel to use social media at a local or "grassroots" level to build connections with the overall community and individual shoppers, while also driving sales growth.

First, let's start with the basics. What happens when you Google your store? Is your Google Business listing up to date? Do photos of your store appear? Is your store pinned at the correct location on the map? Are the store hours up to date (especially during holiday period)?

The second major consideration is that there are a lot of different social media platforms and the demographics of who is on those platforms varies quite a bit as shown in CHART 1.

If your store is located near a university the platforms of choice maybe TikTok or Instagram while if you were in a suburban bedroom community a better platform mix might be Facebook and Instagram.

Having a series of YouTube videos tied to your Google Business profile can provide some interesting content that helps introduce your store to local shoppers. Maybe a short welcome video from the store manager. Or maybe a video showing the bakers hard at work getting the fresh baked goods ready for the day. Or the seafood manager highlighting the freshness and selection available in their department. This content will be long living and give potential shoppers a better view inside what makes your store special.

Other content on more “in the moment” platforms such as TikTok, Pinterest and Instagram should highlight what is happening right now in-store as the content only lasts a short period of time. Without being too much of a sales-pitch, content can still engage the local shopper. An Instagram post showing a newly built display of Easter candy or a TikTok post showing a new item that just arrived in-store is more subtle but still engaging to your viewers.

Also have fun! Some businesses are “all business” on social media, but a fun video of your employees dancing in the aisles, or a time-lapsed video of the delivery truck being unloaded on the overnight shift shows another dimension of your business. Funny, interesting and quirky gets views on social media (at least in moderation)!

I encourage you to also ask staff, family and friends which local retailers are already doing a good job on social media. Check out their accounts, see what they are posting and which posts get the most views. Use this intelligence to drive your own content mix.

Maybe you are like me and you are not overly tech savvy or creative – so who should run your social campaigns and manage your digital presence?

Fortunately, in the grocery industry we have a wealth of social media knowledge in the store's team of employees. Ask around and find one or two people on your team who spend an hour or two of their day bringing your store to life on-line. You will be amazed (as was I) to see the passion and creativity that can be unlocked by adding this responsibility to someone's job description.

But just don't turn over the keys. Have them draft a communication plan that carefully schedules out the cadence and content of social posts and be sure to approve all creative ideas before pressing “post”.

Another avenue you might take would be to find a local shopper who has a solid on-line presence and can act as a “shopper ambassador” for your store. There is an ever-expanding group of deal hunters and couponers that have thousands of followers on various platforms and having them make a weekly post about your store can grow awareness and also expand the followers of your social media accounts.

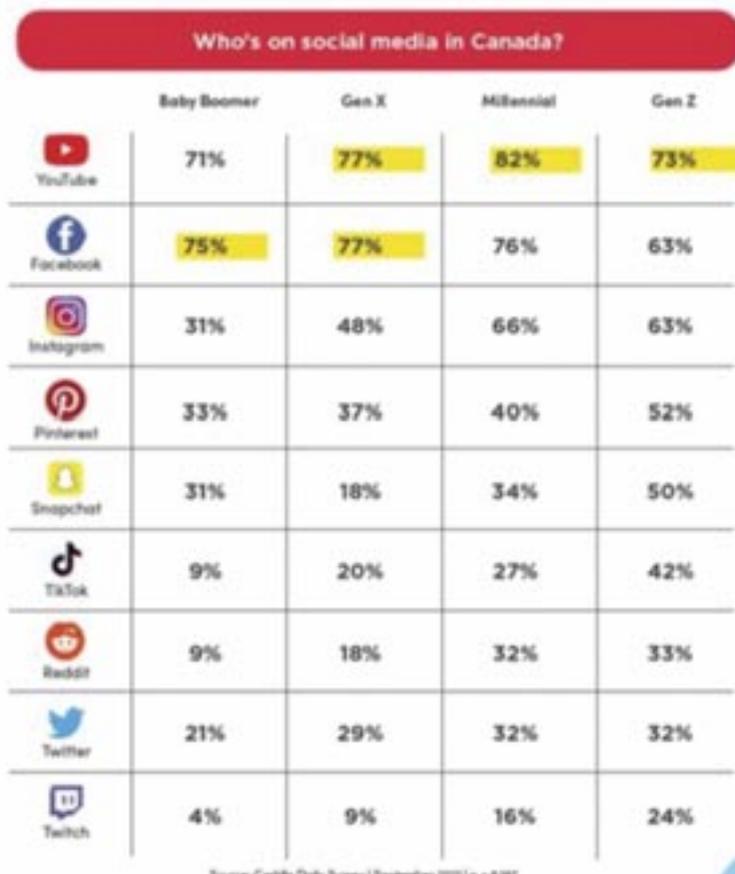
Having your ambassador shoot a post in the store each week highlighting what's exciting in-store can drive interest and traffic to your location. They can also have a secret deal of the week that the promote to their followers.

Many of the popular influencers in the coupon/deals space are what I like to call “Digital Robin Hoods”. Their most popular posts find hacks that allow shoppers to take advantage of multiple

CHART 1

A look at usage of platforms by demographic:

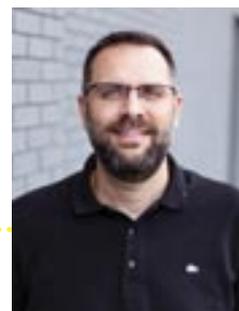
*Yellow represent top used channels by age groups



deals to get products for free or close to it. Imagine finding an item that is in the flyer but also has an on-shelf coupon and a digital offer on a platform like Checkout 51 or a loyalty points offers. Digital Robin Hoods do uncover some pretty amazing deals that are unintentional and they do highlight the need for retailers, brand marketers and account teams to work closely together to coordinate promotional efforts in the digital age – but that is a topic for another

Again, know who you are partnering with and vet their existing content before developing a partnership with an influencer. Start out slow and give the influencer room to make their posts about your store genuine so they resonate with their audience and in turn, will be more beneficial to your store.

There are lots of digital media experts out there and I am definitely not one of them. I encourage you to think about growing your social media efforts for your store in 2022 and have fun! Budgets don't have to be huge and the benefits can be very positive in building your connection with your local community! ●



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

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STORE Strategies

DESIGN DIFFERENTIALS

The local grocery store has been inundated with change over the years. And the pandemic has brought to the fore just how important it is for these stores to continue to evolve.

