

Convenience & CarWash Canada

MAY/JUNE 2021

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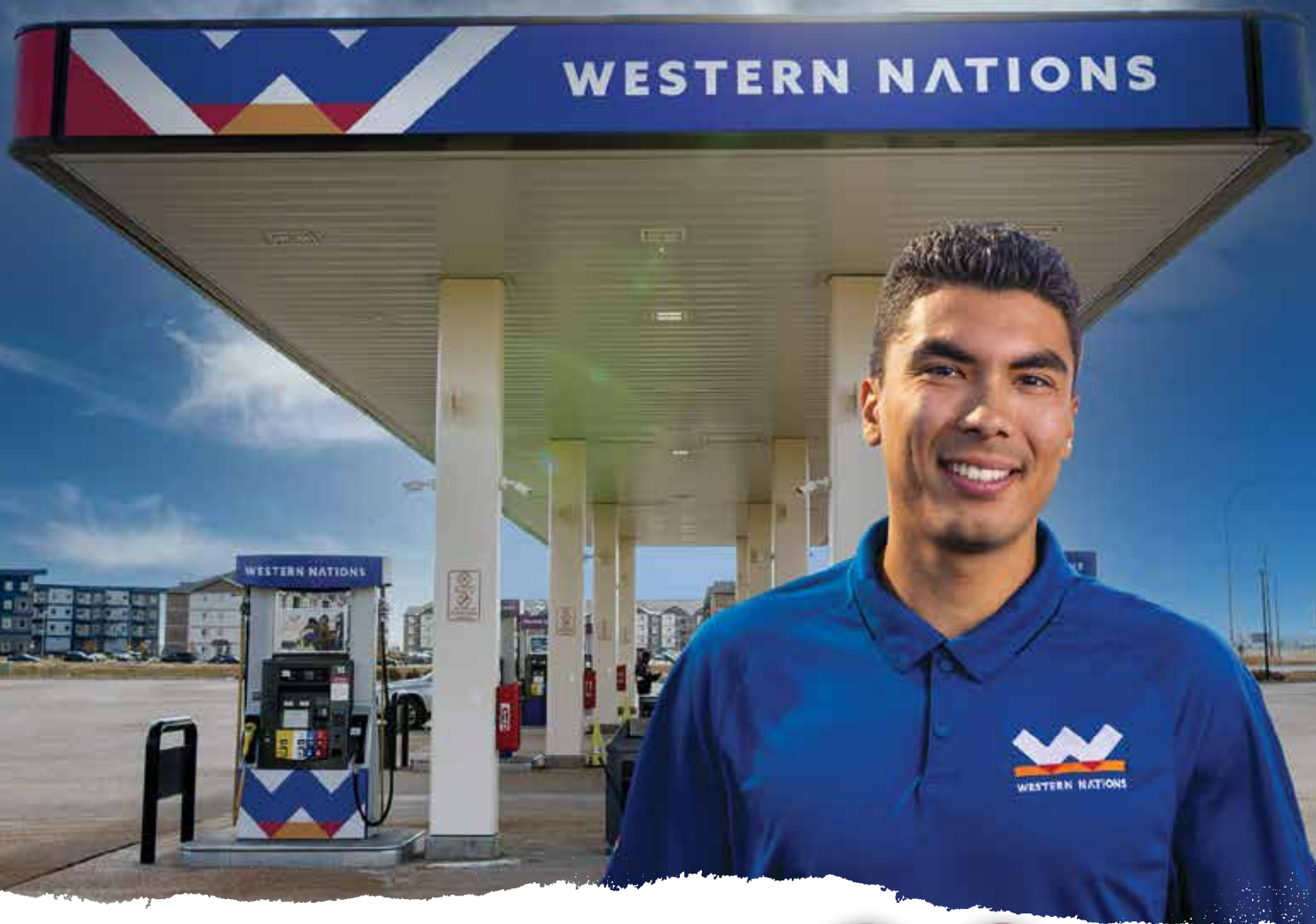
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<p>June 3rd Atlantic Convenience Stores Association Maritime Golf Tournament Glen Arbour Golf Course Halifax, NS, www.theacsa.ca</p> <p>June 9th – 11th SCWA Fort Worth Convention Center Fort Worth, Texas www.scwa.org</p>	<p>June 21nd – 23rd Women in Carwash™ conference Marriott on the Falls Niagara Falls, ON www.womenincarwash.com</p> <p>July 27th – 28th Southeast Car Wash Association Detroit Road Show www.secwa.org</p>	<p>September 15th Newfoundland & Labrador Golf Tournament Clovelly Golf Course, St. John's, NL, www.theacsa.ca</p> <p>October 26th Retail Convenience Awards Halifax Convention Centre, Halifax, NS www.theacsa.ca</p>	<p>October 26th – 27th Atlantic Convenience Expo Halifax Convention Centre, Halifax, NS www.theacsa.ca</p> <p>November 15 – 17 The Car Wash Show 2021 Las Vegas, NV www.carwash.org</p>

Publisher's Message



Hello Spring

Well, now that we're more than 15 months into this pandemic we're all hoping for a great summer with great weather, good, steady stream of customers and the pandemic behind us.

While that all sounds good, the likelihood of one of these is slim. However, I'd like to offer you respite from the dreary days of spring with another great edition of *Convenience & Carwash Canada* magazine.

Federated Co-Op have been doing some great work in Western Canada with their recent partnership with First Nations West. Developing new retail sites that encompass regional opportunities for many while expanding on the corporate mandate, we're excited for the opening of the first site in a few short months. Stay tuned for a follow-up story in a later edition.

According to Statistics Canada less than 0.5 per cent of companies survive more than 100 years, 40 per cent of businesses, family or not, survive past the 10-year mark.

Wallace & Carey Limited are one of the 0.5 per cent companies and we would like to congratulate Patrick and his team for this wonderful, Canadian milestone. What an accomplishment. It takes grit, determination and a great team of like-minded individuals throughout decades to achieve what WACL have. Hats off to you all. Well done!

Another Canadian company, Unique Foods Canada are celebrating 25 years in business. We congratulate them on their milestone.

This past year has taken a toll on everyone and in keeping with our goal of educating and informing, we bring to you an editorial that can be shared among employees to help deal with any mental health issues that may have developed over the past year and a half.

Our industries were deemed as essential services last year and we celebrate the work everyone within these industries has done. Hats off to you who've worked longer hours, shorter hours, late nights and early mornings keeping your communities running.

We bring you an informative editorial that speaks about traditional and modern communications and how retailers might need to up their ante. This past year has brought us, if nothing else, a new appreciation for how we communicate with our family, friends and customers.

I hope that you enjoy this edition and as always, we thank you all for your continued support because, your success is my business, and as always, my open-door policy to your valuable feedback remains not only intact but stronger than ever. If there is a topic that you'd like to have featured or if you have questions, or perhaps you need an introduction, please feel free to email me at bjjohnstone@convenienceandcarwash.com or call me 204-489-4215.

Brenda Jane Johnstone
Publisher

We would like to thank the following companies for their sponsorship of the upcoming Women in Carwash conference:

- AirServ
- AutoLaundry News
- Blendco Systems
- Bravery Becomes You
- Chesapeake Quill
- Go Car Wash
- Istobal USA
- National Carwash Solutions
- Professional Carwashing & Detailing
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- WashTrend
- ZEP Vehicle Care

We appreciate you and thank you for your support.



Convenience & Carwash Canada Wins Publishing Award

Convenience & Carwash Canada proudly accepted the silver award for best print and digital publication at the 2020 Canadian Online Publishing Awards, which were held virtually in February 2021. *Convenience & Carwash Canada* magazine was also honoured with a finalist award for best company feature.

"The people in the convenience and carwash industries are hardworking and dedicated to serving their communities and this has never been more evident than in 2020," says Angela Altass, managing editor, *Convenience & Carwash Canada*. "We have been determined to keep providing them with news and information throughout these unprecedented times. To be recognized for the May-June 2020 issue, which was available digitally during those extremely uncertain times early in the pandemic, is very gratifying. To also be recognized as a finalist in the best company feature category for the article on Winnipeg's Deacon's Corner by writer Tania Moffat is testament to the great stories that are out there behind many of the Canadian locations that we like to shine a light on as a feature of the magazine."

Entries for the Canadian Online Publishing Awards are reviewed by a prestigious panel of content, creative, digital, web tech, marketing, media and advertising experts. To read the award-winning May-June 2020 issue of *Convenience & Carwash Canada* visit: www.convenienceandcarwash.com

Editor's Message



Thank You to Essential Workers

Snacks and cold beverages – no matter what level of lockdown or current pandemic situation your area finds itself in this summer, you can be sure that people will still be interested in snacks and cold beverages.

In this issue, we have articles that provide insight on new snacks and cold beverage products and trends. It is not a surprise to hear that many people have healthier options on their minds – that said, of course, your customers' favourites will also need to be in ample supply.

As Jim Goetz, president of the Canadian Beverage Association, notes in the *Cold Beverages: More Than Traditional Soft Drinks* article, beverage workers were deemed essential and have been working extremely hard during the pandemic. This statement brought to my mind all of you who have been working so tirelessly in this crisis, which has been going on for so long now. Thank you for all that you do and I hope you know how much your efforts, and the risks associated with those efforts, are appreciated and respected.

Everyone hopes that at some point, maybe in the not-so-distant future given the vaccination efforts underway, we can return to some sort of normal. Do we even remember what that was like or do we have expectations for what that will be like moving forward?

If you, your store, or your staff have been going above and beyond what is required, or taking that extra step to serve your customers at this difficult time, given to charity, offered special deals to first responders, or have an interesting story to tell, please let us know about it so we can tell and inspire others. It's the good news that will get us through the rest of this crisis so let us know yours.

I can be reached by email at editor@convenienceandcarwash.com and I welcome hearing from you. How are you managing? Are there topics you would like us to write about in a future issue of *Convenience & Carwash Canada*?

My message to you is to applaud you for a job well done. These are unprecedented times and there is nothing easy about life or work these days. For getting up this morning and facing the day head-on, congratulations. Let's continue to take on this battle one day at a time!

Angela Altass
Managing Editor

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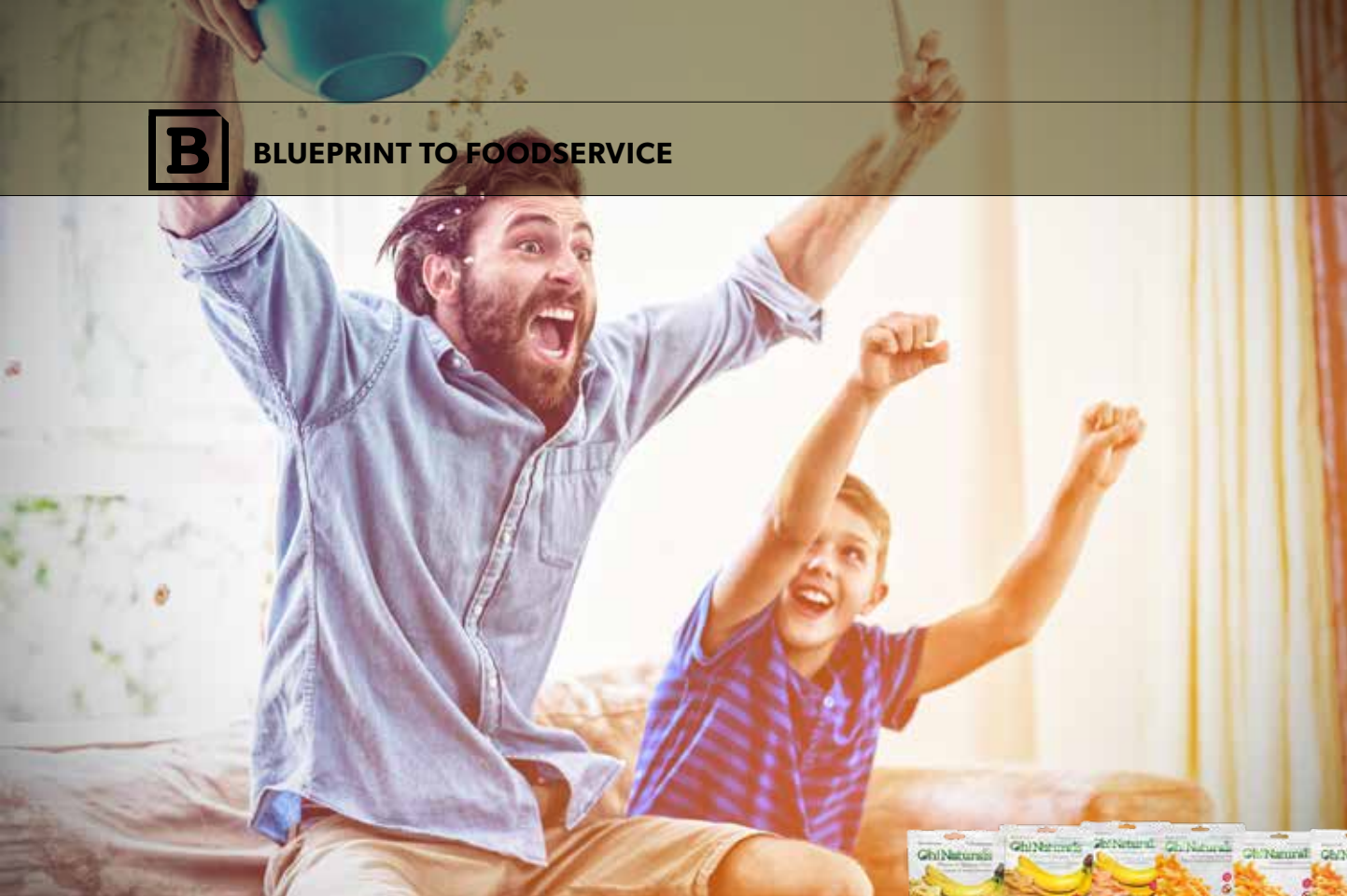
Congratulations to the locations that recently joined our pack

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Bayside Travel Centre
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Milton Esso Cardlock
Woodstock Esso Cardlock
Airport Road Husky & Esso Cardlock
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By Meline Beach



Snacks – From Classic to Contemporary, There’s Something for Everyone

Whether your customers are commuting to and from work, grazing all day while working from home or binge-watching television, snacking is a popular eating behaviour with most people partaking two to three times a day. Even during these challenging times imposed by a global pandemic, the snack category continues to thrive.

