Meet the young leaders in the industry page 26

Automatic MERCHANDISER

Convenience services for vending, micro markets and workplace beverages

Bringing Joy to the Workplace

Seventh Wave Refreshments' founders are no newcomers to Atlanta's workplaces, but they're off and running with a fresh approach.

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Vending MARKET WATCH





Mac Bolak
Panoptyc
Technical
Operations Director



Brittany Westerman 365 Retail Markets Corporate Development



Patrick Sheehan Sheehan Brothers Vending President



Keith Krail American Vending Director of Marketing



Benjamin Thomas Cantaloupe VP of Micro-Market Strategy



Joshua McMillan Nayax North America Support Manager

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A roundup of the latest news and events

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What's happening in the industry on social media

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On the cover: Seventh Wave Refreshments' founders Linda Saldaña and Dave Carroll are no newcomers to Atlanta's workplaces.

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Success Story





Bringing Joy to the Workplace

Centered on that simple mission to bring joy to the workplace, Seventh Wave Refreshments is off and running with a fresh approach.

Features



OCS Update:

Recession? Choose not to participate and pour on the sales effort

In the world of B2B sales, specifically convenience services, "recession" is another word for opportunity.



State of the Office **Coffee Service Industry Report**

The data for 2021 shows some recovery, but for OCS operators, there's still a long way to go to reach the industry's 2019 benchmark high.



Cold brew solutions in OCS

Take advantage of this revenue opportunity.





ONLINE EXCLUSIVES

Visit vendingmarketwatch.com for more on hot topics in vending, micro markets and office coffee service

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OCS Operator

Forget the bells and whistles



Bob Tullio

BOB TULLIO SPEAKS WITH RYAN PINAGEL,

vice president of sales and operations for International H2O, about how "bells and whistles" on water units can be a costly mistake for operators. International H2O is focused on style, reliability and lowering operator costs.

VendingMarketWatch.com/21277073

Embracing technology to level the playing field

Zsolt Vaszary and his Hungarianbased team from tech startup e-Ventor developed the evermart kit, which can be built into a cooler that is equipped with an electronic lock, instantly turning it into a state-of-the-art unattended retail solution. Vaszary urges operators to embrace this type of technology to help level the playing field in the industry.

VendingMarketWatch.com/21275389

Case Study: Smart kitchen robot Semblr supports human chefs

Since September 2021, Semblr has been putting together fresh rice dishes for the workforce of U.K.-based online grocery retailer Ocado. Semblr is probably the most famous canteen employee in the U.K. at the moment. That is because the centerpiece of Semblr is a robot.

VendingMarketWatch.com/21276261

Micro Market

Selecta opens its first Foodies-On-The-Go at East Midlands Airport, UK



Selecta UK opened East Midlands
Airport's first Foodies-On-The-Go, an
unattended retail solution that offers
well-known snacks and drinks 24/7 using
Smart Fridge technology. Customers
can enjoy a cup of Lavazza coffee, a cold
drink, sandwich or snack at any time of
the day or night. They can also charge
their mobile phone at the same time.

VendingMarketWatch.com/21274251

Automatic MERCHANDISER



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Business Staff

Publisher Jolene Gulley

(602) 315-9240 | JGulley@EndeavorB2B.com

Multimedia Account Representative Tami Morrell 708-917-1786 | TMorrell@EndeavorB2B.com

List Rental InfoGroup

Michael Costantino

Michael.Costantino@infogroup.com | (402) 836.6266

Kevin Collopy

Kevin.Collopy@infogroup.com | (402) 836.6265

European Sales, Sales Director

Julian Maddocks-Born

+44 (0)1442 230033 | julian@itsluk.com

Representative ITSL Media, Sales Manager Benedict Hume.

+44 (0)1442 288287 | benedict@itsluk.com

Editorial Staff

Managing Editor Molly Rogers (205) 409-0843 | MRogers@EndeavorB2B.com

Contributing Editors Emily Cambriello, Nick Montano and Adrienne Klein

und Adrienne Nein

Support Staff Art Director Erin Brown

Production Manager Jane Pothlanski

Ad Services Manager Deanna O'Byrne

Audience Development Manager Delicia Poole

Endeavor Business Media, LLC

CEO Chris Ferrell
President June Griffin
CFO Mark Zadell
COO Patrick Rains

Chief Administrative and Legal Officer Tracy Kane EVP/Group Publisher - Technology Lester Craft

Subscription Customer Service

877-382-9187; 847-559-7598 Circ.VendingMarketWatch@omeda.com PO Box 3257 • Northbrook IL 60065-3257

Article reprints

reprints@endeavorb2b.com



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A season for change



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Operators are learning to pivot, to add other services, to change their product mix, to adapt and survive.