A recent report from Deloitte, *The future of food: a Canadian perspective*, underscored the pressure that grocery stores currently face. The report states:

“In recent years, the lifestyles and consumption habits of Canadian consumers have been changing in response to a variety of factors: health and wellness trends, climate change worries, food and plastic waste concerns, the ubiquity of online shopping, rising food costs, and even changing demographics. Then COVID-19 hit — and pushed the pace of change into overdrive. Food retailers found themselves racing to keep up while aiming to strike a balance between investments and operating efficiencies.”

BIG ISN'T ALWAYS BETTER

One of the trends currently in play among grocery operators is the actual size of the store.

“Supersize stores had a large influence on layout and design due to their sheer size,” says Chris Fowler, president, Matrix

Marketing Concepts Inc. “In the past few years, things have migrated back to smaller footprint stores, which calls for a completely different design approach.”

And, in fact, the Deloitte report highlights this trend:

“The large-format stores that rose to prominence five to ten years ago are making way for smaller formats that focus on fresh products and food discovery as retailers right-size and ‘right-brand’ stores to be more relevant to the needs of local markets...”

The report cites a 2020 opening of a Real Canadian Superstore — the brand’s first urban location in Calgary. The new location sported a 36 per cent to 48 per cent smaller footprint than that of a typical Superstore in the area.

SETTING THE MOOD

Fowler attributes the design changes being seen in today’s grocery stores to the developing needs of today’s consumers.

“Consumers value a warm, inviting, welcoming environment to shop in,” he explains. “You see evidence of this across the retail industry in many channels, not just in grocery.”

Henry Friedmann, Western Regional Sales, Arneg Canada, suggests that competition has spurred grocery operators to up their offerings.



Arneg Canada has a wide range of refrigerated cases and systems that can be used for merchandising displays in a variety of departments.

“Competition has increased the importance of getting customers to try new products,” he says, adding that more inviting colours, better lighting and more eye-catching food displays are popular methods being used to better engage customers.

Friedmann cites LED lighting and signage as two tools that grocers are implementing more widely.

“LED lights have played a big role in recent years to improve energy savings, as well as improve the presentation of the products,” he says. “Signage has evolved as well as a way to get customers’ attention.”

Fowler also speaks to the fixture changes being implemented in today’s stores.

“We’ve seen lots of changes and use of natural materials and lighting where you haven’t seen it traditionally applied,” he says. “Even in areas like backwall signage (category signage) where we are doing backlit fabric panels that have brilliant resolution, and are very inexpensive to update graphics.”

PRODUCT PLEASERS

Offering the right product mix to attract consumers is another key element of a grocer’s success.

For example, the Deloitte report states that “Fresh food is fast becoming the key driver of store traffic and sales”. It says that nearly half of Canadian survey respondents don’t buy groceries online because they want to choose their own fresh ingredients.

“Accordingly, retailers are devoting a larger proportion of square footage to fresh produce, meat and dairy products and making room for an expanding selection of plant-based alternatives...”

Having the right fixtures and layout in which to present these fresh offerings is also key to increasing a store’s appeal.

“There has been lots of new development in the design and merchandising of perimeter departments, such as fresh,” says Fowler, who adds that the company’s ModoShelf is a case in point. “ModoShelf is an excellent example of a brilliant



the 15-ft. height of the installation is notable because customers can now easily identify signs for various product categories, which are illuminated on the front and back.

CLARITY:

A new lighting element has been added to the meat and fish sections with Imoon’s innovative Meat Fish HD LED, which enhances the natural colors of the white and red contrasts of the meat and fish on display. The store’s furnishings and materials are also enhanced with a special SPARK LED that increases the

New Light to the Sobeys Grocery Shopping Experience

Imoon, a global leader in the design and production of lighting solutions, has undertaken an innovative food market pilot project with Sobeys with the installation of an all-new, highly scalable lighting design in the Orangeville, Ontario location of Sobeys to create a unique and exclusive experience for shoppers.

The Sobeys supermarket in Orangeville features a modern food hall that is a modular grocery store concept centred around mobile fixtures that can easily be rearranged according to needs. Imoon’s team of lighting designers have ensured flexibility with its lighting concept design that leverages advanced technologies, including the use of special LEDs, for improved ambience and energy efficiency.

Notable features of Imoon’s pilot project include:

VERSATILITY:

An example of the high degree of versatility in Imoon’s lighting solutions is Sobeys-Orangeville’s fruit and vegetable section, where two very different configurations work together: lighting fixtures equipped with Full Color LEDs, which accentuate shapes and colors; and spotlights that create a warm, inviting space, which are also intended for the store’s bakery, pastry and wine sections.

FLEXIBILITY:

A system of track projectors ensure maximum flexibility in the number, orientation and interchangeability of accessories for finetuning onsite while

brilliance of the white walls and the beauty section, creating a perception of hygiene and cleanliness.

AMBIENCE:

Imoon’s lighting solutions in the fruit and vegetable section enhance the perception of freshness of seasonal products. The lighting of the wooden panels on top of the fruit and vegetable section provides warm tones and increases the general feeling of relaxation and well-being.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY:

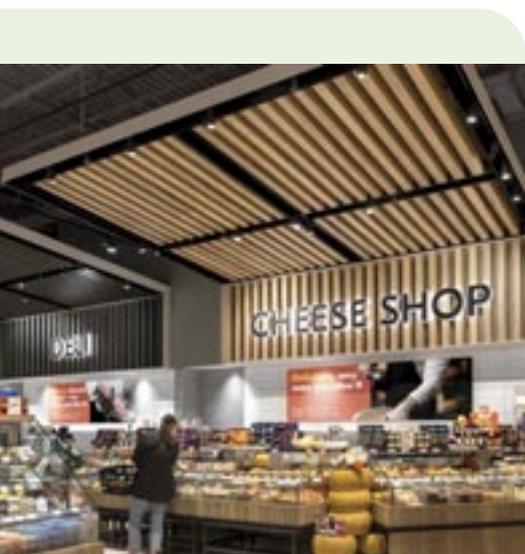
Imoon’s advanced technological solutions significantly reduce both payback period and energy consumption vs. traditional lighting systems, which contributes to a store’s overall profitability.