Convenience stores and gas stations host a wide variety of snacks for every craving and every lifestyle. From fruity flavours and wholesome nuts to new proteins and classic crunch, there’s something for everyone.

Fruit and Veggie

Dehydrated fruit, packed with sweet flavour, fibre, vitamins, and minerals,

makes a great snack for consumers of all ages. Based out of Calgary, Alberta with ingredients and manufacturing facilities in Vietnam, Oh! Naturals satisfies sweet, salty, and crunchy cravings with their wholesome fruit and vegetable snacks. Packaged in 100-gram bags, Oh! Naturals’ banana chips are available in three flavours: natural, chocolate and strawberry. Their sweet potato fries, packaged in 80-gram bags are available in mesquite BBQ, chili and lime or salt and pepper. Both product lines are made from ripe fruit and vegetables and have a shelf life of one year.

“Oh! Naturals was created to make a difference in people’s lives as a fun and functional snack food,” says Oh! Naturals President Rhonda Goldberg, who founded

the company based on her own childhood experience of food allergies, sensitivities, and life-supporting dietary needs. “Our snacks are made with whole fruit and vegetables through a unique vacuum-frying process that preserves nutrients while maximizing flavour, freshness, nutritional value and crunch.”

Goldberg has plans to expand her flavour offerings to include sweet and spicy banana chips as well as jackfruit banana chips – featuring a fruit native to tropical Asia. Currently sold at select grocers and 7-Eleven’s across Canada, Oh! Naturals is also available online www.oh-naturals.com.

Something Nutty

Nuts are a healthy snack option that serves as a good source of fibre and protein.

The Wonderful Company, based out of California, sells snack size pistachios under its brand Wonderful Pistachios. This plant-based protein snack boasts six grams of protein in every serving.

Pistachios are naturally cholesterol free and have various health benefits, including fibre. They are part of many well-studied healthy eating patterns.



"GORP IS ALWAYS HAPPY TO WORK WITH RETAILERS WITH IN-STORE PROMOTIONS AND SALES. WE HAVE GORP FLOOR DISPLAYS AVAILABLE FREE OF CHARGE WITH ANY PURCHASE." SAYS SARAH HUNT, SALES AND PURVEYOR OF FUN AT GORP WORLD.



Grown in California's Central Valley, Wonderful Pistachios No Shells brand serves as an easy-to-eat, already-shelled snack solution and are available in 225-200-gram snack bags across a variety of flavours, including roasted salt and pepper; sweet chili, lightly salted; sea salt and vinegar; bbq; and honey roasted – the first two being the most popular flavours.

Currently distributed by Core-mark Canada, Wonderful Pistachios are sold at select C&G retailers across Canada with plans for expanded distribution in 2021.

The Wonderful Company offers marketing and public relations support to drive consumers to retailers for purchase. Merchandising displays for Wonderful Pistachios have a small footprint and are suited for placement at the checkout.

New Energy

After eight years in product development, GORP Clean Energy Bars hit store shelves in the summer of 2012. Based out of Manitoba, GORP World's best-selling products include The Best Little Peanuts in the World, New Hazelnut Coffee Crunch Protein Balls and new GORP Protein Chips in sea salt, dill pickle, and sour cream and onion flavours.

"Our top selling GORP Clean Energy Bar is cocoa, flax and almond, followed by peanut butter and raspberry," says Sarah Hunt, sales and purveyor of fun at GORP World. "Peanut butter and apple also have dedicated fans, too."

In Manitoba, GORP products are available at most grocery and health food stores, as well as some gas stations and specialty stores. While products are also available online at www.gorppworld.com and through Superior Harvest and Pratts wholesale distributors, the company can

ship to any C&G retailer across Canada and has plans to expand its product offering throughout the country.

With an average profit margin of 35 per cent off a suggested retail price of \$2.75 to \$2.99 for GORP Bars, Hunt suggests a 'starter set' for retailers new to their products.

"The starter kit features a small amount of everything to see what customers like best," says Hunt. "Plus, there are no minimum orders except for our Protein Chips – which right now come in six flavours, so two jars of each would work well."

Hunt adds, "GORP is always happy to work with retailers with in-store promotions and sales. We have GORP floor displays available free of charge with any purchase."

In terms of innovation, GORP has plans to launch new flavours of their Protein Chips, as well as some new exciting product launches soon.

"It is our passion to create snacks that are better for you, with honest ingredients and that actually taste good," says Hunt.

Classic Crunch

PepsiCo has a great portfolio of snack foods, ranging from pretzels, crackers and rice cakes to tortilla, potato, pita, and cheese flavoured chips, not to mention its Quaker products.

"Innovation is always a key pillar of growth for PepsiCo and new skus create excitement and trial," says Scott Stewart, senior director, Region Sales Development at PepsiCo Foods Canada. "When it comes to the best sellers in the C&G channel, the classics are always our top performers with Doritos Nacho and Lays Classic typically #1 and #2 respectively."

Not one to rest on its laurels, PepsiCo Foods Canada is always innovating. The company has seen incredible growth in recent years in the hard bite potato category. As a result, they've expanded their Miss Vickies brand to include new flavours, such as spicy dill pickle and their new Ruffles Double Crunch – a deep-cut ridged chip that's kettle cooked to crunchy perfection.

Changing consumer demographics also drive flavour innovations – with spice being a current trend.



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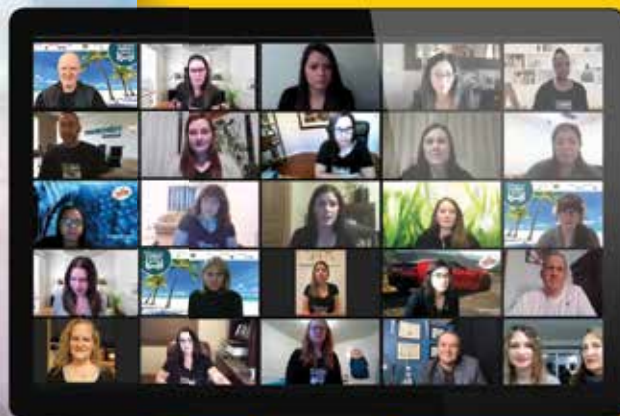
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Brenda Jane Johnstone

phone: 1-204-489-4215

email: bjj@womenincarwash.com

Here's what we heard from attendees of the previous event.



"I was pleasantly surprised at how well the virtual format delivered. The level of interaction and engagement from the group of intelligent and inspirational woman kept it stimulating, and left me feeling energized and lifted. Sign me up for the next one!"

Jenn Munro, Peninsula Co-Op

"The Women in Carwash virtual conference was a great event. The sessions were informative and delivered value. I will definitely attend again!"

Jen Crego, Type B Studio

It was wonderful to see/meet a whole group of women in the industry and to hear their stories and experiences. Helped me to know that I am not the only one with some of the struggles and successes that I have faced. It is hard to be a women in a typically male-dominated industry and be taken seriously.

Anonymous



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"Our core spicy skus like Doritos Sweet Chili Heat have become some of our best sellers and we continue to innovate with our Flamin Hot skus," says Stewart. "At PepsiCo, we are committed to working with our network of experts, including our consumer insights and internal R&D teams to develop innovations that our consumers will love."

While several of PepsiCo's innovations have lasted the test of time, many of their products are offered on a seasonal or special occasion basis to help drive excitement.

"In addition to our core flavour offerings for each brand that are available throughout the year, we do create new and seasonal offerings," says Stewart. "We also have a rotation of fan-favourite flavours that return for a limited time – like Doritos Ketchup. In PepsiCo's experience, consumers enjoy the novelty of limited-time flavour offerings to add some special treats to their usual snacking choices."

PepsiCo understands that properly merchandised products are the key to maximizing the snack category and recommend that salty snacks are merchandised within six feet of the cash register, especially single serve snacks as they are often an impulse buy. Salty snacks are often best consumed with a beverage, so having them located close to beverage coolers will increase their visibility. As an added measure of sales success, snack sized potato chips make a great side order to any sandwich combo for C&G locations with an in-house foodservice program.

In terms of insights on the snack food category, PepsiCo Foods Canada has noticed a growing trend in consumers' use of ecommerce services, including click and collect and home delivery, such as Uber Eats and DoorDash.

"The growth potential is enormous and we're seeing a surge on snack foods in particular," says Stewart.

The company has also noticed several different taste preferences across the country. In the Maritime provinces, Doritos Zesty is the top Doritos flavour, and in British Columbia and Alberta, the

company has seen tremendous growth with their Miss Vickies brand Sea Salt & Malt Vinegar kettle cooked chips surpassing Lays Classic as the second-best seller.

Wherever they live, whatever their lifestyle, and however they crave, consumers have plenty of choice when it comes to snacks – be it something fruit and veggie, nutty, new, or classic – the options in the C&G channel are limitless.

Meline Beach is a Toronto-based communications practitioner and frequent contributor to Convenience & Carwash Canada. In addition to freelance writing, Meline provides communications and public relations support to businesses across Canada. She can be reached at www.mlbcomms.ca

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Cold Beverages: More Than Traditional Soft Drinks



Attracting customers to the cold beverage section at a convenience store means more than just stocking up on traditional carbonated soft drinks. With health and wellness on their minds, people are looking for variety and functionality.

As the world grapples with a global pandemic, beverages are one of the essential products that consumers have counted on to continue to be available. “Beverage workers were deemed essential during the first wave of the pandemic and our members have worked extremely hard to follow guidelines, keep their employees safe and preserve the integrity of the supply chain in these unprecedented times,” says Jim Goetz, president of the Canadian Beverage Association. “Through these efforts, the industry has ensured that shelves remain stocked so Canadians have access to the beverages that are part of their daily lives and that they depend on.”

Consumers are looking for alternatives to mainstream beverage offerings,” notes Mark Rusk, national sales and engagement manager, Wallace & Carey.

“Beverages, like kombucha, cold press, flavoured teas and fresh juices are seeing more new offerings than ever before,” says Rusk. “Consumers are seeking better-for-you beverages with clean ingredients and low sugar.”

Wallace & Carey carries a wide range of both traditional and non-traditional beverages in various sizes.

“Beverages have high turns, good margins and are easy to display – all things that modern convenience stores are looking for,” comments Rusk. “Beverage sales have been growing exponentially during the pandemic and tend to have better margins than other products. Many c-stores are seeing double digit growth in their beverage categories.”

Rusk advises experimenting with cooler placement with new beverages at eye level, using door clings to attract the attention of consumers to new products and setting up impulse displays at checkouts.

In 2014, some of Canada’s most prominent beverage



ICELANDIC GLACIAL STRIVES TO MINIMIZE ITS ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT AND BRING THE PUREST TASTING WATER ON EARTH TO CONSUMERS IN NEW AND CONVENIENT WAYS," SAYS MICHELLE GRIECO, DIRECTOR OF MARKETING, ICELANDIC GLACIAL.

companies launched a Balance Calories initiative with lower calorie options and more still, carbonated or low-carbonated water products appearing on shelves.

"Consumers want variety and options, including non-GMO, gluten-free, caffeine-free," says Norm Snyder, CEO, Reed's Inc. "Consumers are turning away from the aspartame/sodium benzoate laden beverages. They want something that's delicious, refreshing and has real ingredients."

Health and wellness is a trend that is growing and part of mainstream consumer shopping patterns, states Snyder, adding that people will pay a little more for a beverage if they know they are getting something that is a healthier alternative.

"We're seeing convenience chains increase cold sets beyond just the mainstream carbonated soft drinks to include a wide variety of natural and healthier-for-you options," says Snyder. "Today's convenience store shopper wants healthier options like zero sugar naturally with no aspartame, keto certified, GMO free, etc."

Reed's and Virgil's deliver as natural alternative beverage choices, says Snyder.

"Reed's Really Real Ginger Ale is ginger ale with actual fresh ginger in it," he says. "Reed's and Virgil's expansion into 20 oz resealable packaging and slim 12 oz cans helps retailers to carry, and for consumers to choose, healthier options. Convenience store retailers win by gaining more margin and penny profit, while the consumer ultimately wins with a healthier choice that has no preservatives, artificial ingredients, flavours, or colours."