WELCOME TO THE SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER ISSUE OF

Automatic Merchandiser. This month, we feature our annual State of the Office Coffee Service Industry Report, starting on page 16. The report was compiled based on survey responses from operators, so I want to thank so many of you who responded to the survey and provided thoughtful insights. Your participation allows us to produce an accurate, high-quality report for the OCS industry, and your time and effort is greatly appreciated.

Just as our recent State of the Vending and Micro Market report showed (published in the June/July issue), 2021 OCS revenue shows an upward trajectory, but still not yet to 2019's benchmark high. In the survey, operators shared how they are handling rising costs, what is working well for them, and what trends they see in the future. With supply chain issues and now inflation, today's challenges weigh heavy on operators who are still recovering from losses during the pandemic. Yet, operators are learning to pivot, to add other services, to change their product mix, to adapt and survive.

Take for example this issue's operation profile on Seventh Wave Refreshments, which launched in March 2020, just as the pandemic shut down everything. Co-founder Linda Saldana says that a silver lining was that they were able to partner with large food management companies to install and operate micro markets in place of cafeterias that did not have enough staff to support them. They've also had success in blue-collar environments, which is a growing trend in the industry, and by offering a quality coffee program. "Seventh Wave is finding many employers investing in creating an experience that rivals the local coffee house ... thoughtfully designed to cultivate productivity and community with advanced brewers to create a café atmosphere with specialty drink offerings."

Saldana is also recognized in this issue as one of Automatic Merchandiser's 40 Under 40 Award winners. The program spotlights outstanding young individuals making a difference in the vending, micro market and office coffee service industry. We are proud to honor all of the award winners for their dedication to their companies and the industry.

Lastly, we opened up the call for nominations for our annual Readers' Choice New Products of the Year Awards. Once nominations are received, readers will have a chance to cast their vote for the winners, which will be featured in the 2023 April issue of Automatic Merchandiser. The awards recognize new products introduced in 2022. We invite suppliers and manufacturers that launched a new product for vending, micro market or office coffee service to submit a nomination.

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Route Driver of the Year award to recognize his or her achievements as our marketplace recovers.

The Route Driver of the Year winner will receive a trip to NAMA 2023 in Atlanta and a gift card prize, and will be featured in the March 2023 edition of *Automatic Merchandiser* magazine.

Two runners-up will also receive gift card prizes!





To nominate a driver or view complete contest rules, visit bit.ly/22RDOY

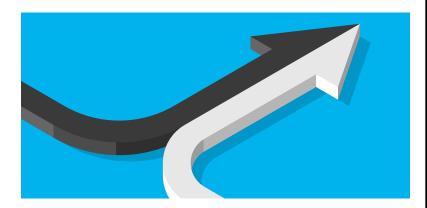
No Purchase or Subscription Necessary to enter or win. A purchase or subscription will not increase a nominee's chances of winning a prize. Nominators and Nominees must be residents of the 50 U.S./D.C. and 18 years or older (19 or older in AL and NE). Nominators must be employed by an active vending operation or a customer of an active vending operation. Nominees must be employed as a route driver of an active vending operation. Drivers may nominate themselves. Ends 12/31/22. Void where prohibited. Entries will be judged. For full entry/prize details and judging criteria, access: bit.ly/RDOYrules.



TOP NEWS

Nayax announces integration partnership with Vagabond

[TECHNOLOGY]



NAYAX LTD. ANNOUNCED AN INTEGRATION

partnership with Vagabond, a Washington, D.C.-based technology solutions company providing cloud-based management software and hardware tools for vending operators. This integration will enable Vagabond's customers to seamlessly deploy Nayax's leading EMV-certified VPOS Touch cashless readers into their vending operations. Nayax's solution enables operator growth and improved productivity.

"Our operators have been asking for Nayax's EMV, 4G LTE cashless payment solution to effortlessly work with their existing Vagabond setup," Juan Jorquera, CMO, Vagabond, said in the announcement. "The ability to offer Nayax devices lets us empower operators by providing additional growth opportunities to customers so they can better tailor their offerings to accounts with the services they need."

Chris Watson, VP of vending operations with Capital Provisions, added: "As a long-term customer of Vagabond, we were thrilled to learn of this new integration with Nayax – we have started incorporating Nayax devices into our machines and we have been impressed with their ease of installation. Our accounts love their look and feel, and we're relieved to have active customer support directly from Nayax, if we need help. Recent events in the unattended payments space have made it clear that upgrading our portfolio to Nayax's product and service offerings gives us significant peace of mind."