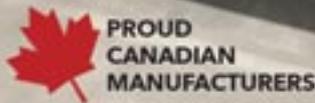
The ModoShelf from Matrix Marketing Concepts Inc. is a merchandising solution that better showcases the product, extends the life of produce and is easier to shop and merchandise.

merchandising solution that better showcases product, extends the life of the produce, and is easier to both shop and merchandise.”

Over at Arneg Canada, Friedmann points to the company’s wide range of refrigerated cases and systems that can be used for merchandising displays in a variety of departments, such as meat, drinks, bakery, cheese, fish or milk.



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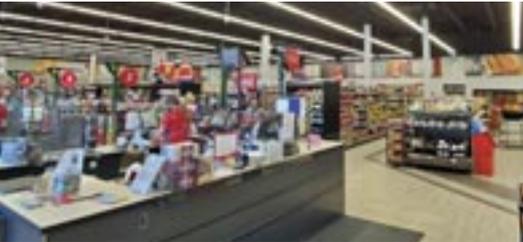
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www.arneg.ca/en

RENO REMIX

One grocery store that went through a major renovation is the Safeway Charleswood Centre in Winnipeg. The grand re-opening took place on December 10, 2020.

“The customers just absolutely love it,” says Manager Paul Miller. “We completely revamped the store and introduced a new, bright design.”



Red River Co-op Food Store in Lorette, MB renovated their store last year with significant interior renovations to make it look fresh and new.

The renovation took about six months to complete, mainly at night to minimize interruption to customers. The redesign included everything from the lighting to the paint to the merchandising.

“It was a complete remodelling,” says Miller. “We put in new fixtures, new paint

and new LED lights. It’s created a brighter, more appealing store. And a better shopping experience for our customers.”

The redesign also put the emphasis on different focal points within the store, at times by increasing the linear feet of certain departments.

“A lot of our customers are looking for ready-to-go meals,” explains Miller. “They want to grab and go. So we increased the size of our deli department. We made significant cosmetic and design changes to the department as well.”

One of these changes is the addition of a live lobster tank – a brand new offering for this location, and one that satisfies the evolving needs of the customer base of this particular store.

Another big redo took place at the Red River Co-op Food Store in Lorette, MB.

“We wanted to do a complete interior refresh to make it look fresh and new,” says Ryan Madla, store manager. “We also wanted to update the brand and make space for new merchandise.”

The renovation, which involved both interior and exterior work, was completed by Parkwest Projects Ltd. in 2021.

The interior renovations were significant.

The deli fresh department, for example, was expanded to include additional products, such as the brand’s fried chicken program, a beverage and coffee section, a curry bar, and soup offering.

Other changes included: a new bakery production area; new produce displays and coolers (plus a renovation of the produce prep area); new meat cooler and meat-cutting room; and an upgraded checkout and customer-service desk.

Also among the renovations were new bakery fixtures, a new cake display counter, and a new “Made in Manitoba” section in the grocery department.

“There has been a lot of positive feedback,” says Madla. “Customers say they feel like they are coming into a brand new store.”

MEETING EXPECTATIONS

With or without the pandemic, Canadian consumers will demonstrate their changing needs through their purchasing habits. The pandemic has served to quicken — and heighten — this evolution. Grocery stores need to continue to show customers that they are up for the task. ●

An advertisement for Guru Lucky snacks. The background is a warm, golden-yellow color. On the left, there is a decorative archway containing the Guru Lucky logo, which says "AUTHENTIC GURU LUCKY TASTE". Below the logo, a list of benefits is presented with checkmarks: "0 Trans Fats", "No MSG", "Gluten Free", "High in Fibre", and "All Natural Ingredients". At the bottom left, the phone number "604-594-9800" and the website "www.gurulucky.com" are listed. In the center and right, three bags of "Ready To Eat Snacks" are displayed. The bags are labeled "Morku" (purple), "Mix Bhujia" (green), and "Punjabi Mix" (orange). The text "Spice Up Your Life!" is written in large, stylized red letters across the top right. At the bottom right, it says "Available at all major supermarket chains and your local grocery stores and convenience stores".

Ian Dickson

Retires from Associated Grocers

After 36 years with Associated Grocers, Ian Dickson is hanging up his grocery apron, retiring from his current position as vice-president of strategic initiatives.

Ian was born into the grocery business. He was the youngest of three children to Flo and Charlie Dickson. Charlie was in the grocery business all his life and when he retired, he too was a vice-president at Associated Grocers.

Ian is a BC boy, graduated from Burnaby Central High School with a sports scholarship in track and field. He earned his degree in Business at Simon Fraser University.

He was persuaded by his father to come and work with him at Associated Merchants in 1981 in Victoria, BC. A few years later Ian moved over to work in produce at Slade and Stewart in Victoria.

His next career move was to follow his father Charlie to Associated Grocers in Calgary. In 1985, he was hired on as the Southern Alberta sales specialist. From there, he transitioned into the marketing department and eventually becoming director of marketing. In 2017, he transitioned to a new role as vice-president strategic initiatives and handed the marketing leadership over to Brody Powell.

Dan Bregg, president, Buy-Low Foods LP, says “Ian has played a key role in the growth of Associated Grocers over the years through his extensive experience and expertise in his many years of leading the marketing and merchandising for the Independent Grocer in Western Canada and, more recently, in providing critical leadership in the greater Buy-Low Foods Group of company’s strategic growth initiatives.”

Bregg refers specifically to the mentoring role Ian played in the company. He “ensured that we are left with dedicated, capable, and passionate leaders in the next generation to take us forward as Associated Grocers approaches its 100th year of operation.

I personally, will forever cherish the dedication and support — but most importantly the friendship — that Ian has given me throughout the years. Our relationship long ago transitioned far beyond being work colleagues to being good friends. Although we won’t be ‘in the business’ together post-retirement, I know that we will be getting together from time to time socially to break bread, lift a glass and catch each other up on our families and our adventures.”



During the Covid pandemic, Ian showed his metal by helping to develop policies and procedures regarding working from home and stepping up sanitization in facilities as well as helping customers put in place the same policies at their stores.

Larry Chmielewski, vice-president wholesale, says Ian has been a solid pillar in the building of Associated Grocers. “He is well respected in the vendor/supplier community also, by all the AG retailers in Western Canada. He has been at the helm of the ‘AG Family’ always with the best interest of our customers first and foremost.”