Variety and innovation are critical, given the more impulsive nature of the Canadian convenience store shopping experience, says Sassan Jahan, vice president of marketing with PepsiCo Beverages Canada.

"While Canadians are on the go, tasty hydration beverages like soft drinks and iced teas have always been the dominant beverages sold in convenience stores," says Jahan. "However, we are seeing a greater demand for more functional needs like energy/performance with beverages such as Gatorade or Rockstar

since the onset of the pandemic last year. We know that most beverages purchased in grocery stores are often planned in advance, whereas Canadians tend to be more likely to buy new exciting products while visiting convenience stores."

PepsiCo Beverages Canada recently brought several new products into convenience stores nationwide:

- **New:** MTN Dew is going pink with the brand new soft drink, MTN Dew Major Melon which is bursting with watermelon flavour.
- **New:** Propel Electrolyte Water Beverage: Enhanced with Gatorade electrolytes, available in three refreshing flavours; Kiwi Strawberry, Grape and Berry.
- **Rockstar Energy Drink** is unveiling a new can look – new look, same taste. Made for consumers who need an extra boost of energy.
- **bubly sparkling water beverage:** available in 473 mL cans at convenience stores in the three flavours – blackberry bubly, cherry bubly and lime bubly, which always make you #crackasmile with no calories. no sweeteners. all smiles!

"Many convenience stores have loyalty programs for their customers, which have proven to be an excellent approach to promotion," says Jahan. "Engaging with your customers through your store's social channels also drives awareness of the new products available in store. Our PepsiCo Beverage Canada team proudly works closely with a number of convenience >>



stores to build and execute engagement programs specifically around new product launches or priority occasions, such as summer or hockey.”

Sometimes, it's a refreshing water beverage that consumers are seeking and there are certain brands that tend to catch their eye in convenience stores.

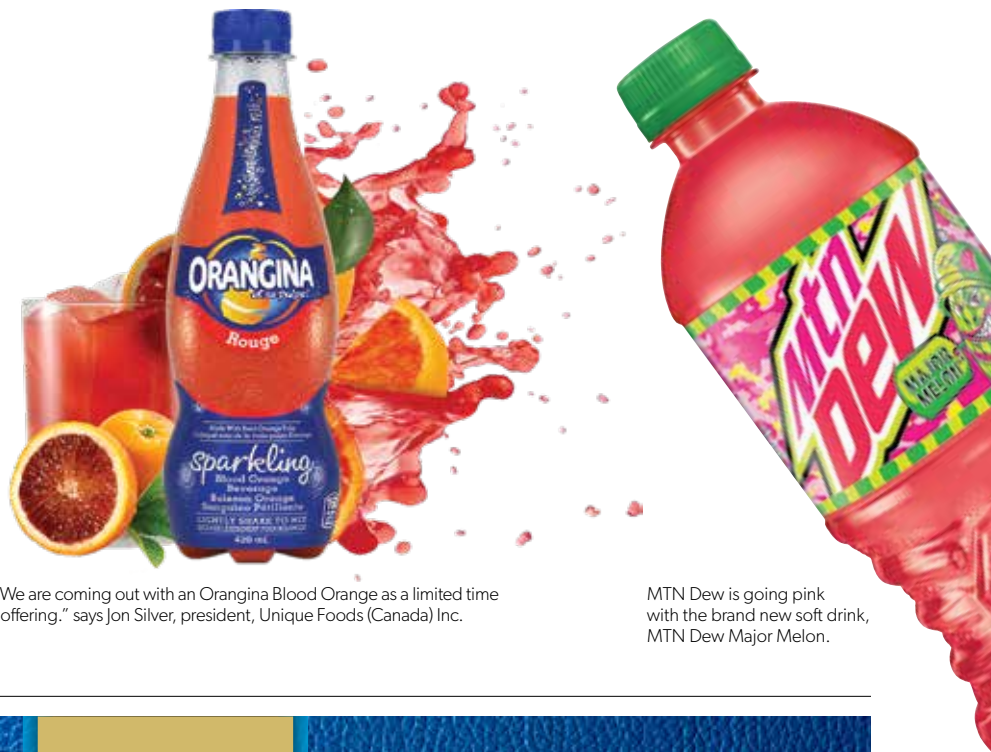
Icelandic Glacial premium spring water is sustainably sourced from Iceland with a naturally occurring pH of 8.4. Company CEO Reza Mirza refers to “consumer centric innovation based on our core values of purity, sustainability and authenticity” as the lifeblood of Icelandic Glacial. Products Include:

- 500mL Icelandic Glacial still water
- 500mL Icelandic Glacial sparkling water - each flavored product contains zero calories and is free of sugar/artificial sweeteners; each flavor is sourced from its country of origin to arouse the senses!
 - Unflavored Sparkling
 - Sicilian Lemon
 - Tahitian Lime
 - Tarocco Blood Orange
- 750mL Icelandic Glacial still water with Sports Cap for the on-the-go / active lifestyle consumer

“With each new product launch, Icelandic Glacial strives to minimize its environmental impact and bring the purest tasting water on earth to consumers in new and convenient ways,” says Michelle Grieco, director of marketing, Icelandic Glacial.

Rubicon Exotic recently launched their one litre coconut water beverage into the Canadian market.

“We identified that although there are many different coconut water brands, we stand for producing beverages that are true to the nature of the product, which we felt was lacking in terms of



“We are coming out with an Orangina Blood Orange as a limited time offering,” says Jon Silver, president, Unique Foods (Canada) Inc.

MTN Dew is going pink with the brand new soft drink, MTN Dew Major Melon.

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the authenticity of coconut water,” says Anjalee Nagrecha, marketing director, Rubicon Exotic. “We are also going to be launching a 330 ml impulse version soon, hopefully in the summer months. It will be well suited for the convenience channel. We are also launching a new beverage: a pineapple and coconut flavoured juice drink that is almost a play on a pina colada. We will also be launching our flavours into an impulse, chilled, lightly sparkled or carbonated version, which should be available towards the end of the summer months. They actually contain real fruit and there will be a lower calorie version with less sugar as well.”

Rubicon Exotic is a specialist in exotic fruit flavours, such as mango, passion-fruit, guava, lychee and soursop. They also have 200 ml juices for children in mango apple, guava apple and lychee apple flavours.

“There are also some exotic fruits that we are looking into, one being dragon fruit,” says Nagrecha. “Consumers are looking for variety. We pioneered the single fruit exotic beverage category in both the UK and Canada and today, more than ever, with the diversity of people in this

country, people are more fascinated with trying something new or having a taste of a fruit that is from their home country. People are also looking for functionality; products that are fortified with vitamins, nutrients and clean ingredients.”

Mood boosting fruit is a growing trend, notes Nagrecha.

“The beverage category is looking at mood boosting as a new trend going forward and some of our flavours, namely pomegranate, mango and soursop, are highlighted in the top 10 mood boosting fruits and vegetables, so we are very well aligned with this,” states Nagrecha. “We work with convenience stores to create POS promotional material to engage the consumer. The functional cold beverage category is set to rise above \$208 billion in 2024 so having something unique and functional, rather than just the traditional grab and go, is very important.”

Having a wide variety in stock is the key to success during cold beverage season, says Jon Silver, president, Unique Foods (Canada) Inc.

“More selection means more customers will come in to purchase their preferred beverages,” says Silver. “We are coming out with an Orangina Blood Orange as a limited time offering.”

Guru Organic Energy recently announced that its plant-based energy drinks would soon be available in over 1,130 Circle K and 140 Winks convenience stores across Canada.

“Guru Energy is the world’s first natural energy drink providing a clean

source of energy to sustain demanding lifestyles,” says Amal Gayed, marketing director, Guru Organic Energy. “We are on a mission to clean up the energy drink industry, one can at a time, by delivering good taste and good energy. Guru offers a healthy alternative in the \$15 billion energy drink market, which is the fastest growing non-alcoholic beverage category.”

Energy drinks are traffic drivers in convenience and gas bars across Canada, driving high velocity in sales, says Gayed.

“We recommend that healthy energy drinks, like Guru, which are increasingly sought after by today’s health-conscious consumer, be well chilled and given prominence in store merchandising plans,” says Gayed. “Effective sales tactics include in-store sampling as well as disruptive point-of-sale marketing initiatives. Guru has a strong track record of success driving consumer loyalty through trial and direct interaction and it is important for convenience store owners to work closely with companies like Guru on these activations.”

There are many different reasons customers enter convenience stores and many types of consumers, notes Gayed.

“Whether they are looking to quench thirst or for an energy boost during a busy day, it is important for convenience stores to offer a variety of well-chilled options to meet consumer needs, including healthy alternatives for health-conscious consumers.” **■**

How leaders and Co-Workers Need to Shift Their Approach to Workplace Mental Health in 2021

By Marlene Milczarek

Convenience stores and gas stations have experienced unusual demands and challenges throughout the coronavirus pandemic. Essential employees have worked long and hard hours providing access to basic food essentials like milk, or gas so that other can commute to and from their essential jobs. In fact, c-stores and gas bar workers have felt a lot of stress and may have increased mental health needs since the start of COVID-19.

It's important that as business leaders, HR leaders and even co-workers we recognize and respond to this. According to experts, the psychological toll of working in essential public spaces during the pandemic has been and continues to be significant.

Frontline healthcare workers report high levels of anxiety, high levels of an anxiety diagnosis, as well as high levels of accessing treatment for anxiety and high levels of resiliency in overcoming these challenges. More than ever business leaders and managers are wondering what they can do to better support their people.

Why a pandemic is so stressful?

Fear and anxiety over a new disease and the thought of what could happen are overwhelming. They stir strong emotions in adults and children. Pair this with the media frenzy that is taking place and we have a recipe for anxiety that is hard to match. As dictated by the WHO and CDC, public health actions such as social distancing can make people feel isolated and lonely. Social distancing also increases stress and anxiety to otherwise mentally healthy individuals.

What's the role of the employer and co-worker in this?

The pandemic may have become the impetus that was needed for leaders to actually move from a stage of just talking about mental health, to a place where they're actually taking tangible, sustainable action for the mental health of their people.

"We really have to stop telling people who are unwell to go get help," says Stephane Grenier founding partner and CEO at Mental Health Innovations (MHI), a consultancy that leads innovative and sustainable change in organizations to enhance the mental health of their people.

"While most services aimed at supporting employee mental health are well-intentioned, what we have to keep

in mind is that when people are unwell, they have a tendency to isolate and not want to do the very things we are asking them to do," says Grenier.


In a common workplace injury scenario, we would never put the onus on a worker to seek first aid themselves, explains Grenier. Rather, co-workers would gather around the person and support that person to get them the help they need. Someone would take the initiative to help their injured coworker.

So why is it different with mental health? That's what business, HR leaders and even co-workers need to start asking themselves. Imagine when someone within the organization is capable of saying, "wait a minute, Leslie's not herself today. I'm going to reach out and ask her how it's going, and I'm going to be there for her."

"We need to pivot and create a culture inside every organization where people who are well are capable of recognizing those who are unwell and supporting them," says Grenier.

Now, more than ever, the HR department needs to not only stay abreast of changes in compliance issues due to COVID-19, but they also need to be actively providing resources to staff for mental health awareness and support. Co-workers in any company can also be there to offer support and guidance for fellow workers to help recognize and address feelings of stress and anxiety.

As we move into the new normal, it's important to remember that not everyone shows stress or emotions the same, so providing strong human resources support, mental health awareness and education to all staff, and being a supportive coworker can help all workers feel heard.

Coping with stress in a healthy way will make all businesses, employees and communities stronger. 

Marlene Milczarek is a freelance writer and founder/chief strategist of SPINNING IDEAS, a marketing consulting firm based in Acton, Ontario. Her career spans over 16 years in marketing, helping businesses grow revenues, improve their branding and sales enablement tools. Marlene holds a chartered marketer (CM) designation from the Canadian Marketing Association (CMA), and has a bachelor of journalism from Ryerson University. You can connect with Marlene on LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/marlenemilczarek.

A man with a beard and sunglasses and a woman with curly hair are smiling and laughing while sitting in the front of a car. The background shows a sunset or sunrise through the car windows.

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UNIQUE FOODS:

Celebrating 25 years of Innovative Beverage Trends in Canada



Jon Silver, president and owner of Unique Foods Canada Inc.

At its heart, a business is the sum of its relationships. Who people choose to work with is based on this. However, no matter the industry, there will always be another company able to provide a similar product or service should that relationship falter. The stronger its connections, the more successful the business will be.

Jon Silver, president and owner of Unique Foods Canada Inc., has spent the last quarter-century cultivating the bonds upon which he built his business. That foundation runs deep. Unique's commitment to those relationships has cemented its reputation in the industry, enabling it to adapt and persevere through the last 25 years and an unprecedented global pandemic.

"Those in business who believe that they don't need friends will never succeed in business or life. My success is thanks to my team, family, brother, our customers and the businesses that I have had the pleasure of working with," Jon explains. The importance of these relationships is evidenced by the number of staff, customers, and suppliers that support Unique and count Jon as a personal friend.