Hormel Foods to transition to three operating segments

Effective Oct. 31, 2022, the company is transitioning to three operating segments – retail, foodservice and international – to drive sustainable growth.

VendingMarketWatch.com/ 21277207



PepsiCo and Celsius announce agreement and investment

PepsiCo and Celsius Holdings Inc. announced a definitive agreement forging a long-term strategic distribution arrangement. The agreement initially transitions Celsius' current U.S. distribution to PepsiCo's capabilities. As part of the transaction, PepsiCo will also make an investment in Celsius in support of its growth agenda and will nominate a director to serve on Celsius' board of directors.

VendingMarketWatch.com/ 21277509

Coffee-tech company ansā sets up new U.S. operations center in Dallas

ansā, a pioneer in coffee roasting technologies and founded in 2020, set up its new operation center in Dallas. It will serve as the company's main warehouse, repair lab, and packaging and distribution center.

VendingMarketWatch.com/ 21276629

Dasani and Sprite boost sustainability packaging credentials in NA

Coca-Cola North America's entire green plastic portfolio, including packaging for Fresca, Seagram's and Mello Yello, will transition to clear PET in the coming months.

VendingMarketWatch.com/21276823



Steeped Coffee makes 2022 Inc. 5000 list

Steeped Coffee, a Certified B Corp. announced it has been added to the annual Inc. 5000 list of the fastestgrowing private companies in America. The disruptive single-serve coffee company is ranked 572 nationally, 88th in California, and 18th on the list for all of food and beverage, after experiencing three-year revenue growth of 1,107%.

VendingMarketWatch.com/21278641

Five Star Food Service acquires Elite **Vending Company**

Five Star Food Service announced the completion of the acquisition of metro Atlanta's Elite Vending Company, an independent operation that services Fulton, Cobb, Douglas, and Clayton counties in Georgia. The acquisition adds to the company's existing base of business in the Atlanta region.

VendingMarketWatch.com/21278232

Minus Forty and QBD combine into one company, **Due North**

Two retail refrigeration merchandising companies, Minus Forty Technologies Corp. and QBD, have combined their portfolios, enabling Due North to offer more solutions to customers.

The amalgamation will enable Due North to create refrigerated retail merchandising solutions that maximize customer success through a variety of means including domestic manufacturing capacity that ensures alignment with its customers' business growth requirements. VendingMarketWatch.com/21278115

Bevi partners with Cowen Sustainable Investments

The \$70 million in equity funding will support Bevi's rapid growth and expansion into new verticals and products. Bevi machines offer an affordable and environmentally sustainable alternative to bottled water and flavored seltzer.

VendingMarketWatch.com/21276951

Study by Cantaloupe and MSU shows a soar in contactless payment transactions

Cantaloupe Inc., a digital payments and software services company that provides end-to-end technology solutions for the unattended retail market, partnered with the Broad College of Business at Michigan State University for a joint study on payment trends in unattended retail. VendingMarketWatch.com/21276918



Tyson Foods breaks ground on Caseyville facility

The expansion project at its Caseyville, Illinois, prepared foods facility will increase automation. Tyson Foods leadership, along with state and local officials, celebrated the \$180 million investment project that will help meet growing demand for Tyson Foods' Hillshire Farm and Jimmy Dean branded products.

VendingMarketWatch.com/21277213

PFG's CFO to retire, transitioning role to **Patrick Hatcher**

Performance Food Group Company (PFG) announced the retirement of Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer Jim Hope and the transition of the role to Patrick Hatcher, Vistar president and chief operating officer.

VendingMarketWatch.com/21277504

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS



David Roach named chief strategic projects officer at Flowers Foods

In this newly created role, David Roach is responsible for leading various strategic projects for the company and will continue to report to Brad Alexander, chief operating officer.



Josh Rosenberg joins Just Baked Automated Retail as an advisor

Automated Retail Technologies, parent of Just Baked Automated Retail solution, is partnering with industry veteran and former NAMA chair Josh Rosenberg to execute its go-to-market strategy.



Kevin McAdams appointed president of Perdue Foods and COO of Perdue Farms

McAdams joins Perdue Farms from Jack Links protein snacks, where he was president, North America.



By Bob Tullio, Contributing Editor

Recession? Choose not to participate and pour on the sales effort

In the world of B2B sales, specifically convenience services, "recession" is another word for opportunity.

THE LAST RECESSION (JUNE 2007

to December 2009) was very good to me. Not everyone can say that, but in the world of B2B sales, specifically convenience services, "recession" is another word for opportunity. Plus, based on the combination of the post-pandemic return to the workplace and the ongoing shortage of qualified help, this upcoming recession is going to be different, if it happens at all.