Larry says Ian loves to travel and has set course for many of their tours around the world with the AG Family of Retailers. “I think this was his favourite part of his career that and planning the annual Fairmont Hot Springs Retailer and Vendor conference now in its 50 plus years. I know he will never be far away

A true leader, he's able to take decisive action when necessary, but loves a good back and forth discussion to come to the right conclusion.

from his home here at AG. The AG team and the grocery industry wish Ian, “Happy Trails” to a long and healthy, well-deserved retirement.”

Lyle Waldren, vice-president, retail sales-Western Accounts & Wal-Mart at Saputo Dairies, Canada, says “I have called on Ian since the early ‘90s. I have always enjoyed working with Ian and have found him to challenge a company representative to be better, and a great supporter of the western industry.

In December 2012 Ian was selected by the Calgary Food and Drug Executive as the Santa Cause recipient. When I heard that Ian been selected, I phoned him asked him if he was retiring? During a 30-minute call, Ian adamantly denied he was retiring — I didn’t believe him. While that day has finally come proving I was right to be suspicious nine years ago. Good luck in your retirement Ian.”

Most of the industry knows Ian as a tough but fair negotiator, but most might not know Ian’s personal side being a genuine philanthropist. Today Ian owns a beautiful home that he built in Bali, Indonesia. He shares this with an adopted family that live in his villa; and he has helped the family and the three children to be educated, to expand their family business as a taxi and tour guide, he even supported them with a business venture. Today the eldest boy is married and has two children.

Ian prides himself on being highly organized and self-assured. A true leader, he’s able to take decisive action when necessary, but loves a good back and forth discussion to come to the right conclusion. Ian is enthusiastic and passionate about the grocery business and occasionally does get a little hot under the collar. But he has mellowed considerably over the years and truly has a kind heart and cares about people. His customer first, supportive attitude has shaped his staff into the hard working, friendly team of today. ●



**Happy Trails, Ian. Wishing you a Happy & Healthy Retirement!
From all of your good friends at Associated Grocers, it has been
a pleasure and a privilege to work with you. Cheers!**

Top 10 Tips



photo courtesy shutterstock.com

Maximizing Impulse Buys

There isn't a single "sure-fire" method of increasing your impulse buys. Impulse buys depend on many different factors down to simply the mood your customer is in at the time.

The following ten tips can help you to gain some control over your customers thought process when it comes to purchasing impulse items. To capitalize on impulse buys, consider using these tips in congruence with each other to maximize their effects.

1 Increase visibility/ Attractive displays

This is always first to mind when it comes to impulse buys, and arguably one of the more important points. A large majority of impulse buys are based on the visual attractiveness of the display. For a customer to buy something they didn't plan on, it's a good idea to first draw them in visually.

2 Strategic positioning – place impulse items near top-selling items

This goes hand in hand with the first tip. Your top-selling items are naturally where most of your store traffic will be focused. Place your impulse buys in these high traffic areas.

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With over 400 certified organic fresh produce items, Discovery Organics can help retailers increase sales in the industry's strongest growth areas - organic and fair trade.



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3

Cross-Merchandising

Place items that complement each other together. When this is done, customers who have come into your store for the first item will be likely to purchase the impulse item that complements what they initially came in for.

4

Leverage social proof

Social proof and influence can be a great method of increasing impulse buys. You can use testimonials from experts, or prominently displayed customer testimonials along with the product can go a long way in convincing consumers.

5

Checkout optimization strategies

This can be as simple as creating a pathway with racks and displays filled with optimal impulse items leading to your checkout registers. This way the customers are corralled through an array of different purchases.

6

Leverage online consumer data for greater insights.

Many grocers are already looking to increase revenue by putting consumer data to better use. In addition to search, the resulting real-time insights and customer profiling improve merchandising, allocation, planning, and forecasting.

7

Create an immersive online platform ready for innovative experience

Platforms play a key role in bringing creative content and deeply personal offers to shoppers at select moments during the customer experience. How product information is shared, and the absolute fit for each shopper, influences shoppers' perception of offers as value rather than clutter.

8

Use mobile tech to your advantage

Shopping apps, retailer texts, push notifications and retailer social media can all go a long way these days with impulse buys. With consumers spending less time in the brick-and-mortar stores and more time online, reaching them through their mobile devices is more important than ever.

9

Use deals and sales to your advantage

A sale that offers uncharacteristically deep discounts or even bold signage that indicates a deal is ending soon can prompt a customer to purchase something they weren't originally planning on purchasing.

10

Product types

Characteristics of impulse buys usually fall under the same categories. They're usually sensory, on the less-expensive side, as well as made to be perceived as urgent and needed. A customer will spend much less time debating a \$5 dollar purchase, compared to a \$20 purchase. ●

ISLAND LIFELINE

ColdStar Solutions
keeps grocery shelves
well stocked on
Vancouver Island



In December of 1999, after recognizing that a potential niche market for specialized refrigerated trucking existed on Vancouver Island, Kelly and Jennifer Hawes started Cold Star Frieght Systems Inc. Kelly’s vision was to change the way that food product was handled on Vancouver Island. At the time due to the many logistical chllenges of shipping to an island there was a lot of room for improvement. With Kelly’s varied background including serving 10 years with the Canadian Armed Forces and Jennifer’s passion for helping people and our communities. ColdStar became a multi-million dollar company in a short period of time.

Little did they suspect their company would eventually become the major transporter of food

to retailers and wholesalers throughout the 12,400 square mile island and nearby Gulf Islands.

Today, ColdStar Solutions Inc. consists of 175 employees and 45 trucks, and operates out of 158,000 square feet of warehouse space. The warehouses have all been purpose built to meet the needs of ColdStar’s wide range of customers. These include their newest building, which is a 72,000 square foot dry goods warehouse in Cassidy, a produce warehouse in Victoria, along with the largest public cold storage facility on Vancouver Island wich is located in Victoria, ColdStar’s warehouse in Richmond on B.C.’s mainland, and cross-dock facilities in Nanaimo and Comox.



Kelly Hawes, CEO

With this infrastructure, ColdStar coordinates closely with BC Ferries and Seaspam to provide next-day delivery of meat, produce, and dry goods to the Island's independent retailers and wholesalers.