John Tzouvelakos, owner of the LaSalle Drive-In, has been a customer of Unique since its inception. "Jon's a good guy. We have a great business relationship, but after 25 years together, we've developed a close friendship too. If either of us ever needs anything, we know all we have to do is pick up the phone."

Getting started



Jon was working for a food service company, attending trade shows in the U.S. and Canada when he recognized a potential business opportunity. The beverage sector was exploding in the U.S. and overseas, while beverage choices in Canada remained limited. A fortuitous meeting at a trade show opened the door for his new business idea.

Sam Simpson, owner of Cable Car Beverage Corporation, wanted to expand his beverage line into Canada. After meeting Jon at a show, he was impressed with his energy and enthusiasm. Taking him under his wing, Simpson gave Jon the opportunity to bring Stewarts Old-Fashioned Sodas into Canada in 1996.

"At this infantile stage of the business, I was literally selling beverage cases out of the trunk of my car and storing product in my garage and basement. What started as a pallet turned into two, then four and eventually a truckload. I realized that I couldn't do this venture justice and work my other job, and Unique Foods was born. Some of the first customers that came on board were LaSalle Drive-In, Lester's Deli and Cotes St-Lucs BBQ," Jon recalls.

A local institution since 1951, Lester's Deli owner Bill Berenholc has also been a customer from the start. "We have a presence in the marketplace; therefore, it's important for us to be consistent with our product and supply chain. Unique is a great company, and we've had only good relations with them."

Building a presence

Unique continued to grow, expanding from the Quebec market into Atlantic Canada, then Ontario and the West. By 2000, Silver brought his brother, Josh Silver, on board. The two worked well together, balancing each other out perfectly by bringing their unique strengths to the business. Josh had an affinity for public relations and became the charismatic face of the company, while Jon, a whiz on the business end, focused on the corporate and administrative aspects of the industry.

"Jon has a real knack for identifying and bringing the next big beverage trend to market. He brought Hype Energy drinks to Canada before energy drinks were even a thing," Josh says of his brother. The pair learned early on that Unique would have to expand its offerings beyond trends after witnessing industry giants >>



swoop in with their own products or outright purchasing the trending brand.

"I've always believed that it's the people behind the brand that make it successful. My brother is an unstoppable force on his own, but we grew and developed each brand exponentially together. Unique became more than just a distributor of trendsetting beverages. We acted as a promotional agency for the products in our portfolio, representing them at various events, giving back to the community through donations and developing a strong social media network and following for each brand," shares Josh.

Companies began to approach the duo because of their connections and reputation. The Silver name became synonymous with innovative beverages and well-executed events. People trusted them as ambassadors of their brands because the Silvers not only knew what would work in Canada, but they backed their products with dedication, enthusiasm and drive.

Unique's junior vice-president of sales and marketing, Mike Tobin, has been with the company for 15 years. In that time, he's witnessed their diversified product line flourish. "I enjoy being a part of the team who decides what the next big thing we bring to market is. Unique approaches new clients differently than most. We are very selective of the products and brands we choose to carry. New brands take time to prepare for the market, which takes time away from our existing products. It's a delicate balance; the timing, the product - everything has to fit."

Reza Mirza met Jon when he was the president and owner of Activate Drinks, a product that was later sold to Unique Foods in 2012. Today, Reza is the CEO

of Icelandic Glacial. "Unique is our Canadian supplier for Icelandic Glacial water. Jon is a real hands-on guy. He took the initiative to create a four-pack of our sparkling water flavours, which we could not do in our factory here and helped build our sparkling water distribution. His team has been a real asset in getting our products into major accounts like Loblaws, Shoppers Drug Mart, Bulk Barn, Whole Foods and the like."

Another example of the trust that companies instill in Unique is evidenced from their distribution contract with Orangina. Suntory Brand's Orangina is popular in food services and controlled by Pepsi Bottling Ventures in North America. "We were given the account because they believed in our philosophy and liked how we back our brands," Tobin says.

Jared Smith, vice president of business development at Stratus Group, was introduced to Jon three years ago. "With Jon's help, we successfully launched our first brand, KÖE Organic Kombucha, into Canada with Unique. He is an independent operator that we trust to manage our Canadian business with little support from us. Even through Covid, Jon maintained the business we had, and now we are emerging from the lockdown with massive orders and growth. Unique is a truly amazing partner, through thick and thin," he shares.

Loblaws director Sylvain Lemieux, a Unique customer for the last decade, also touts the company's graces. "Jon is an incredible entrepreneur, and Unique's service really stands out. They always ensure we're stocked with the right amount of products to service our customers, are diligent with their follow-ups and support us with store events or fundraising."

Overcoming Adversity

In March 2020, on the precipice of celebrating their 25th business anniversary, the Covid-19 global pandemic hit. The impact was severe, with many companies having to close or re-evaluate the way they operated. "This pandemic has been a great equalizer. If it wasn't for the relationships that I developed over the last quarter-century, our company might not be here today," Jon says soberly.

"At first, our staff transitioned to working remotely. However, as an increasing number of industry sectors closed down, we were forced to cut hours and lay off some of our staff. As a family-run business, it wasn't easy to see happen, especially when Josh told me he had decided to step back from the company. It was a big adjustment, but we remain close," Jon says.

CONGRATULATORY MESSAGES

Congratulations to Unique Foods and their 25 years of service. They have been an amazing partner through thick and thin. I couldn't recommend them more.

– *Jared Smith, Stratus Group*

Congratulations on a successful 25 years. We hope to be an integral part of the next 25!

– *Norm Snyder, Reed's/Virgil's*

Wishing Jon and his team another successful 25 years as we continue growing together as partners.

– *Reza Mirza, Icelandic Glacial*

"When Covid hit, our promotional activities flat-out stopped. There were no more events, tournaments or tastings. That entire aspect of our business and my position changed overnight. It was important for me not to be a drain on the company at a critical time, so after a lot of soul-searching, I made the decision to try something new. I had been interested in pursuing various projects over the years, and this seemed like the best time to take that leap. I'll always be grateful for my brother's support on this. We're best friends, and while the change in our dynamic will be difficult at first, I'm excited to see where my path leads. I hope that I can continue to support my brother through my new venture and look forward to seeing how we will be able to work together in the future," Josh explains.

During this time, Jon's focus was to keep driving the company forward. "Our team really rose to the occasion. We were fortunate to pivot when we needed to get ahead of market trends and ensure our brand line-up relevancy. Since the food-service industry was hit hard, we shifted our distribution focus to the grocery and drug sectors, growing several new accounts," shares Jon.

The company adapted in other ways too. "Customers began asking if we had a source for personal protective equipment (PPE) as there was a severe shortage in the market. We partnered with one of Jon's contacts in Quebec that supplied industrial products like sanitizers and dispensers and were able to help them transition their products to the retail market. After connecting with them and other importers, we knew we were able to sell nitrile gloves, sanitizer, sanitizer dispensers, and three-ply non-medical >>

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masks. Being able to offer these products at fair prices strengthened our relationship with our customers who were unable to source the product themselves, many of whom are still buying PPE products from us today," Tobin says.

Unique's ability to seamlessly transfer into PPE sales saw them radically expand their distribution base by June of 2020. This, in turn, opened the door for their beverage business. "We built many new relationships we didn't have before because of PPE, and these customers began buying our beverages too," explains Tobin.


By late summer, Unique had conducted

a thorough business analysis and began reorganizing its infrastructure to prepare for 2021. "We forecast everything for the upcoming year. It's a big project to try to determine our needs for the year, made even more difficult with the pandemic," says Tobin. Accurate forecasting is critical for Unique to prevent losses as their products have varying expiry dates.

Martin Luther King Jr. once said the ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy. "The pandemic saw some brands cut their distribution, in the end, though, Unique is more than any one brand. We are about finding solutions and staying positive through whatever storms come our way in this competitive industry," Jon shares. "We made changes for the better, and I am excited for the first time in a long time to bring two all-natural brands, Reed's Ginger Beers and Virgil's Handcrafted Sodas, to the Canadian market."

"Despite our late start on getting the required packaging to enter the market properly, Jon assisted us with finishing all the steps and launching on time. Unique

presented a blueprint on how to grow our business in Canada, quickly implemented the plan and even developed new opportunities. They stand out because they have strength in several areas of business, including local knowledge and a breadth of key relationships that ensure success," says Norm Snyder, chief executive officer at Reed's Inc.

Jon Silver's business philosophies haven't changed much over the past 25 years. He still believes in developing solid business relationships and hand-shake deals where honesty and integrity are paramount in a transaction. He understands that a business must remain fluid to adapt to the ever-evolving market and world around them. These guideposts have served Unique Foods well over the past quarter-century and will continue to do so for the next 25. 

Tania Moffat is a freelance writer, editor, publisher and photographer. She has worked in the publishing industry for the last 16 years on a wide variety of B2B and consumer publications, both in print and online. You can connect with her at info@chiccountrylife.com

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The Open-Mold Spray Up process for manufacturing fiberglass, also known as “chop and spray,” uses a specialized gun and bottle of resin to apply a pre-mixed, spooled fiberglass strand to a single-sided mold before a hand roller is used to squeeze out any air pockets. While cost-effective, this labor-intensive method can result in an inconsistent blend of resin and fibers, leading to weak or porous spots in the finished product.

A Look at Fiberglass-Manufacturing Methods and Their Applications

By Ed Kammerer

In many ways, human beings are driven by the search for the next big thing, something that’s “new and improved” or “bigger and better.” As an example, take smartphones. As soon as the newest model is released, the people who stood in line to purchase it immediately begin wondering when the next model will become available. In reality, there are many, many people whose lives are moving along just fine with a smartphone model that was released several years earlier.

Which brings us to fiberglass. The first patent for fiberglass – defined as a “type of fiber-reinforced plastic using glass fibers” – was awarded in 1880, with the fiberglass that we recognize today entering the market in the mid-1930s. Since then, it has become an indispensable component in the production of many common objects, including bathtubs, swimming pools, roofing and boats.

It also has a prominent place in the forecourt of your local retail-fueling station. Fiberglass is commonly used in many of the components (seen and unseen) that dot the forecourt, including manhole covers, dispenser and tank sumps, top hats and skirts. And much like that smartphone, the ways to construct

and implement fiberglass have evolved and expanded over the years. At this point, there are four main methods – all of which are viable and commonly used – to manufacture fiberglass-based forecourt products.

A Totally Full Glass

The trick, then, for the fueling-site operator is choosing forecourt components and equipment that make the best use of the specific fiberglass-manufacturing processes. Let’s take a closer look at each one, from oldest to the most recent innovation:

- **Open-Mold Spray Up:** Also known as “chop and spray,” this method uses a specialized gun outfitted with a bottle of resin to apply a pre-mixed, spooled fiberglass strand to a single-sided mold. In addition to its low cost, the main benefit of this method is that it is easier to produce parts that are of an irregular shape (not circular or square), as well as parts that are not meant to have an airtight or watertight seal or bear heavy loads and forces. The main drawback is that a part can only be produced with one smooth side and the thickness can be less consistent than those produced >>

by other methods, since the fiberglass/resin is sprayed on by hand. It can also lead to an inconsistent blend of resin and glass fibers leaving porous or weak spots in the product. Hand rollers are used to squeeze out any air pockets, but if any air pockets are missed, this will also compromise the consistency and quality of the finished product.

- **Resin-Transfer Molding (RTM):** Uses a composite of glass fibers and resin that is packed into a mold, with the fiberglass providing tensile strength and the resin contributing compressive strength to the finished product. To ensure a smooth, consistent finish on both sides of the object, all of the fiberglass fibers must be fully saturated with the resin. This is accomplished by layering glass sheets into a mold and then injecting the mold with resin. The two components are then compressed together by extreme forces in a hydraulic press that insures a perfect

blend of resin-saturated glass. This method of construction is effective in developing dense, compact layers of fiberglass for objects that need to bear heavy loads or repeated high-force events, such as manhole covers. The drawbacks to this method come in the actual manufacturing process itself, which requires expensive tooling and a large hydraulic press to ensure that the two halves of the mold hold together effectively.

- **Vacuum-Assisted Resin Transfer Molding (Vac-RTM):** This evolutionary stage in the RTM method uses a vacuum to pull, rather than push, the resin into the fiberglass. This creates a better seal without the need of a large, expensive hydraulic press, with something as simple as a pair of vice-grip pliers used to securely clamp the two halves together. The finished walls are also incredibly smooth, which makes it easier to attach things to it, while there are no holes or pores that

can adversely affect sealing capabilities. The biggest challenge with this method is the simple fact that there is an absolute maximum amount of force that can be generated by a vacuum. This limits the amount of fiberglass that can be permeated by the resin, which restricts the load-bearing properties of the finished product and, by extension, the number of different products it can be used in. This process makes it ideal for parts like containment chambers, but not manhole covers.