CAPITALIZING ON THE MENTALITY

Recession or not, the mere mention of the word has CFOs thinking "cutbacks" and asking, "How can we save money?" That type of

thinking is music to the ears of a savvy account executive because it creates a compelling reason for a decision-maker to meet with you. An operator should capitalize on this decision-maker mentality

by asking one simple question: "If I can show you a way to cut your spending and improve your OCS and refreshment program at the same time, is there any reason why you would not be open to a short meeting to learn more?"

CHOOSE NOT TO PARTICIPATE

A great quote from the founder of Wal-Mart, Sam Walton, comes into mind in relation to increasing business development efforts during a recession. When asked in 1991, "What do you think about a recession?" he responded, "I thought about it and decided not to participate." Listen to Sam. Instead of cutting back on your business development and sales efforts in the face of recession, spend more in a targeted fashion.



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LESSONS FROM HISTORY

During that last recession, there was plenty of pain, from business closures to job losses, largely driven by the crisis in the real estate, mortgage and banking sector. One thing we have learned from past recessions is that they are typically followed by robust times. A recession is the time to "set the table" for the big recovery that is just down the road. That is exactly what we did with our company, and when the economy began shooting off like a rocket in 2012, we were well-positioned.

A THREE-TIER STRATEGY THAT WORKS

We focused on three business development strategies, which, by the way, will work nicely in any economic condition.







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Increase pay-per-click (PPC) advertising.

Yes, it is costly. The good news: If your competition isn't reading this, chances are, they are cutting back on their advertising and especially PPC, so the price-per-click should come down.

I have written and spoken about PPC advertising before. As far as I am concerned, it is the magic bullet. Yes, you can rely on search engine optimization (SEO) and hope for the best, but if you want to put your sales reps in front of highly motivated prospects on a consistent basis, PPC is the answer.

Relying on SEO is like buying a patio set from Sears and putting it together yourself. Over time, it will get completed. It might even be assembled properly. It will be cheaper than buying one from the expensive patio furniture store where my neighbor bought his. The difference is this: My neighbor will be lounging on his patio, relishing in the success of his purchase, while I am still crawling along the floor a week later, looking for that missing nut and bolt. I speak from experience.

Increase paid strategic partnership efforts.

Everyone is a little hungrier in leaner times, and it is easy to find a strategic partner who is motivated by compensation – my favorite type of strategic partner. Consider it part of the account acquisition cost. Would you pay \$250 to \$400 for an account that will generate \$12,000 or much more in annual sales? Usually you find these strategic partners at trade shows or serving your existing accounts. I never hesitated to solicit them directly on LinkedIn. These strategic partners

are calling on the same decisionmakers that you are. They could be a commercial mover, an office supply rep, a plant service or a move planner.

These people know which companies are relocating, who is growing, who is unhappy and who makes the decisions. If they are a truly motivated strategic partner, the decision-maker will be expecting your call. My deal was simple: "Get me in the door – if I secure the account – you get paid." A few strategic partners in this category can help you set the table for the post-recession bounce back.

Actively promote paid referral programs within your client base.

If an existing client, an office manager or a facility manager refers you to another company, they get a \$50 gift card after the appointment and a \$200 gift card when you install the location.

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Not everyone is motivated by this type of program, but the small percentage who are, can keep the prospect pipeline overflowing.

HOW TO DELIVER ON THAT ONE SIMPLE QUESTION

Remember the one simple question I referred to that becomes very easy to ask during a recession? "If I can show you a way to cut your spending and improve your OCS and refreshment program at the same time, is there any reason why you would not be open to a short meeting to learn more?"

It is not difficult to deliver a better program for less money (without cutting prices), if you are willing to open your eyes and consider the possibilities. Here are five easy examples - with additional questions that the client must answer.

- Is the client willing to convert from single cup to an artisan-roasted drip coffee program?
- Is the client willing to replace bottled water with a high-end point-of-use system?
- Is the client willing to switch from cases of bottled beverages to a single-serve beverage unit?
- Is the client willing to switch from packaged snacks to bulk snacks?
- Is the client willing to try a multiple coffee strategy to achieve a lower overall price?

It always comes down to the same thing. Are you willing to swim against the current? Are you willing to toss out your cookie-cutter programs and develop simple but creative solutions? If the answer is yes, you will more than survive the recession and be well-positioned for the strong recovery that is just around the corner. •



About the author

Industry consultant and VendingMarketWatch.com contributing editor Bob Tullio is a content specialist who advises operators in the convenience services industry on how to build a successful business from the ground up and advises suppliers on how to successfully connect with operators. Tullio's YouTube

channel, b2b Perspective, is designed to "elevate your business in two minutes." Visit www.tulliob2b.com or email bob@tulliob2b.com.