Senior Vice-President of Transportation Andy Ellison admits the logistics are daunting. Every night up to 20 refrigerated trailers carry over 750,000 pounds of food from the lower mainland. These loads are ferried across the Strait of Georgia and other waterways. The ColdStar logistics team are armed with very creative back-up delivery plans, which are necessary during inclement weather or cancelled ferry sailings.

"Every step of the way we're thinking of the end user, meaning island residents who need their supermarket shelves well stocked regardless of weather or other circumstances," says Travis Shaw, ColdStar's vice-president, wholesale.



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The well-being of the end user was always the driving force behind Hawes' original company, Cold Star Freight Systems Inc. And although this made it a success from the get-go, its journey to becoming the Island's pre-eminent food supplier began in earnest on July 1, 2014, when it merged with Victoria-based Wilson Foods.

"Wilson was a wholesaler based in Victoria that mainly serviced the independent retail stores on the south island. Kelly and Jennifer needed it to fulfil their vision of being a one stop shop for the entire region," Shaw says.

Wilson's warehouse was sold off, and ColdStar constructed a new facility — the Cassidy warehouse — in the short space of one year.

ColdStar's newly established wholesale division handled produce, dry goods, and temperature-controlled products for

independent grocers, augmenting Hawes' transport division that supplied meat, chicken, and other goods to other retailers (one of many distinctions of the wholesale division today is that it has the largest offering of ethnic Asian cuisine on the Island).

But as impressive as ColdStar's facilities and fleet may be, even more impressive is the hard working team behind them.

"Our people are critical to the food sector, who never fail to surmount the challenges inherent in their job," Shaw says. "We're incredibly fortunate to have them."



Trevor Sawkins, COO

ColdStar's management team is equally dedicated and includes CFO Lynsey Robertson (who is widely credited as integral to ensuring that everything runs smoothly) and COO Trevor Sawkins (who joined ColdStar in 2002, when it was still a relatively new operation,



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because he wanted to work for a small company and contribute to its growth).

As for Shaw, he joined ColdStar in 2020 with over 25 years experience in warehousing, purchasing, local development and category management at Thrifty Foods and Sobeys.

Together, this team excels in building trusting relationships with customers and vendors, listening closely to their needs, and providing innovative solutions — which goes hand in hand with company growth. A case in point is the recent partnership with Paradise Island Foods Inc. of Nanaimo. Since 1978 Paradise's goal has been to make its cheese products more accessible to local residents, and ColdStar struck a deal to assist in distributing their items to a variety of locations, including Port Hardy.

"These are places we already service and can assist Paradise, which would have been unable to access regularly," Shaw explains.

Growth opportunities also abound with regards to the foods ColdStar deals with. Towards the end of 2021, the company was in the midst of adding three different brands of yogurt to the 10,000 items from over 280 companies coming through its warehouses.

"Three new brands may not sound gigantic, but it represents upwards of \$1.5 million in sales for us," Shaw says. "Plus, yogurt is just one of many types of foods we can



Travis Shaw,
vice-president, wholesale

purchase, pick, and distribute."

Yet another important component to ColdStar's growth is the ability to improve operations, and in the transportation sector this means efficiency of movement combined with environmental sustainability. ColdStar embraced green initiatives as far back as 2014, when it purchased ten 400 hp Mack tandem-axle Class 8 highway tractors powered by compressed natural gas.

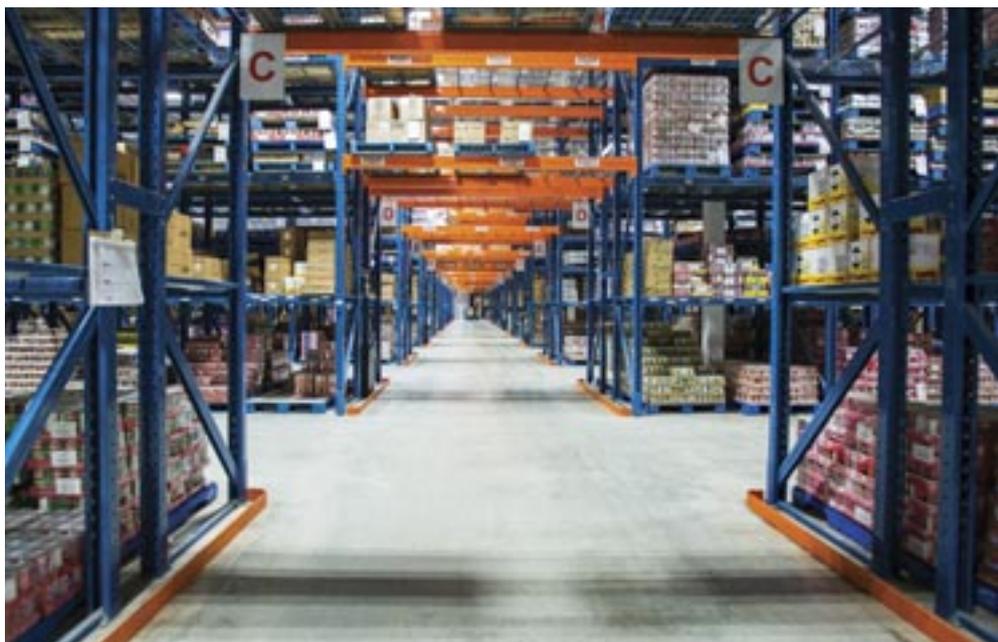
In addition to being the first fleet in Canada to pioneer CNG usage for regional-haul applications, the trucks significantly lowered fuel costs, reduced

diesel consumption by about 380,000 litres per year, and slashed greenhouse gas emissions by over 360 tonnes annually.

Today, about 75 per cent of ColdStar's total fleet is CNG powered, and further investments will be made in other CNG equipment when the need arises.

Meanwhile, for 2022, Hawes has doubled down on his commitment to lowering ColdStar's carbon footprint by investing in an all-electric 5-ton refrigerated truck.

"This has been in the planning stages for some time, and the truck will go into operation this spring," Shaw says, adding that this makes ColdStar the first company in North America to deploy an all-electric refrigerated truck with an



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electric reefer unit for commercial use.