- **Sheet-Molded Compound (SMC):** This most recent fiberglass-manufacturing innovation combines the best of the chop-and-spray and RTM methods. It's basis is a putty-type mixture of resin and chopped glass fibers that is produced in sheets that can then be molded to meet the specific end-user needs for density, length, and shape. The sheets are cut to the size and shape needed, then placed in a mold

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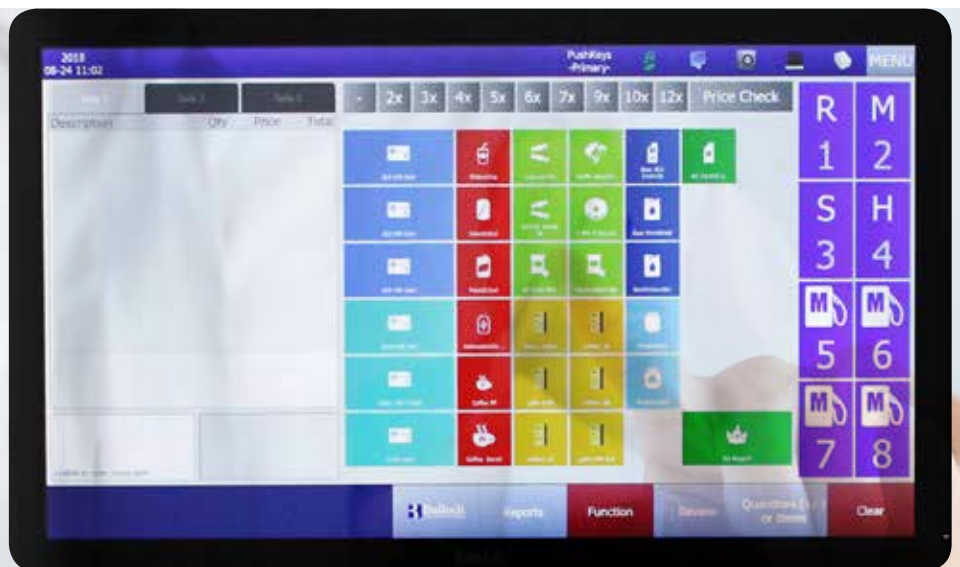
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The Vacuum-Assisted Resin Transfer Molding (Vac-RTM) process builds on the benefits of RTM fiberglass manufacturing through the use of a vacuum that helps create incredibly smooth walls that have no porous or weak spots that can compromise performance.



The Resin Transfer Molding (RTM) production process saturates glass fibers with resin to create the fiberglass then uses a hydraulic press to compress the two halves of the part together, resulting in a smooth, leak-free finish.



The new DSE Dispenser Sump from OPW Engineered Systems utilizes the Sheet-Molded Compound (SMC) fiberglass-manufacturing method to produce a finished product that delivers best-in-class quality, fast delivery lead times and affordability without sacrificing performance.

and pressed into shape. The result is a part that has the highest level of consistency available, making it the premier way to construct a high number of consistent parts over a short period of time. The main drawback goes back to the heart of the manufacturing process – a large (sometimes 20-foot tall) and expensive hydraulic press is needed to shape the fiberglass sheets into a finished product. The other drawback is the high initial tooling cost and capital expense. The mold that is placed into the press is a large, precision-machined piece of steel that is made into the exact shape of the part to be pressed. The tool is then chrome-plated for easy release from the press. The SMC process is ideal for high-volume parts requiring consistent and detailed end results.

OPW Retail Fueling, Smithfield, NC, utilizes all four types of fiberglass-manufacturing processes in creating its various lines of manholes, dispenser and tank sumps, multiports, top hats

and skirts. Its latest effort in this area is the new DSE Series Dispenser Sump, which combines best-in-class quality, fast lead times and affordability without the customer having to accept less than the best level of performance in all three metrics.

The DSE dispenser sumps are constructed via the SMC manufacturing method, which gives them extremely fast lead times, smooth walls both inside and outside, which allows entry fittings to bond better and prevent leaks, and a consistent finish and thickness that can accept all types of piping and fittings. Finally, the DSE sumps are stackable, which optimizes distributor inventory space and improves ease of ordering.

Conclusion

While we love bigger and better, sometimes same-old, same-old can still be the best solution. Though the ways to manufacture fiberglass have grown over the years, all four common methods still have their advantages when it comes to building components for use in the retail-fueling forecourt. The task is finding parts that make the best use of the specific manufacturing method, from top hats and skirts that are still made through the chop-and-spray method, to next-generation dispenser sumps like the OPW DSE Series that take advantage of the advanced SMC process. **■**

Ed Kammerer is the director of Global Product Management for OPW, based in Cincinnati, OH, USA. He can be reached at ed.kammerer@opwglobal.com. For more information on OPW, go to www.OPWGlobal.com.



JUSTICE PERSPECTIVES

How Can Convenience Stores be Good Citizens?

By Bob Christmas

Historically the idea of good corporate citizenship and financial responsibility were mutually exclusive. Making money for the company often meant you could not be a good citizen. In this article, I argue that in the modern environment, this has changed. In the contemporary context, being a good citizen is, in fact, good business.

The concept of corporations was imported from Europe and was first employed by the railroads. These massive projects required more money than a few wealthy investors could put up. Corporations allow many people to invest, and they protect investors from liability. A corporation is a legal person, at law. As such, the individual shareholders cannot be sued, for instance, if the corporation pollutes the environment. It created an ethical dilemma for executive directors obligated by law to do whatever makes money for the corporation, even if it is hurting the community or polluting the environment. You cannot put a corporation in prison for damaging the environment. The only recourse for the courts would be fines, which may not hurt enough to change corporate practices.

However, the collective conscience has evolved over recent decades. Consumers now care more about how the businesses they support hire and treat their employees. Whether they deliberately work to protect the environment and help the communities

they operate in. Businesses now stand to gain from being good global citizens. That means taking an interest in how they interact with the world. It means being mindful of making positive impacts in the community. Good corporate citizenship seeks to be socially responsible. On top of standard ethical and legal practices, most successful businesses now demonstrate a strong balance between the needs of the shareholders and the community and environment.

Shareholders increasingly demand these values, thus shrinking the dichotomy between corporate profit and being a good citizen. Investors are seeking socially responsible environmental, social, and governance practices. Profit is no longer mutually exclusive to social responsibility. Research has shown that over 85 per cent of customers consider corporate social responsibility in their buying decisions. Over 90 per cent have said they are likely to choose brands that are associated with good causes.


Some of the benefits of good citizenship include improved reputation and brand recognition, better sales and reduced costs, and customer and employee loyalty. Being a good citizen can consist of almost any aspect of your firm's operation, including where you locate your stores and offices, what products you sell, how you treat your employees and how the company interacts with customers and the community. The convenience and

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CARE ABOUT HOW
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DISPLAY GOOD CITIZENSHIP
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carwash industry seems full of opportunities to be good citizens. I know I would drive an extra couple of blocks to use a carwash that advertises that they use environmentally friendly detergents. I believe a great deal of mileage could be gotten highlighting how your stores care about newcomer opportunities, employment and economic development within communities.

At this time in history, consumers genuinely care about ethical product sources that are not produced through exploited children off-shore or at the expense of our ozone layer. In this unprecedented Corona Virus era, customers and employees care about how companies are working to ease the burden of lay-offs and altered operations. Retailers can display good citizenship in many ways. They can offer organic and ethically sourced products, discontinue socially irresponsible ones, and choose regional and smaller suppliers. Businesses can take care of employees by considering how they can support their health care needs or reduce their financial burdens. Many employees in 2021 are said to be increasing credit debt as a result of Covid related downsizing, reduced hours and

lay-offs. Could your company offer small loans to help employees avoid high-interest credit debts? Many companies are offering wage continuity, at least for the first weeks of Covid related lay-offs.

People believe their company is a good corporate citizen when they see management making decisions that sacrifice short-term profitability for the sake of long-term customer and employee loyalty. The long game is where corporate executives should have their goals set, regardless of their market niche. Without loyal customers and employees, what do we have? Being a good corporate citizen is the way to achieve that. 

Bob Christmas, Ph.D., is an author, scholar, consultant, passionate speaker and social justice advocate police professional with internationally recognized expertise in community engagement and crime prevention. An advocate for social reform, he has written and speaks extensively on innovative trends in policing, community partnership and governance. Visit Bob at BChristmas.com.

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A hand with a red-tinted finger pointing at a white social media icon (a person in a circle) on a dark blue background. The background is filled with a network of white dashed lines connecting various white social media icons (people in circles).

Social Media: Communication the Modern Way

By Angela Altass

It is 2021 and we spend more time looking at and connecting with each other through our various devices than we do in person, especially as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to force us into varying degrees of social distancing.

“Generally speaking, a digital footprint is recommended for any business,” says Melissa Martin, owner, Halfsquare Designs, www.halfsquaredesigns.ca. “Specifically, as for a convenience store, it may be an opportunity to diversify from the traditional format with, for example, online orders for home delivery. But, without a firm cadence of five or more posts per week, it’s probably not going to yield the results you are looking for.”

Whether you operate a business or not, it is difficult to ignore the role social media plays in our lives and its impact on our day-to-day work and lifestyle choices. It’s necessary to be on top of your social media game, and that includes knowing who all the players are, which means more than a quick occasional post on your Facebook page.

“In today’s world, I think social media is more important than your website,” says Stephen Heckbert, professor, public relations program, Algonquin College, “and, most importantly, make sure you are engaging on social media sites you may not consider as such. In other words, check your Yelp, Trip Advisor and Google reviews as much, or more, than your Instagram. Your website, if you have one, will invariably be fairly static, so try to ensure you’re giving yourself time to update it and your social media channels.”

Heckbert lists the following social media platforms in order of most suitable for use by convenience stores:

- “Facebook – This is the big one for a reason: It’s likely home to your target market, unless your target market is in high school, in which case,
 - a. Instagram: Be more visual on Instagram. Words are not your friends here. Also, if it’s high schoolers you’re targeting,
 - b. TikTok: Figure out how to make your convenience store a dance haven.”

As for monitoring social media, make sure you follow Facebook, Google, Yelp, Kijiji and other sites for mentions of you. This is more of a monitoring activity but it has to be done. I promise, people have said things about you online you might not have seen yet, so make sure you’re listening on social media.”

Martin agrees that Facebook is the key site for reaching Gen X and older.

While it can seem somewhat of a daunting task if you are not used to it, managing your online presence is something that you

can do yourself but it’s important to realize that it’s not free, says Heckbert.

“You can do it on your own, absolutely, but, first and foremost, make sure you’ve thought about what you want to be known for,” he says. “If you know what you want your brand to be, fast and convenient or friendly and welcoming, then either you or someone else can manage your social presence. But, make sure your brand positioning is the same online as it is in person. Also, and this is the most important point, it’s not free. At a minimum, it will take time and energy, and you have to understand what you’re spending that time and energy on.”

Martin agrees that managing your online presence is something you can probably do on your own to start but you might want to consider getting help when the volume grows and justifies hiring a company or person to look after it for you. Martin also says to be sure to determine clear objectives before you begin.

You already have an online presence, whether you think you do or not, states Heckbert.

“You are on Google somehow, so it’s better for you to be in control of your story than to surrender it to someone else,” he advises. “Think about who you want to be online and in person and then build to that goal. If you want your brand to be fun, then be prepared to have fun yourself. If you want your brand to be fast and convenient, don’t be text-heavy in your messages.”

Heckbert cautions about keeping your online content on point.

“Make sure you’re posting about what’s important to you in your role as a store owner,” he advises. “You may have personal opinions about a wide variety of topics but unless you think it’s important for your store to share your exact views, you may want your store’s social media to focus on more universal ideas, like: these new crunchy potato chips really are the crunchiest ever!”

Heckbert says there is no universal answer to what consumers expect from a store’s website or social media accounts, except for consistency.

“They are expecting consistency,” he states. “If you say you’re going to post frequently, and you don’t, then I’m out. If you say you’re going to advertise what’s on special and you don’t, I’m out. If you promise special deals to followers, and you don’t have any, I’m out. So, be consistent.”

Martin adds that customers are looking for informative and entertaining/engaging content on social media.