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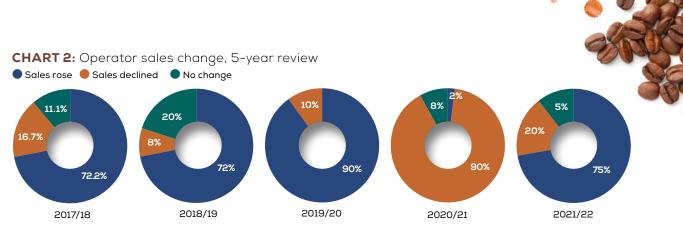


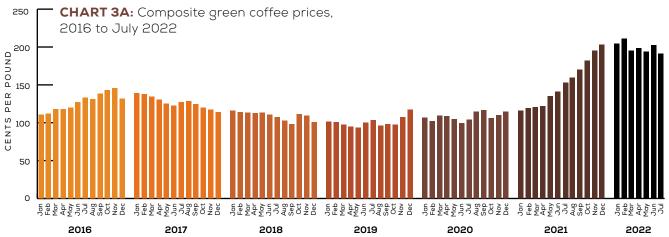
STATE OF THE OFFICE COFFEE SERVICE INDUSTRY REPORT

OCS sales are on the rise, but not yet to pre-pandemic levels

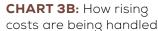
The data for 2021 shows some recovery, but for OCS operators, there's still a long way to go to reach the industry's 2019 benchmark high.

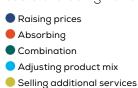


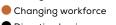




Source: The International Coffee Organization, London, U.K.







Divesting businessOther

*Other included: Researched and found vendors for some specific products that had the biggest price increase; Adjusting service practices (ex: move clients to online ordering vs arriving on schedule to check stock levels)

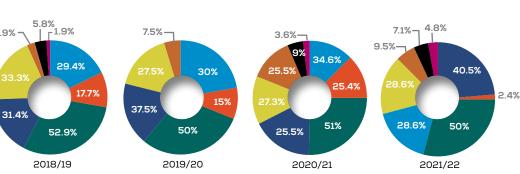


CHART 4A: Revenue per cup in cents per cup, Fraction pack automatic/pourover coffee, 5-year review

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Revenue	12.5¢	11¢	10.6¢	11.4¢	12.97¢

*Previous numbers have been adjusted based on additional data

CHART 4B: Revenue per cup, single-cup coffee, 5-year review

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Single-Cup Capsule	47¢	46¢	46¢	49.4¢	46.6¢
Bean-To-Cup per cup cost	41¢	43¢	36¢	44.8¢	40.9¢



CHART 5A: % OCS sales

by supplier type

SUPPLIER TYPE	2022
Private label	26.7%
Local coffee brands (known to customers)	22.55
National brand - value coffee	34.5
National brand - specialty coffee	10.75
Espresso coffee	5.5

CHART 5B: % OCS sales by product category

, .	,
PRODUCT CATEGOR	Y 2022
Frac pack	33.8%
Whole bean coffee	36.9
K-cups	14.5
Single cup (non K-cup)	14.8

CHART 5C: Top-selling OCS products for past 12 months, by volume

- /	
TOP PRODUCT	2022
Local coffee brands	25%
Private label	15
Value frac packs	5
Specialty drinks	0
Whole bean	15
National brand coffees	20
K-Cups	5
Single-cup	10
Tea	0
Pantry or direct delivery service (food/snacks/beverages delivered to locations)	5
Water filtration service	0

CHART 5D: OCS product category, % of sales

(point-of-use/POU)

30.7, 70 0. 00.00	
PRODUCT CATEGORY	2022
Coffee	41.5%
Non-coffee hot beverages	6.9
Soft drinks	9.3
Bottled water (5 gallon)	7.5
Creamers/sweeteners	6.8
Cups/plates/paper	9.1
products	
Tea	7.1
Pantry service/micro	3.5
kitchen (paid by employer	
offered to employees)	
Water filtration service	5.2
(non bottled)	
Ice machines	3.1

HIGH COSTS AND HIGH DEMANDS

According to the data from the International Coffee Organization, green coffee prices reached a 10-year high in late 2021 and continued into the first half of 2022. Weather, both drought and frost in 2021 in Brazil, as well as global supply constraints and other pandemic-related issues, have had a substantial impact on the coffee market. For 2022, inflation is an additional factor in the rising cost of coffee.