While Hawes advances ColdStar's capabilities to reduce harmful emissions and boost productivity, his wife Jennifer focuses on supporting communities and making Vancouver Island food secure for less fortunate individuals. She does so via the Community Food Project,

which posits that not only is food a basic human need, it provides the opportunity to break down barriers and share and connect with others.

The way the project works is simple but relies on ColdStar's extensive networking and transportation capabilities. Once a month the company, with the help of other participating sponsors, donates food to non-profit agencies on Vancouver Island. Food suppliers are encouraged to donate rather than dump their misshipped, mislabelled, and package-damaged products, and ColdStar also purchases any foods not donated each month (typically, high protein items like cheese).

The bulk food items (chicken, cheese, eggs, meat, peanut butter, bread) are then delivered to the Blanshard Community Centre in Victoria. There, volunteers divide the donations into equal parts for other neighbourhood houses to collect and create meals and snacks for children, young and/or low income

families, youth at risk, and isolated senior citizens. The rainbowkitchen.ca is another organization that is very important to the staff at ColdStar.

"ColdStar has come a long way and has experienced many challenges over the past 22 years, but we believe that we have



Jennifer Hawes,
vice-president of human
resources and community
development

and will continue to make a difference within the food industry. Kelly believes that ColdStar's growth should come from continuing to be innovative and encouraging food producers to manufacture their products on Vancouver Island. Vancouver Island will remain the company's primary focus, but we believe that what we do here can help to improve the entire industry. The Island is very near and dear

to our hearts," Shaw says. "It's our home, and we're grateful to play a role in its well-being. There may be constant challenges in bringing food over to these shores, but we get to live in paradise. And how many people can say that?"



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INNOVATING BEVERAGES INCREASING CATEGORY DIVERSITY



Today's grocery retailers have good reasons to get excited about breakfast

Top of the Morning!

Since 2014, 365 days a year, market research firm Ipsos has been tracking what individuals in Canada ate and drank yesterday.

“We capture their behaviour across all day parts, including breakfast, but all categories, all brands, all venues, whether they were at home, or at school, or at the office, whether they brought their breakfast from home or whether they went through the drive-through line. We really have great visibility into what consumers are eating and drinking,” explains Kathy Perotta, vice-president of strategy and market understanding at Ipsos.

The online-diary tracking goes beyond behaviour to a core focus, where individuals report attitudes, motivation, preparation, and health data, which connects to their shopping behaviours. Findings are compiled in a massive report called Canada CHATS, with “CHATS” an acronym for “consumption habits and attitudinal trends.” It’s a lot of rich detail that highlights changes over time.

“The question du jour is, given our pandemic experience over the last 20 months, how has it really impacted consumers’ choices and their behaviours, their needs, and how will that look in the future?”

The findings for breakfast and breakfast foods are enlightening and exciting for retailers.

“The movement to breakfast clearly is home — it’s all about home consumption at breakfast,” says Perotta, noting that pre-pandemic, breakfast was also a more at-home occasion but there was considerable movement to foodservice. When the pandemic hit, that quickly reverted to 90 per cent of all breakfast occasions consumed at home — and later in the morning. Pre-pandemic breakfast was typically between 5:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m. Now, breakfast is between 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m.



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Breakfast Food Trends

The number one food consumed at breakfast is eggs.

“Eggs have unseated things like toast, fresh fruit, ready-to-eat cereal,” says Perotta.

But eggs have been at the top of the list since before the pandemic. What has changed is that eggs are also being enjoyed at other times of the day.

“Not only at breakfast, but also outside of breakfast,” she says. “That’s a trend — breakfast food not only consumed at breakfast, but breakfast for dinner, and now we’re also seeing breakfast for lunch.”

Overall, ready-to-eat cereal has performed well during the pandemic, but when people are eating it has changed.

“In the initial days of the pandemic, we saw a nice lift of ready-to-eat cereal,” says Perotta. “That’s pulled back somewhat, though consumers are snacking on ready-to-eat cereal at other day parts, particularly later in the day.”

Dairy consumption has changed, too. In the latest phase of the pandemic, Perotta says dairy products like milk, cheese, and yogurt have pulled back a bit with a resurgence of dairy alternatives.

“We see consumers going back to their personal dietary regimes, whether it be plant-based, whether it be eating for the environment, some of those consumers looking at conscious consumption priorities, so that has impacted dairy products to a degree.”

With people spending a bit more time preparing breakfast at home, traditional breakfast meats like bacon and ham have done well through the pandemic.

“There’s comfort, nostalgia, with cooking things like bacon, that evoke these feelings of a better time in the past,” says Perotta. “However, we do see rising concerns over cost.”

She also points to a trend showing a growing interest in grains.

“It’s not just toast — it’s toast, it’s bagels, it’s croissants, it’s the grain-based products, bread-like products,” she says.

This change comes after a time of grain-free and low-carb diets. Now, there is a shifting mindset where people are choosing to eat whole grain and fibre foods, but they are doing so earlier in the day.

“The overall bakery area, that’s done really nicely at breakfast.”

Perotta concludes by summarizing the

needs that drive decisions about what we eat in the morning. She calls them the “five H’s” — hunger, habit, hurry, health, and heartiness.

“The interesting change has been the focus on being full in the morning, and energized, and warm,” she says.

As a balance between function and emotion, choices are more health-related in the morning.

“Health is about nutrient and nourishment intake, but it’s also about functional benefits like energy and satiety and digestive health, and it’s also about emotional benefits, feeling like I’m well prepared and I have the tools that I need to be concentrated and focused,” says Perotta. “Breakfast really personifies all of those demands when it comes to health.”

And with most Canadians eating breakfast at home, grocery retailers have a key role in the most important meal of the day.

What are people eating? Here are some perspectives from breakfast-food suppliers, as well as a look at their newest products.

Breakfast Bevies

In the juice category, the main growth has been in family-size cartons, says Marlène Hins, vice-president of marketing for Lassonde Inc. She also sees a strong trend towards health and wellness.

“Consumers are looking to buy or try products better for their health,” she says. “Buying local from a Canadian company is very important and a trend that is amplified by the pandemic.”

New Lassonde products that meet those trends include Oasis Health Break Collagen, as well as a brand-new lactose-free Oasis Smoothie and Oasis HydraFruit with 60 per cent less sugar.

“Cross promotion is usually a good way to boost sales,” says Hins, noting that it encourages consumers to try new products they wouldn’t put in their baskets otherwise. “As well, in-store promotions are still good incentive to increase sales.”