Heckbert’s final words of advice: “Good luck. The best part of the online world is there are no right answers.” 📌

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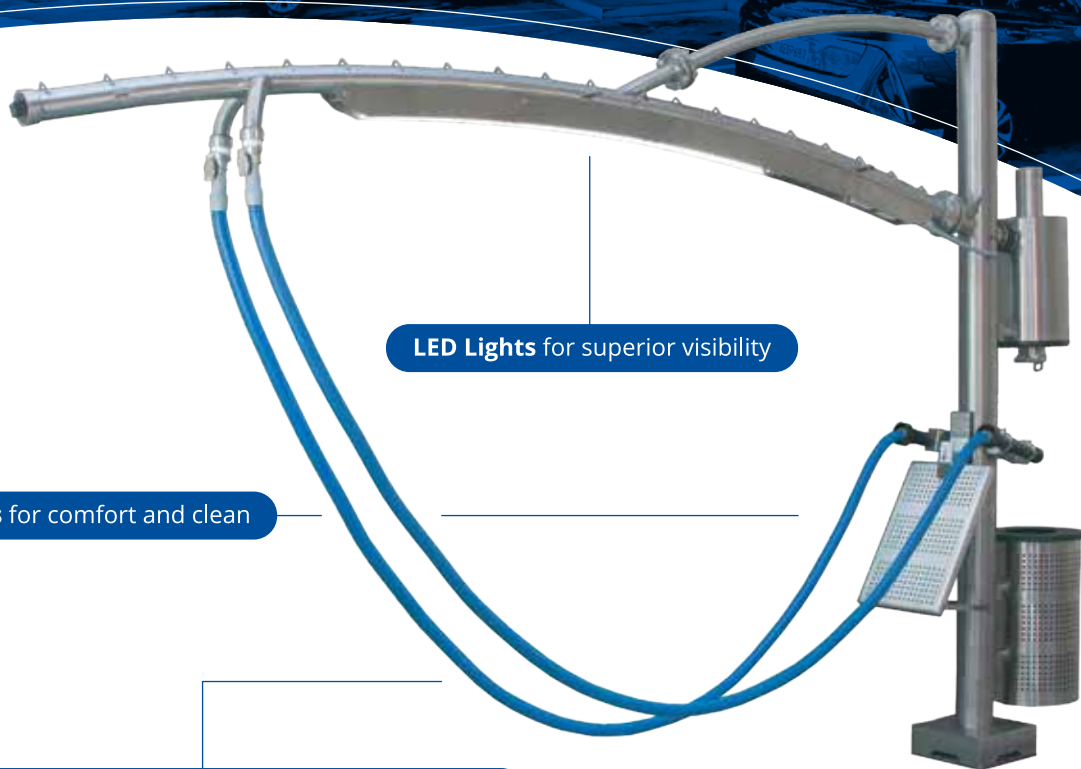
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Car wash industry leaders know success is rooted in creating the optimal customer experience. Not only do vacuums provide a clean interior to match the shiny exterior, they are often the only equipment customers use, and evaluate, themselves. *That's why Vacutech designs accessories with the customer in mind to offer an experience that's fast, clean and easy.*



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By Camden Easterling

Vacuums are Key to Bringing in Customers and Building Loyalty

With increasing wash competition, customers seek the best – and vacuums and accessories are deciding factors.

As the tunnel carwash industry continues to grow and consolidate, owners and operators are also seeing increasing sophistication in the field: Fantastic looking sites, new technology, professionally trained staff.

That means customers not only have more choices, they're also much choosier about where they wash than in previous decades. And the deciding factor? It's often the vacuums and the accessories in the vacuum plaza.

Why do vacuums matter to wash patrons? In large part because vacuums are one of the only pieces of equipment customers operate themselves at a tunnel carwash. If the vacuums disappoint – poor suction, out of order, inconvenient – people aren't coming back. And, they're likely to share their opinion on social media, amplifying the impact

of an unhappy customer.

But provide top-notch vacuums and thoughtful accessories to make vacuuming effective, fast and convenient, and your wash is positioned to have not just happy customers but patrons who evangelize for you.

"This carwash is the best in the Treasure Valley," writes one customer on the Facebook page for Epic Shine, a multi-site company in Idaho in the United States. Epic Shine is in an area where customers have plenty of washes to choose from. "My car is always super clean when I drive out and the vacuums always work, unlike other places."

"Vacuums that always work" start with central vacuum systems designed by engineers who ensure you have the right combination of turbines (motors), separators (the dirt and >>



WHILE MECHANIZED TUNNELS CLEAN CARS, PEOPLE VACUUM VEHICLES. OFFER THEM THE IMPRESSIVE SUCTION WITH EQUALLY IMPRESSIVE ACCESSORIES AND YOU'LL BUILD REPEAT BUSINESS.

debris collectors) and other components that work in combination to provide powerful suction.

Another reason, and a surprising one, customers select wash sites based on their vacuums as much or more than the tunnel is because they handle the vacuuming themselves.

The appeal of the express tunnel is that it is a drive-through service. However, people feel a significant amount of satisfaction in the tasks they do themselves.

This notion of pride in a job performed by oneself is called the Ikea

effect. Researchers report consumers experience pleasure in ownership in tasks they complete, even seemingly tedious jobs such as assembling basic furniture from the retailer Ikea, and are willing to pay more for it. Carwash operators often hear from vacuum users that they feel extra satisfaction with vacuuming because they cleaned their interiors.

But make sure the task is comfortable, fast and convenient so it doesn't slide into the territory of being drudgery. Offer accessories that make vacuuming pleasant, and you'll set your wash apart

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from the competition (see side bar for the top accessories customers look for when choosing a wash).

“Great experience and great free vacuums and hand towels for cleaning after you go through the wash,” writes a customer on the Facebook page for Launch Car Wash, a booming site in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in the US that has its second location in the works.

While mechanized tunnels clean cars, people vacuum vehicles. Offer them the impressive suction with equally impressive accessories and you’ll build repeat business. [E]

Camden Easterling is the marketing director for Vacutech LLC and has been working in the carwash industry for seven years.

Tidy interiors complete the promise of clean, dry and shiny vehicles. Thoughtful accessories ensure your customers have the optimal experience in your vacuum plaza.

Awnings|

Providing protection from the elements is perhaps the number one way to give your guests a comfortable experience. Awnings also boost the aesthetics and visibility of your site. Materials range from fabric to perforated aluminum.

Mat racks

Save patrons the hassle and mess of vacuuming on the pavement with ergonomic mat racks. These also prevent customers from banging their mats on your vacuum stanchions, which could damage the stanchion finish.

Waste receptacles

Good quality waste receptacles are a favorite of both patrons and wash staff. Customers love not having to trek across the lot while cleaning out their vehicles. Employees appreciate not having to pick up as much stray litter. Vacuum systems with debris cleanouts mounted above trash cans also make daily maintenance speedy for staff.

LED lights

Customers can easily see when they are vacuuming during dim hours, improving efficiency plus their feeling of safety on the lot. Lights also make your site visible to passersby at any time.

Towel bins

If you offer free towels, make them convenient with well-designed towel bins that store clean towels tidily and collect used ones.

Compressed air

Compressed air lets customers get a complete clean by blowing dirt and grime out of all the interior nooks and crannies or blow those last few drops of water from hard to dry areas such as mirrors and door sills. Nothing says attention to detail like this tool.

Signage

Vacuum plazas are a great place for signage to let customers know about promotions, encourage membership signups, or convey other information. [E]

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Detailing Against Covid-19 and Other Germs

By Meline Beach



Dust, crumbs, and spills create a surplus of germs inside vehicles. Every season leaves behind its mark – from rain and mold to dirt, leaves, and salt stains. A quick wipe down and vacuum will create a visually clean environment, however, there is more than meets the eye when it comes to complete disinfection.

The Covid-19 virus has created a heightened awareness about the easy spread of germs – from liquid particles expressed through sneezing, coughing, talking, and singing to touching contaminated surfaces and then touching your own eyes, ears, nose, or mouth before cleaning your hands.

Many businesses have suffered from low to no sales due to Covid-19 lockdown restrictions, including carwashes, except those that offer interior detailing services.

“We’re down approximately 30 per cent of our usual car washing business, but our sales in car detailing have gone up with a number of cars coming in for Covid-19 disinfection,” says Dave Watson, owner of the Chamois Car Wash and Detail Centre in Winnipeg, Manitoba. With three locations across the province, they’ve managed to stay open on reduced hours, seven days a week. “We’ve received an increase in sales from emergency service vehicles and car dealerships from trade-ins and auction vehicles.”

In addition to their regular detailing practices, the Chamois offers an ozone treatment, using a machine that takes out the oxygen of a vehicle to kill bacteria.

New safety protocols

Established in 1998, the Chamois carwash company has been providing carwash services for over 20 years across three locations throughout the province. They take pride in the safety of their customers, team members and the vehicles they service – before and during the current global pandemic.

“We’ve taken extra precautions due to Covid-19. Before team members enter the vehicle, they spray everything down with a disinfectant to prevent the spread of the virus. Before entering any vehicles, all team members must be wearing masks and latex gloves, which they sanitize between vehicles and discard between shifts.”

While Watson says they haven’t actively promoted Covid-19 disinfection services, they do tell all customers of their safety protocols when they call. Part of their protocols involve using a spray chemical germ guard treatment that kills viruses within seconds after application. They’ve also dedicated certain tasks to team members in a manner that creates safe distancing from one another, and towels are no longer shared between vehicles.

In order to accommodate these new safety protocols, the

Chamois locations have had to remove a vacuum install and one carwash bay. They've also changed their exterior carwash practices, allowing customers to remain in their vehicle and just drive down the line.

"I think we'll continue with the option for customers to remain in their car for exterior vehicle cleaning even after all restrictions are lifted," says Carlo Occhino, detail manager at the Chamois' Waverley location, who has noticed a change in his customers' behaviour since the start of the pandemic. "We've had to require our staff to say hello to customers as people are not as outgoing or talkative as they once were."

Natural disinfection solutions

Christine Teschl, president of Specialty Fuel Improvers Inc. quickly shifted her focus from fuel and engine performance additives to disinfectant solutions as soon as the pandemic negatively impacted her business venture.

"All contract negotiations and business meetings were instantly cancelled due to Covid-19 travel restrictions and sales halted," says Teschl, who is a spirited entrepreneur and easily adaptable to change. "Having an established network of scientists, we quickly pivoted to develop a disinfectant spray that would be effective against the Covid-19 virus and other germs."

Within 60 days, Teschl launched Sunbee – a Canadian manufacturer of premium hand sanitizers, 100 per cent natural surface disinfectants and wipes.

"The world is hyper focused on helping their family, friends and employees," says Teschl. "We found ourselves in a position to respond quickly with an extremely safe, natural solution in a highly competitive market that was crowded with a number of toxic options. Our disinfectants are safe and easy to use on all surfaces. When disinfecting your vehicle, you definitely want to stay away from using bleach or hydrogen peroxide; those products could easily do damage to your car's upholstery."

Licensed by Health Canada, Sunbee's products feature a Natural Product Number (NPN), and are proven to kill 99.99 per cent of bacteria and viruses without the detrimental side effects of other toxic chemical products. Their Select-Bio products contain powerful sporicidal, fungicidal, and bactericidal agents and serve as a highly effective disinfectant on hard surfaces, such as sinks, toilets, floors, walls, vehicles, and personal protective equipment – perfect for use in corporate offices, reception area, restrooms and carwashes.

"We noticed that Health Canada issued a number of recalls against toxic sanitizers originally approved to disinfect against

the Covid-19 virus, that not only smelled terrible, but were also causing skin irritations," says Teschl. "We wanted to offer a natural alternative to chemical solutions and came up with the Sunbee line of products, using organic Aloe Vera and essential oils rich in antioxidants and natural cleanings powers, known to protect skin against harmful organisms."

Sunbee's products are formulated for personal and medical applications and can be used for travel, pets and in cars, including leather interiors. Available for retail and wholesale interests, their products are packaged for individual use and bulk sizes, in a variety of scents, including lavender, vanilla, citrus, tropical, Yogi and natural – with vanilla being the top selling scent.


According to Teschl, their 100 ml hand sanitizer spray is the perfect size to sell to C&G customers. With a suggested retail price of \$8 to \$10 per unit, the product offers a 20 to 30 per cent profit margin, depending on volume.

A customer's perspective


Brian McAllister likes to keep his Ford Escape clean from pet hair, food crumbs, dust, and germs. A resident of Niagara Falls, Ontario, McAllister relies on his local carwash and detailer closest to his home for quality service, competitive pricing, and its loyalty program.

"On average, I have my car cleaned inside and out once every two weeks in the summer and once a month in the winter," says McAllister, who pays \$30 for a platinum wash, which includes a 15-minute detailing session. "I get my car cleaned regularly because it's an expensive investment and I feel it's important to take care of it. Plus, there's nothing worse than getting into a dirty car."

Charlea Sivazlian from Sudbury, Ontario takes pride in cleaning her own car but happily purchases a gift certificate from her local carwash for her boyfriend twice a year. Valued at \$150 each, Sivazlian says car detailing is part of routine maintenance in owning a vehicle.

"My boyfriend is thrilled with his gift certificates to have his F150 cleaned inside and out," says Sivazlian. "He's able to drop off his truck and pick it up three hours later looking and smelling brand new." 

Meline Beach is a Toronto-based communications practitioner and frequent contributor to Convenience & Carwash Canada. In addition to freelance writing, Meline provides communications and public relations support to businesses across Canada. She can be reached at www.mlbcomms.ca



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Photo by Daniel Wiener www.danielwienerphotographer.com

By Angela Altass

Wallace & Carey: Celebrating 100 Years

Wallace & Carey is celebrating by engaging its team to complete 100 acts of kindness during their 100th year, which fits in nicely with the company's mission statement that includes a commitment to working together in a positive, fair and respectful environment.

"Our 100th anniversary committee includes teammates from all areas and levels of the company," says Dan Elrod, president, Wallace & Carey. "The intent being that all those wishing to participate in the celebration have the ability to do so, and kindness is something everyone can practice. We are up to 31 events so far; well on the way to exceeding the goal."

Alongside the company's philosophy of a positive outlook and being respectful to others is a deep pride and recognition that to stay in business for 100 years, you have to be doing things right.

"In the span of 100 years, any organization is going to develop a deep-seated culture," says Elrod. "Ideally, that is one of a positive nature, fair and respectful to teammates, customers and all stakeholders of the business. At Wallace & Carey, we have that. With that longevity also comes a great sense of pride in the excellence, endurance and leadership required to stand the test of time. We're living through one of the greatest challenges as an essential business committed to meeting the needs of our customers and all Canadians. I'm honoured to lead this company and am extremely proud of our leaders and all our teammates."