OCS operators tried to combat the challenges of rising costs in products, equipment, coffee, fuel and shipping. Some raised prices, and others absorbed costs. A small percentage of operators chose to divest their OCS businesses. Many adjusted their product mix and began selling additional services. About 14% of operators added pantry and water service, and 7% added micro markets. Of those that added micro markets, bean-to-cup brewing was the dominant choice of coffee service system.

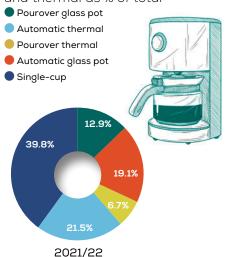
In 2021, whole-bean varieties showed an increase from 2020, and frac packs were also among the dominant coffee products sold in the OCS channel. Operators continue to provide high-quality coffee, with local coffee brands familiar to clients (25%) as the top-selling OCS product, then nationally branded coffee (20%), private-label products (15%), whole bean (15%), and single-cup at 10%.

Almost 39% of respondents said brand is fairly important to customers, 50% said important to some and not others, and 11% said it's not important for the majority.

For OCS product categories, ice machines showed a notable jump in 2021 sales due to customer demand.

Technology is also among the new services that some OCS operators are adding. Nearly 78% said they offered online ordering of coffee or related

CHART 6: Plumbed-in, automatic and thermal as % of total



products in 2021. And a little over 30% said they are using industry-specific software to manage OCS business; 16% are using the same software for vending.

Trends in sustainability and environmental concerns also affect the products that OCS operators offer to their customers. More than half of the respondents said they offer recycled products (cups, filters, pods, utensils), 16% said they offer water filtration devices to reduce bottled water, and a little over 11% said they supplied coffee with attributes such as organic and fair trade.

Cold brew, another trend in the office coffee service channel, shows an upward trajectory by the respondents with over 66% offering cold brew coffee options to locations. Among those, 22% offer on-draft kegs and 16% offer single-serve bottles.

LOCATION

About 42% of operators said the number of locations of their coffee service accounts increased in 2021; 26% said the number remained the same; and 31% said it decreased.

In 2021, the typical location population of coffee service accounts from respondents had





At Franke, we're not just in the business of selling coffee machines. We're in the business of creating memorable coffee moments for your customers.

The new **Franke A400 Fresh Brew** system allows for consistent, bean-to-cup, hot coffee every time. This machine has a small footprint that is perfect where space is limited and convenient whether in-house or on-the-go. Creating fresh taste, with no waste for your customers has never been easier.

Visit us at the NACS Show 2022

Booth #5436 | Las Vegas, NV | Oct 1-4, 2022

Want to know more? us.coffee.franke.com

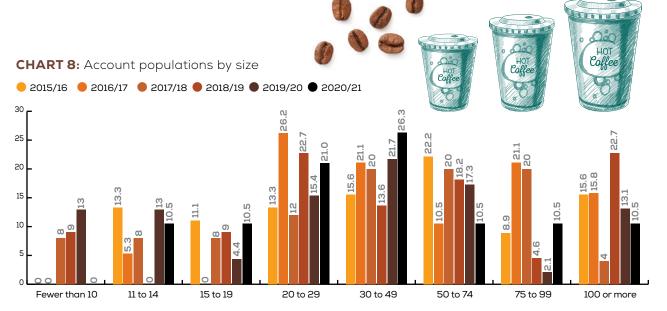


59165191 | Annbozhko | Dreams

CHART 7: Estimated market share of single-cup brewer placements in the U.S., 5-year review