Naturally Sweet

Honey continues to be a popular breakfast spread, especially with consumers migrating to more natural products. But it is now also getting a big boost for its versatility.

“We see continued interest in smoothie bowls and smoothies as an easy, nutritious breakfast with a dollop of honey,” says Shannon Bowden, senior brand and communications manager at Bee Maid Honey. “People are continuing to bake their own muffins and quick breads and are increasingly using honey as a substitute for sugar.”

While honey has been a long-time favourite with tea drinkers, the pandemic has sparked an increase in consumers making their own specialty coffees at home — and more are using honey.

To make adding natural sweetness even easier, Bee Maid recently launched their Li'l Honeys in a 32 count.

“This product is perfect for those that eat breakfast on the go — in their car, at work etc., as it packages honey in convenient 7g (one teaspoon) portions,” says Bowden. “Perfect to add to your cup of tea or coffee or to spread on a score or bagel.”

Bowden suggests merchandising Li'l Honeys alongside oatmeal, granola, and tea to help consumers think about other breakfast items they might add to their cart.

Spreads to Love

As Jacqueline Chao, manager of brand build and innovation, spreads, for Kraft Heinz points out, when it comes to breakfast, Canadians want convenience but won't compromise on taste.

“The demand for our spreads, like Kraft Peanut Butter and Philadelphia Cream Cheese, has been strong and we don't expect that to change as consumers continue to work from home or grab quick takeaway breakfasts like bagels from local cafés and restaurants on their way to work,” says Chao. “As the country looks ahead to reopening, many of us will continue eating our first meal of the day at home.”

New quick, easy, delicious solutions include Kraft Hazelnut Spread in 45 per cent less sugar and crunchy varieties — perfect for breakfast — as well as lactose-free Philadelphia Cream Cheese, with the rich, creamy taste and texture people love.

Chao says occasion-specific programs are effective opportunities to provide a holistic meal solution and inspire shoppers to try new foods and recipes, which leads to the increase in basket size.

“At Kraft Heinz, many of our products

are perfect for such promotions,” she adds. “From breakfast spreads to coffee and condiments, we work closely with our customer partners to deliver unique and engaging shopping experiences. This is done using eye-catching displays through merchandisers to disrupt shoppers' path to purchase both in and out of aisle.”

For example, breakfast spreads are most often used to elevate the taste and texture of a host food like toast, bagels, or bakery products.

“We've worked with our retail partners to create displays and out-of-aisle merchandising that bring our spreads and host foods together,” says Chao.

They are also developing tools such as permanent cooler displays that allow refrigerated products, such as cream cheese, to be merchandised more easily in bakery along with shelf-stable spreads.

Simple, Glorious Eggs

Todd McKinley, regional sales manager for Sparks Eggs in Alberta and widely known as “The Egg Man”, says demand for eggs is increasing for a number of reasons, including population growth and more people cooking, baking, and eating at home.

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BC Egg offers a number of marketing pieces to help you increase egg sales. These pieces include print-ready shelf labels, shelf talkers, flyers, recipes, bag stuffers as well as digital assets for electronic signage.

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More assets will be added as they become available. All pieces can be customized with specific farmers or your own branding.



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BC egg FREE-RUN
Hens have access to the entire barn where they can perch, scratch,

BC egg FREE-RANGE
Hens have access to the entire barn plus access to the out

For information on customization, please contact
Amanda Brittain, Director Communications and Marketing
amandab@bcegg.com • 604 854 4498



“We’ve seen some pretty good growth recently, and I think it’s going to stick around,” says McKinley. “People have rediscovered the enjoyment of just making their own breakfast at home.”

Amanda Brittain, director of communications and marketing for BC Egg, agrees.

“While working from home, people have had the time to prepare a hearty breakfast that often includes eggs.”

Brittain also notes the increase in eggs prepared at times outside of breakfast.

“Everyone enjoys eating breakfast for dinner,” says Brittain. “Some of our most popular recipes are ones that can be enjoyed at any meal — frittatas, quiche, omelettes, etc. Of course, baking with eggs is also popular.”

Where eggs come from is important to Canadians.

“We have definitely seen a preference for local eggs,” says Brittain, who adds that BC Egg has a video series (<https://bcegg.com/meet-the-farmer/>) to help people connect with farmers. “People like to know the farmer they are buying

from but are also satisfied with BC-grown eggs.”

Labelling is important to shoppers.

“People, more than ever, have a greater awareness of local, if they can see something on a label that says, ‘this is local,’” says McKinley, noting that Sparks products are labelled as Alberta produced. “But different retailers have put now tags on the shelf pointing out what products are local.”

Consumers also want nutritional and animal welfare information.

“Maybe people are looking closer at the omega-3 or the vitamin D or the welfare of the hens, the free run, the free-range products, organic eggs,” says McKinley, making an interesting point about shopping behaviour.

“Most people, the majority of people, decide what eggs they’re going to buy when they’re actually standing at the egg shelf,” he says.

McKinley’s role over the years has been to understand what consumers want, then see how eggs can meet those wants. When people asked for more omega-3 or vitamin D or lutein, he worked with eggs producers to accommodate that.

Enjoying 100% pure Canadian honey just got easier

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

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

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From Omega-3 to organic and free-range Spark Eggs notes that a lot of consumers decide what eggs they want to buy when they are standing at the shelf.

“Now, people are interested in the various free run, free range, and organics,” he says.

Most recently, McKinley has been seeing interest in dark-yolk eggs.

“If I said this 20, 25 years ago, I would’ve gotten thrown out of places, because for the generation back then, an egg had to have a pale-yellow yolk — if it was dark, they thought something was wrong,” says McKinley. “But in the last probably even 10 years, the needle’s pointed more to the dark side. People love darker yolks. You eat with your eyes. If you dip into an egg yolk and it’s that nice, rich, not yellow, but more an orange colour, people think, ‘Mmm’ and they associate that rich colour with value.”

That darker yolk can be created by feeding hens more corn as well as marigold flower extract.

“Eggs set the standard for protein and for an affordable source of protein, too,” says McKinley. “I think that’s where people are learning. People are now more educated than ever as far as what’s good food for them.”