Elrod has a close connection with Pat Carey, CEO of Wallace & Carey Inc.

"In 2005, I met Pat as part of a joint venture between Wallace & Carey and my former employer McLane Company in the United States," says Elrod. "Pat and I remained close over the years and when the time came for him to focus more on the strategic growth of the organization, I said goodbye to retirement and moved to Canada."

Wallace & Carey embraces continuous improvement in all areas of the business, striving continually to improve through-put in warehouse operations, fuel efficiency improvement via green initiatives and optimized routing, greater inventory efficiency through improved turnover rates "and the thousand other elements required in successful wholesale distribution," says Elrod.

"Our primary business is the supply of convenience stores throughout the country," he says. "It has been amazing to witness the evolution in this industry and the innovation driven by necessity that these operators have forged. C-stores have, in some instances, reinvented themselves to become the corner store with supplies of necessities typically found in supermarkets or big box stores. Good examples of this are 7-Eleven (7-eleven.ca) with broad expansion of their food offerings and delivery to home options, and Greenergy / Mobil 1 (greenergy.com) expanded product mix to address consumer's fill-in shopping needs. Some retailers have actually grown their sales as a result; an amazing accomplishment."

Elrod acknowledges creative and inventive pivoting to alternative



Photo by Daniel Wiener www.danielwienerphotographer.com



Original Wallace & Carey logo, Photo by Chris Uglancia Photography

“Our primary business is the supply of convenience stores throughout the country,” says Elrod. “It has been amazing to witness the evolution in this industry and the innovation driven by necessity that these operators have forged.”

Dan Elrod, president of Wallace & Carey, and Pat Carey, CEO of Wallace & Carey, discuss business in a Wallace & Carey warehouse. Photo by Ewan Nicholson www.ewannicholson.ca

opportunities during the pandemic.

“The theatre business is significant for us as we supply all Cineplex (cinplex.com) and Landmark (landmarkcinemas.com) locations in the country,” notes Elrod. “These businesses have been required to remain mostly closed for the past year, with some exceptions, which has affected their results and ours. Theatre management has found inventive solutions, such as home delivery of their food

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offerings and exclusive bookings of theatres where allowed by provincial rules. Our business would be severely challenged if not for the creative and inventive pivoting by our customers.”

Wallace & Carey has done some pivoting of its own in recent years.

“Regarding our business model and strategy, we have pivoted in the last few years to be a broader supply chain solution,” says Elrod. “This has involved new markets and non-traditional product lines to an expanded mix of retail channels. Our most significant area of growth has been in transportation services. We now run freight on the lanes between all major cities Ontario and west weekly, and many we cover every day with the potential to service every postal code in the country. Our transportation business has grown 300 per cent in the past two years and we continue on a strong pace in this segment.”

As 2021 progresses, Wallace & Carey is working on plans for numerous activities to celebrate their 100-year centennial.

“While the pandemic has gatherings mostly on hold for now and, like everyone else, we still don’t know what the rest of the year will look like, we will hold a number of events when the time is right,” comments Elrod. “Our CEO Pat Carey is understandably very proud of this accomplishment and the significant role his family has played in our industry for many generations. I’d like to invite anyone interested in this milestone to visit our centennial website at www.wacl100.com.” (#CareyKindness #WallaceAndCarey100 #MovingCanadiansForwardSince1921).

WALLACE & CAREY’S GREATEST STRENGTHS HAS BEEN THEIR ABILITY TO MAKE DECISIONS QUICKLY AND TO PIVOT RAPIDLY AS THE ENVIRONMENT CHANGED.

The secret of Wallace & Carey’s success lies with its people and the future looks bright for the company, states Elrod.

“We’re just getting started,” states Elrod. “Our tenure and retention rates are tremendous; people simply want to work here. They know the company

is doing its best to support them; this belief and their commitment drives exceptional performance. It would be impossible to name and thank all the customers, teammates, partners, friends, and other supporters who have driven our success and longevity in this business. Still, we will give it our best effort

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during this centennial year, and to all stakeholders in our industry, our teammates and their families, we say thank you.”

Those working with Wallace & Carey return those feelings of appreciation and express admiration for the longevity and strength of the company over 100 years.

“One hundred years is an amazing milestone that most companies do not reach,” states Mary Shigematsu, key account manager, western region, JTI Macdonald Corp. “The fact that Wallace & Carey is a family-owned business makes this anniversary even more special. Throughout COVID-19, Wallace & Carey has continuously provided that personal touch, even with pandemic restrictions. While we have not been able to conduct business in person, the WC team always has cameras on, ready to engage in meaningful conversation. Everyone on the Wallace & Carey team is amazing. Our connection with the WC team has grown even stronger over the past year and we were able to pivot and have great success.”

Kinpack Ltd. also offers congratulations to Wallace & Carey.

“One hundred years of business is an outstanding achievement,” says Steve Bradford, managing director, Kinpack Ltd. “The world has changed over the last 100 years but certain business principles remain constant. Larry, Frank and Pat Carey and their teammates have built an enduring business around exceptional people and customer service; a formula for continued success.”

JF Turcotte, president, National Smokeless Tobacco Company values his company’s close relationship with Wallace & Carey, which has developed over several decades.

“Frank Carey demonstrated how important it is to have a strong partnership as the foundation of any business dealing,” says Turcotte. “With that comes trust and respect and a simple handshake represents your word. I would say that one of Wallace & Carey’s greatest strengths has been their ability to make decisions quickly and to pivot rapidly as the environment changed. They’ve always looked ahead towards the next opportunity while valuing their existing business. I never had the opportunity to meet Larry Carey but I have a strong

feeling that these beliefs originated with him and were passed on to Frank, and now Patrick.”

One hundred years is truly remarkable, especially considering all the changes the industry has gone through, says Turcotte.

“Three generations of Careys have provided Wallace & Carey with the strong and consistent leadership required to succeed in good and difficult times,” says Turcotte. “Wallace & Carey

has always treated their customers and suppliers like partners and their employees like family. Their teammates have been such an integral part of their success over the years. No matter what your dealings with anyone at Wallace & Carey, you will encounter their values of family, integrity, kindness, relationships and entrepreneurial spirit. These values live and breathe throughout the organization. Wallace & Carey works only one way and that is as a team.” **TC**

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By Meline Beach

CARWASH DRYERS – **Stronger, Greener, Quieter.**



Dryers play a vital role in the whole car washing experience. Not all dryers dry equally and not all vehicles dry the same. While drying systems are not one size fits all, it's important to choose the right system that's most reliable for you and your location in order to create the best experience for your customers. *Convenience & Carwash Canada* spoke with three manufacturers of carwash drying equipment to learn of the features and benefits of their innovative products.

International Drying Corporation

Not one to rest on their laurels, International Drying Corporation launches a new piece of equipment every two years on average. Their most recent product launch is the Stealth Quiet Drying System – the only system with sound levels certified to meet OSHA requirements, followed by the Back Blasters – best designed to get rid of the excess-hard-to-remove water on the back of minivans and SUVs. Quiet is the operative driving force behind their innovations.

"In order to meet customer requirements, we need to know their available space, the type of wash, site voltage and the number of vehicles washed per hour," says Art Stephens, owner and president of Drying Corporation. With 40 years of industry experience, Stephens is confident they have dryers to fit any carwash footprint. "We can install a new dryer within four to 10 weeks from deposit



depending on current orders."

Beyond recent innovations, the Chicago-based company's top selling dryers are the Stealth, Spyder and Whisper.

The Stealth boasts quiet smooth air technology with patent-pending low turbulence design. Constructed from surgical stainless steel, the Stealth meets or exceeds most US and international



International Drying Corporation – Back Blaster

sound regulations. Also constructed with surgical stainless steel, the Whisper offers sound frequency control with anywhere from three to ten motors at ten to 15HP. The Spyder is the company's most economical yet powerful drying system designed using fully welded reverse flow centrifugal high pressure drying technology and molded resin. It is best suited for tightly spaced car washes.

International Drying Corp's value proposition? All systems are built to last.

"Our axial systems are extremely energy efficient with unmatched warranties," says Stephens, who encourages customers to call their shop anytime for technical or installation support, and CAD layouts for regular and custom systems. "Our stainless housings and axial fans are guaranteed for life and our centrifugal systems are guaranteed for three years."

A customer's perspective:

"International Drying Corp has been a strategic partner for us," says Jeff Casillas, western sales representative at NCS. Located in a residential area in California, NCS has the Stealth system installed. "When it comes down to noise, the Stealth was our best choice and it

dries really well. We haven't received any complaints from customers or nearby residents."

Proto-Vest

With 50 years in business and numerous patents associated with its products, Proto-Vest has launched several industry firsts. Earlier this year, the Arizona-based company launched its new Elite 460 dryer, featuring four bags at 60HP. It was produced for high volume locations with line speeds of 100 vehicles per hour.

In comparison to a standard dryer

with eight 15HP motors, running 10 hours a day, at the average cost of \$0.13/kWh (CAD), the Elite 460 with two 30HP motors achieves an annual savings of \$25,417. According to Jeff Reichard, president of Proto-Vest, at an average cost of \$40,000, the Elite 460 pays for itself in one and a half years.

"With the elimination of not having to connect six motors, at \$7,000 each, you avoid the \$42,000 for installations, which is more than the cost of the entire new dryer," says Reichard. "The first-year energy savings of \$25,417 combined

with the cost avoidance of installation of \$42K achieves a savings of \$67.5K, which is the price for two new Elite 460 machines! The energy savings each year after will continue at \$25,417."

The company targets a new product launch, or a complete redesign of an existing product every two to three years, and can produce and ship any standard dryer in less than one week. The lead time for custom design work, which accounts for 35 per cent of their orders, takes up to four weeks depending on the complexity, scope, and quantity.

Beyond recent innovations, Proto-Vest's top selling dryers are the Windshear II, IP Stripper and S130. The Proto-Vest IP Stripper dryer is designed to provide the best fully automated drying results while only using 30HP and one overhead bag. Its front and rear sensors follow the contours of any vehicle within inches to optimize drying performance, up to 210 cars per hour. The Windshear II dryer model uses two 30HP blowers, plenum and three Proto-Duck >>



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patented air delivery bags to effectively dry the top and sides of a wide array of vehicles at various line speeds without touching. The S130 single 30HP unit has pinpoint drying capabilities using pressurized air flow to dry windows, doors, and fenders of a vehicle without touching at a variety of line speeds.

Proto-Vest's value proposition? Energy reduction and cost savings.

"Proto-Vest is well known for its leadership in having the quietest dryers that actually dry," says Reichard. "We wanted to develop and manufacture a product that we could mathematically demonstrate real energy cost reduction as the cost of energy is only increasing. The Elite 460 offers tangible results."

A customer's perspective: "We really like our IP Stripper. It strips the water right off and it works better than our previous seven blower system," says Scott Hewett of Sunshine Superwash. The Orillia Ontario-based carwash has been a loyal customer of Proto-Vest for over 30 years.



AeroDry Systems

Aerodry Systems prides itself on addressing customer needs when it comes to launching innovative equipment. The Colorado-based company takes into consideration customer comments and experiences to determine when and if a solution must be found for a particular concern.

"While it's difficult to specify a schedule for launching new products or features, all innovations are thoroughly considered and field tested prior to

launch," says Cheryl Ehmen, chief executive manager at Aerodry Systems. "Performance and uptime are always top priorities when it comes to innovative equipment launches. The product must prove useful for its intended purpose, operate cost effectively and consistently, fit within a specified space and target a specific shaped object, all while being safe to employees, customers, and the neighborhood. Limitations abound and balancing all these aspects is not lost on Aerodry, as we move forward with new



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innovations.”

Aerodry commonly provides 180HP or larger systems for express model carwash systems. While the small hand wash or automatic market remains active, their expertise is with larger operations typically located in high traffic areas which requires low sound levels.

“Our Advantage and Base Drying Systems are top-quality products,” says Ehmen. “Our lightweight fans typically utilize 66 per cent of the available running amps, when on 60HZ; therefore, the motor is not overtaxed and allowance is made to increase performance through added rotation, if the customer so chooses. As the air passes directly over the motor for cooling, speed can also be reduced without concerns of overheating.” In an effort to expedite delivery requirements and mitigate material shortages, the company maintains a large inventory. This also guarantees quality control as it allows staff to thoroughly inspect products prior to shipment. Replacement products are typically shipped within days. The planning and construction

process for a new carwash may take as long as two years. Each system is designed specifically to a customer’s needs and can cost anywhere from approximately \$30,000 upwards to \$100,000 or more.

Aerodry’s value proposition:

Communication with integrity.

“We maintain constant communication to schedule appropriate delivery dates and provide thorough installation instructions as well as recommend pre-installation conference calls,” says Ehmen. “That said, we are always available, prior to, during and after installation for questions on installation and operation. Communication can be via phone, text, or video chat with the customer and their designated engineers, installers, and electricians.”