MARKETER	PRODUCT(S)	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Cafection	Avalon, Total Lite, Total 1, Alternative	5.1%	7.5%	8.35%	7.40%	5.69%
Bodecker Brewed	Bodecker	7.4	0.5	3.59	3.50	2.46
VE Global Solutions	Brio, Colibri, Koro, Korinto, Kinvivo,	1.0	5.8	0.95	1.00	0.00
	Trophy, Venus, Cypris, Juno, Prosyd					
Crane	Coti, Café System, Genesis	0	3.4	2.56	2.50	0.00
Cafejo	Cafejo	0	0.2	1.03	1.00	2.40
Technologies Coffea		0	1.2	0.00	1.00	5.73
JM Smucker's	Douwe Egberts C-300, C-600, C-60, N110, NG-300	6.2	4.6	5.87	5.10	1.88
VKI Technologies	Eccellenza Express, Eccellenza Touch, Eccellenza Cafe, Latte Lounge	2.4	2.0	2.05	1.90	3.82
Lavazza	Espresso Point, Lavazza Blue, Dual Espresso, EP 2500	1.3	2.0	1.03	0.90	1.14
Mars Drinks	Flavia Barista, Flavia Creation 500, Flavia Creation 400, Flavia Creation 200, Aroma	5.9	9.4	2.42	2.50	2.99
Filterfresh	Filterfresh	0	1.7	1.28	1.30	0.00
Grindmaster	Grindmaster	0.9	1.0	10.18	9.80	14.72
Kraft/Heinz	Gevalia, Tassimo T-3000, T-65	0.7	0.5	0.28	0.30	0.84
Keurig	K3000, K150, K145, B155, K155, K130	17.1	33.2	20.72	19.80	14.24
Rheavendors	Rhea, Cino	2.1	0.5	0	0.40	0.00
Saeco USA	Saeco, Estro	0.2	1.3	0	1.00	1.27
Newco	Smartcup, Freshcup, Freshcup Touch	6.9	7.4	7.59	7.80	13.89
Starbucks	Starbucks	1.8	2.7	4.48	4.50	2.83
Bunn	My Cafe Pod, AutPOD, Trifecta MB	22.3	15.8	7.80	8.30	11.37
Nespresso	Nespresso	0.5	1.8	5.90	7.20	2.34
Wilbur Curtis	Gold Cup, Expressions	6.7	5.8	0	0.50	1.39
Comobar	Comobar	n/a	0.2	1.96	1.80	0.00
MZB	La San Marco OC System	1.8	0.7	6.39	6.10	0.96
Cafe Primo	Cappuccino	n/a	1.4	2.31	2.20	3.13
Other		n/a	13.6	2.56	2.20	6.92

^{*}Represents OCS provider placements only













Enter Your Product into the Products of the Year Competition

Categories include: Salted Snack • Healthy • Protein or Meat Snack
Cold Beverage • Equipment Cookie & Pastry • Candy •
Food Technology • OCS Products • OCS Equipment & Systems

Product entry deadline: January 6, 2023.

If you launched a new vending, OCS, or micro market product in 2022 and would like to enter your product(s), please send a product photo accompanied by the launch month/year and a 100-word description to editor@VendingMarketWatch.com with subject line: POTY 2023 submission | Company Name, no later than January 6, 2023. If you have any questions, please call Molly Rogers, editor, at 205-409-0843.

Please note that all products considered for the award MUST have been launched in 2022.







	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Offices	53.%	60.1%	47.7%	51.2%	36.5%
Industrial plants	15.5	12.4	17.6	16.8	17.3
Schools/colleges	8.0	6.11	6.9	6.3	8.3
Convenience stores	7.4	4.2	9.0	8.6	8.0
Restaurants, delis, bakeries	5.4	4.8	7.3	4.1	8.0
Other (healthcare/hotels)	4.4	3.2	3.0	3.8	9.5
Government/ military	3.8	4.6	4.3	4.1	6.1
Retail outlets	2.5	4.5	4.2	5.1	6.3

60 52.8% CHART 10: New services added in 2021/22 50 40 30 20 14.3% 9.5% 10 7.1% 2% 0% -Vending Pantry Micro Other I didn't Water Janitorial offer new service supplies service markets (if didn't (catered food, previously equipment services offer it) repair,

30-49 employees (26%), followed by 20-29 employees (21%). There was a moderate decrease in whitecollar workplace populations and an increase in blue-collar locations. Data also showed an increase in schools and colleges, as well as other locations such as heathcare/ hospitals, hospitality and auto dealerships.

WHAT'S TO COME

For trends that OCS operators are seeing, respondents said companies are trying to entice employees back to the workplace with incentives such as free snacks. Customers are also demanding more high-quality coffee choices, including bean-to-cup and liquid creamer options, single-drink coffee packs, and overall, new products and many options.

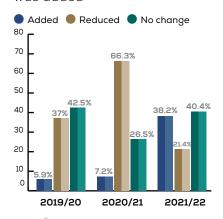


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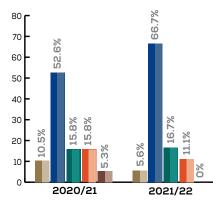
CHART 11: Where staff was added



66% of respondents said they provide cold brew options.