And eggs are good food. ●

Restaurant Quality Ramen at Home with **Hung's Noodles**



Hung's Noodles has introduced a premium, authentic mouth feel – locally made Premium Ramen. The product has the right bounce and chew that the worldly foodie craves and the ease of preparation that the home cook wants. Perfect with broth, great for stir-fries and a fresh new texture for noodle salads – Hung's Premium Ramen is right for any season.

For more information: www.hungsnoodles.com

Celebration and New Beginnings at **NutriStart**



NutriStart is celebrating their 25th anniversary and ringing in the new year with two new products! Expanding on their excellent Liposomal line, their new Liposomal CoQ10 is the most bio-available form of CoQ10, which is beneficial for cardiovascular health, migraine prevention, and cognition.

Also on deck: Provide:Balance. This unique smoothie is formulated for gut and brain health, with lion's mane (great for brain health), lactospore microflora (a patented, clinically-proven pre-biotic), raspberry seed (a powerful antioxidant), paired with a blend of vegan proteins. It's a gut/brain powerhouse!

For more information: orders@nutrirstart.ca

New **Dole** Meal Kit Line Taps into At-Home Culinary Trend of Sheet Pan Dinners

Dole is tapping into one of the largest recent culinary trends to give time-starved consumers their choice of healthy plant-based or lean protein single-pan fresh vegetable meals at home.

Dole has introduced its new DOLE Sheet Pan Meal Starter Kits, representing the industry's first new fresh vegetable product line catering to the growing sheet pan meal trend and fulfil growing consumer need for easy, single-pan meal options within the value-added vegetable category.



Available in Homestyle Roasted Herb, French Onion and Lemon Parmesan flavour varieties, DOLE Sheet Pan Meal Starter Kits combine fresh, ready-to-roast vegetables with a perfectly paired seasoning, which can be used for both the vegetables and a favourite added protein such as chicken, seafood or tofu. When mixed and cooked on a conventional sheet pan, the ingredients combine to create a healthy, restaurant-quality meal in minutes for a family of four, with only one dish to cleanup.

For more information: www.dole.com



Pillsbury Canada and **Frank's Redhot** Team Up on Limited Edition Hot Sauce Flavoured Pizza Pops

For a limited time only, Canada's No.1 selling pizza snack, Pizza Pops has joined forces with the country's number one selling hot sauce, Frank's RedHot to bring Canadians a new and unique pizza treat. Frank's RedHot Pizza Pops unites two trusted brands, to bring spice lovers a tantalizing and tasty new snack to savour. Enthusiasts can take it up a notch with the special edition Pizza Pops, now available in Pepperoni and Bacon. "We know our consumers have a serious appetite for spicy food flavours," said Andrew Davis, vice-president of marketing, General Mills Canada Corporation. "We surveyed our fans and 90 per cent expressed the desire to eat a spicier Pizza Pop. That is why we're thrilled to partner with the hot sauce experts at Frank's RedHot to add some excitement and a sizzling new kick to our snack category."

For more information: www.pizzapops.ca

Amerlux's UV-Free Antimicrobial Lighting Wins Product Innovation Award



Amerlux's new UV-free antimicrobial LED lighting solution has been named one of the most innovative solutions in the industry by Architectural SSL magazine. "We are grateful to Architectural SSL magazine for honouring our innovative, 405-nanometer lighting solution, which kills bacteria and viruses including COVID-19," said Bill Plageman, Amerlux's vice-president of marketing and product management. "Unlike traditional UV lighting, ActiveClean provides comfortable, crisp-white illumination that meets the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) standard for continuous, unrestricted use around people. These award-winning attributes make it an attractive addition to any workplace looking to better protect their most valuable assets – their employees and their customers."

The product was also named one of the best lighting products of 2021 by Architectural Record magazine in its December issue.

ActiveCLEAN pairs commercial-grade LED lighting engineering with new UV-free, 405-nanometre antimicrobial lighting technology to continuously kill 90 per cent or more of bacteria, fungi, yeast, mould and viruses, including SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.

The proprietary technology is ideal for high-traffic environments where people congregate, such as bathrooms, conference rooms, lobbies, collaboration spaces, kitchenettes, classrooms, airports, supermarkets, and doctor's exam rooms.

For more information: Amerlux.com

Mann Packing Co., Inc. Launches Nourish Bowls Sauté Style Veggie Meals

Mann Packing Co., Inc. has launched its healthful Nourish Bowls Sauté Style Veggie Meals, a warm blend of fresh vegetables, hearty grains, and plant-based protein, now available in sauté style to spice up consumers' lunches.

Nourish Bowls Sauté Style Veggie Meals are available in three nourishing flavours to please any palate: Southwest Chipotle, Creamy Roasted Garlic & Kale and Sesame Sriracha.

"At Mann Packing Co., it's essential to meet consumer needs with fresh vegetable products that boast high-quality, convenience and premium taste at an affordable price," said Pablo Rivero, vice-president of marketing North America, Fresh Del Monte. "We believe one of the key ingredients to a successful day comes from mindful meals. Although it can be easy to skip or work through lunchtime, Mann Packing Co. strives to remind consumers that lunch is one of the most important meals of the day. With our latest Nourish Bowls Sauté Style Veggie Meals, we're redefining lunchtime and providing consumers with simple, fresh and warm options to add more vegetables to consumer diets. We encourage consumers to try our new variety of Nourish Bowls Sauté Style Veggie Meals to help power through any day!"



Feel Foods to Launch 'Breakfast' of Plant-Based 'Eggs and Bacon' Products

Feel Foods Ltd. has announced it is developing plant-based eggs and bacon products.

Traditional breakfast segments of the plant-based foods sector are experiencing 'meteoric' growth and Feel Foods is at the forefront having already acquired 100 per cent of Black Sheep Vegan Cheese.

Feel Foods CEO, David Greenway stated, "Breakfast segments of the plant-based foods industry are currently experiencing meteoric growth and we are aiming right at it with the imminent launch of our new eggs and bacon plant-based products. We feel these traditional breakfast items are part of a fast-growing segment of the plant-based movement and are highly complementary to our Black Sheep Vegan Cheeses and whip product."

Feel Foods and Black Sheep recently launched a vegan whip cream after successful testing at farmers markets and trade shows. The company has already begun shipping the product to its distribution network, currently consisting of 70 retailers, foods service business and online marketplaces.

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