A customer’s perspective: “After extensive research, we found that Aerodry Systems was the quietest dryer on the market that met our municipality’s noise restrictions,” says Cosmo Oppedisano, co-owner and operator with his wife, Teresa, of Aqua Auto Spa in Nobleton,

Ontario. Oppedisano purchased two top dryers and two side dryers for his automatic tunnel carwash, launched earlier this year. “Aerodry Systems has been a great partner to work with when designing our wash. We are completely satisfied with their product.”

Every step of the carwash experience aids in achieving maximum performance. The dryer, being the last step of the process, leaves a lasting impression. While airflow, outlet angle, and ductwork configuration are important factors, choosing a manufacturer that meets your needs in terms of quality, sustainability and customer service will create a positive experience in owning and operating a carwash. **Q**

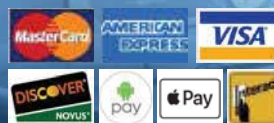
Meline Beach is a Toronto-based communications practitioner and frequent contributor to Convenience & Carwash Canada. In addition to freelance writing, Meline provides communications and public relations support to businesses across Canada. She can be reached at www.mlbcomms.ca.

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Federated Co-Op Partnered in Prosperity



By Meline Beach

Innovative approaches to cultural awareness, meaningful collaboration, and partnership development.

Seven years shy of its centennial anniversary, Federated Co-operatives Limited (FCL) has grown tremendously over its nearly 10 decades of existence. The company is owned by more than 160 independent local co-operative associations. These local co-ops own and operate agro centres, food stores, gas stations /convenience stores and home centres. Together, they form the Co-operative Retailing System (CRS), which helps build, feed and fuel more than 600 communities across Western Canada – from Vancouver Island to northwestern Ontario and into the Arctic.

With a deep commitment to diversity and inclusion, the company has embarked on a journey to nurture a welcoming environment, build sustainable communities, understand outreach, and be part of the fabric of the communities they serve. Part of that effort includes the development of cultural awareness training, which is expected to be part of every employee's onboarding experience.

Earlier this year, FCL launched Western Nations – a new program dedicated to building and growing long-term mutually beneficial working relationships with Indigenous communities across Western Canada. Western Nations locations are not part of a co-operative, but remain independent, Indigenous-owned

and controlled gas bars that are supported and supplied by FCL and local Co-ops.

Through this program, FCL and local Co-ops work together to support and supply independent, locally-owned Indigenous gas bars.

“We believe that co-operative and Indigenous values are aligned,” says Roger Korte, director of Petroleum Sales and Marketing at FCL. “We recognized an opportunity to expand our existing relationships with Indigenous partners through an exclusive Western Nations gas bar brand and developed the concept in collaboration with consultants and Indigenous groups across the west to ensure it was respectful of Indigenous culture and beneficial to Indigenous communities.”

FCL's history is based on forming relationships and working together in finding a solution as part of one system. It's about creating self-reliance, supporting one another, and building an economic engine. The Western Nations brand, which took over a year to develop, is the next evolution of FCL's journey.

“It's really part of our support for reconciliation that we're reaching out from a prosperity perspective and wanting to partner together in meaningful engagement,” says Pam Skotnitsky, vice-president of Strategy at FCL. “The Western Nations brand >>

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In order to be a Western Nations branded facility, the sites must be on Indigenous, Metis, or Inuit land and qualify for the minimum volume and brand requirements.

is modern, unique, respectful of Indigenous culture and relevant to all customers.”

The Western Nations brand includes a logo and several benefits. The logo draws inspiration from Western Canada’s landscape and features rich ochre that represents the Prairies; a snow-capped mountain in the centre to represent the Rockies; a large blue letter “W” to represent the sky, moving wind and abstract aurora borealis; and two red triangles as anchor points that represents the fuel supplied from the earth, as well as the connection and support supplied by FCL.

“During the consultation process, some stakeholders wanted the brand to feature more traditional Indigenous symbols while others wanted a more modern approach,” says Korte. “The brand

we developed hopefully is a balanced blend of the two.”

Korte adds that the greatest benefit from the collaborative process behind the brand was the creation of a comprehensive program with different levels of capacity that can be tailored to achieve long-term success.

The Western Nations brand can be applied to both existing gas bar locations or new construction. In order to be a Western Nations branded facility, the sites must be on Indigenous, Metis, or Inuit land and qualify for the minimum volume and brand requirements. Locations in a state of disrepair would not be eligible. The goal is to work with Indigenous partners to create a brand image that all stakeholders can be proud of across western Canada.

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“As with any business, developing key strategic partnerships in industry becomes very important for Indigenous communities looking to grow their economic footprint. By working with organizations that are willing to build an understanding of the values of Indigenous investment it helps to create greater opportunities for that Nation(s) by seeing greater financial returns, employment, Indigenous capacity building, growth of other Indigenous business in the supply chain and further reinvestment in other businesses or in the community,” says Thomas Benjoe, president/CEO, FHQ Developments.



Program benefits

Facility design – For new locations, Co-op can offer support to help plan and build gas bars and convenience stores through pre-existing designs or customization to meet local needs. Also available are competitive grants to enhance and upgrade equipment and maintain appearance.

Brand association – Western Nations gas bars are fuelled by Co-op, a heritage brand with high-quality products that customers have trusted for generations.

Uniforms – Co-op can provide help in supplying and funding team member uniforms.

Management assistance – In some situations, the local Co-op may be able to provide operational management support.

Additional support – FCL offers attractive debit and credit card fees; convenience-store program support (including an Indigenous-owned coffee brand) and financial assistance, including help with annual maintenance costs, subsidized uniforms, and promotional advertising support.

“All Western Nations accounts are supported by the local Co-op in their area,” says Korte. “This structure allows for relevant and timely support of their existing business operations, drawing on Co-op’s long-term success in retailing.”

An affiliation to Co-op’s Indigenous Gas Bar Program would also be available to Indigenous communities that already operate their own gas bars but don’t want to adopt the brand name, or don’t qualify based on fuel volumes or do not >>

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Through the [Community Assistance Building Program](#), Co-op provides funding that communities can direct to community infrastructure, programming, and events. The amount to be allocated is based on fuel sales.

meet the minimum image/size requirements but wish to have Co-op supply the fuel. As an Indigenous reseller, most of the benefits would still apply, including the Community Assistance Building Program – the most unique feature of the Western Nations brand.

Community support is an important value of local Co-ops across western Canada. Through the Community Assistance Building Program, Co-op provides funding that communities can direct to community infrastructure, programming, and events. The amount to be allocated is based on fuel sales.

“The Community Assistance Building


Program is one of the important appeals of what we’re offering,” says Skotnitsky. “The ability to recognize the benefits of the business and reinvest in the community it serves is what resonates really well. The local communities will determine how they guide those dollars to gain maximum benefit for their community.”

All sites within the Western Nations brand would be independently owned and operated, which allows for flexibility in operating the business. As an added measure of support to maintain individuality, within the Western Nations brand standards, considerations may be made to incorporate a unique design or logo

specific to the Indigenous community.

“Our experience goes beyond operating gas bars, selling gasoline and diesel,” says Korte. “We have experience with a complete offering of convenience store items, lubricants, propane service, and carwash – which may all be part of the Western Nations brand in the future. We are developing ways to further enhance this program, offerings and customer experience, and are open to feedback from Indigenous communities to further our partnership into other lines of business.”

While still in its infancy, the Western Nations brand is gaining momentum. Relationships take time and this program is, as they say, a journey and not a destination.

For more information or to join the Western Nations brand, interested parties are encouraged reach out to their local Co-op or email: westernnations@fcl.crs. 

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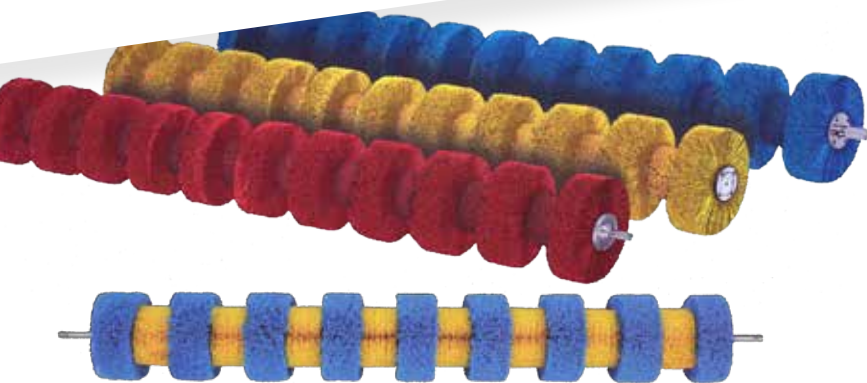


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What's New

Dover Fueling Solutions Partners with EdgePetrol

AUSTIN, TEXAS – Dover Fueling Solutions ("DFS"), a part of Dover Corporation that delivers advanced fuel dispensing equipment, electronic systems and payment, fleet systems, automatic tank gauging, and wetstock management, recently announced that it has entered into a commercial partnership agreement with, and acquired a minority interest in, EdgePetrol Limited, an innovative provider of cloud-based software for revenue and operating results management to the retail fueling industry. By entering this new strategic technology partnership, DFS will enhance its' offering of software solutions to the global convenience retail industry. Based in London, England, and founded in 2015, EdgePetrol offers a Software-as-a-Service solution to help retail fuel operators optimize their station performance. The secure, comprehensive solution operates in the Amazon Web Service (AWS) environment and is a complementary platform for DFS, which offers the enabling devices to manage the flow of underlying data.

"We chose DFS as a strategic partner not only because of the alignment in products and SaaS service models, but because of their ability to reach a global market with established and growing customer relationships," said Gideon Carroll, CEO of Edge Petrol. "The investment enables us to expand our product suite with customer-driven solutions, whilst the commercial agreement will allow fuel station owners around the world the opportunity to use Edge Petrol's software through DFS's global network."

"This innovative fuel management software complements the DFS DX cloud-based solutions and will help our customers improve their business operations and results," said David Crouse, president of DFS. "This software can also be deployed in other applications, providing DFS with growth opportunities outside of retail fueling, including in renewable energy for transportation and various other retail verticals. The minority investment we're making in EdgePetrol aligns directly with our goals of both growing our business through strategic partnerships such as these and broadening our solutions and products portfolio and roadmaps. Our commercial agreement enables DFS to market this product globally."

Terms of the transaction were not disclosed.



DRB Systems, LLC Acquires Washify Services, LLC

Akron, OH – DRB Systems, LLC, a leading provider of software and hardware innovations to the carwash industry, announced today that it has acquired Washify, an advanced carwash point-of-sale system.

"Today, more than ever, we have assembled the best minds in the carwash industry," said DRB CEO and president Dan Pittman. "We have not only joined two of the best carwash technology line-ups, but we have also joined two of the most talented teams."

DRB and Washify represent two of the fastest growing brands in the carwash space. By joining forces, they can offer carwash operators the widest set of technology solutions to profitably grow their businesses.

"Our industry is rapidly transforming. Recent consolidations warranted a

change," said Washify president Adam Korngold. "We wanted to be aligned with a best-in-class partner that supports our growth. I wanted to work with an organization that had the best interest of our employees at heart and that would allow us to remain in the industry doing what we love. DRB is that partner."

Both companies will maintain their own brand entities and industry niches, leveraging synergies where possible to achieve the common goal of helping carwash operators sweat their assets. Korngold will continue to serve as president of Washify while Pittman continues to lead DRB as CEO.

DRB acquired Washify from Adam Korngold and private equity firm Ambina Partners, with the help of legal services provided by Benesch and insurance brokerage and risk management consulting provided by Marsh, a business of Marsh McLennan. Legal services were provided to Washify by King & Spalding.



OPW Retail Fueling Releases New Value-Priced

DSE Fiberglass Dispenser Sump
Smithfield, NC, – OPW Retail Fueling, a global leader in fluid-handling solutions, is pleased to announce the launch of its new value-priced DSE Dispenser Sump. Produced using an Advanced Composite Technology manufacturing process, the DSE Dispenser Sump is a high quality, affordable sump that can be quickly delivered to retail operators.

"The new DSE Dispenser Sump is the result of a comprehensive development project initiated to advance our industry-leading product line of dispenser sumps and bring premier fiberglass technology to the retail-fueling industry," said Ed Kammerer, director of Marketing and Global Product Strategy for OPW Retail Fueling. "While the DSE is a lower-priced alternative to many of the dispenser sumps we currently offer, it doesn't compromise on quality. It's the best fiberglass solution for this type of application, and it continues the OPW tradition of providing innovative fueling equipment that combines superior design, premium materials and world-class manufacturing expertise."

The latest addition to OPW's comprehensive line of dispenser sumps, the UL/ULC listed DSE is installed beneath fuel



dispensers to provide access to and secondary containment for dispenser plumbing, emergency shear valves and underground piping connections. The close-molded manufacturing process provides additional features for the DSE Dispenser Sump, including consistent wall thickness, consistent shape and smooth surfaces on both interior and exterior sump walls for superior entry fitting sealing. These new sumps feature a single conduit-less base that is compatible with all major dispenser models while being designed for ease of nesting/stacking and unstacking, which maximizes shipping and distributor warehouse space.

"There's this myth in the manufacturing world that products can provide quality, speed or value, but not all three," added Kammerer. "The DSE dispenses with this myth by offering best-in-class quality, fast lead times and affordability without sacrificing value. It is the perfect value-priced solution for retail operators."

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