CHART 12: Most popular environmental product offerings

- I don't offer products to address environmental concerns
- Recycled products (cups, filters, pods, utensils)
- Water filtration devices to reduce bottled water
- Coffee with sustainability features
- Other, such as paper products



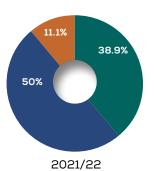
currently offers online ordering on its website

CHART 13: Company



CHART 14: Brand importance to coffee customers

- Pretty important
- Important to some and not others
- Not important for the majority



About the study

Data in Automatic Merchandiser's State of the Office Coffee Service Industry report are collected through a 50-question survey sent to OCS and vending operators. The annual report examines responses from small, medium and large OCS providers, as well as full-line vending operations offering office refreshments. The State of the Office Coffee Service Industry analyzes performance in various product and equipment categories. Data from the 2021 survey looks at the prior year. Caution should be used when comparing year-over-year numbers.



With their proven process, Advantage Refreshments is poised to support mainstream operators

Advantage Refreshments offers a turnkey solution for businesspeople who seek entry into the vending business.

By Bob Tullio

For over a decade now, Gary Joyner of Advantage Refreshments has been successfully helping entrepreneurs find their way into the vending business. He is now seeing interest from mainstream operators, who can easily benefit from the suite of services his company can offer.

Turnkey solutions

Joyner offers a turnkey solution for businesspeople who seek entry into the vending business. "We start by making sure that the businessperson is qualified, from both a financial and business experience standpoint," said Joyner. "Then we use our proven process to get them in business and help them to succeed."

Intense sales effort

Joyner's process begins with a sales effort on behalf of the operator. "We conduct an intense telemarketing and direct mail advertising campaign at manufacturing plants and warehouse distribution centers only. Core blue-collar locations – ideal for vending. We don't go after white-collar locations," Joyner said. "Our target is anywhere from 100 to 500-600 employees, and we typi-

cally sign five-year contracts with no commissions."

Federal Machine Corporation

As an authorized distributor for Federal Machine Corporation, Advantage Refreshments provides the operator with equipment. "We go beyond selling the equipment by providing an extensive training program that deals with everything from product selection to pricing, to promotions, to customer service, to route service, to equipment repair and vending management software - everything an operator needs to know to succeed," Joyner said. "We are hands-on, and our support is there for the operator for as long as they own their business."

Beyond installation support

Advantage Refreshments also provides complete installation assistance for their operator clients, just to be sure that they get started on solid ground. "We want success stories and happy operators who then become repeat customers," Joyner explained. "We set the table for them. Great locations, new equipment, excellent product

selection, strong promotional ideas that work – a perfect situation that is designed to make it easy for the operator to succeed – if they are willing to do the work once the location is installed. That is obviously very important."

Success story: Jack Brown

One success story that Joyner points to is Jack Brown of ReFresh Facility Services. The Indiana-based operator was featured in 2017 on the cover of Automatic Merchandiser. According to Brown, Joyner was extremely helpful to him in the early days of his company, when he decided to go into the vending business about 10 years ago. That new operation was paired with a successful janitorial service, now 30 years old.

"Gary got me started in the vending business," said Brown. "He is ethical and knowledgeable. Gary is driven. He never stops going, like that Energizer bunny. He helped me get the right supplier contacts, helped me to understand the business, gave me the encouragement and training that I needed, and the rest is history."

Brown added that Joyner has a heart for vending and for small business. "He is a standup guy who is always available, and he is all about helping operators succeed," said Brown.

Selling against micro markets

While Joyner just recently became an authorized distributor for Three Square Markets, he said often, he is selling against micro markets in large industrial locations. "We have replaced numerous micro markets in manufacturing plants and warehouse distribution centers because of the problems related to theft," Joyner said. "We hear the employers express concern about having to fire a good employee over a stolen candy bar."







Growing market area

Advantage Refreshments primarilv serves the Southeast - Florida. Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Alabama and Mississippi, but he is willing to expand to just about any market area. "I average about 75 to 85 customer inquiries wanting to do business with us or seeking information to do business with us per month. Anywhere between 800 to 1,000 people call me or contact me via email every year. They're looking to get into the vending business in their hometown," he said.

The local advantage

According to Joyner, being a local, hometown business, is a strong competitive advantage. "There are people out there who want to do business with a big vending company or maybe, they are forced to because of a national contract," Joyner reasoned. "But more often, the HR managers that we talk to

want to be served by a local business, who can deliver true personal service. As a result, we have tremendous success going up against the big guys in the industry."

"They truly care"

Joyner said he is often asked by a potential client, "How do we know this small operator will provide great service?" His answer can be convincing. "They will provide great service because if they don't, they lose the location and their investment. They truly care, because unlike the giant vending company you are talking to – this small operator has his own money on the line, and it will really hurt to lose your account."

Helping mainstream operators

Joyner is increasingly exploring how he can serve existing mainstream vendors in addition to newcomers. "Every small operator has

the same issues. Not enough help and not enough time to wear the many hats they must wear to run their business," Joyner noted. "If an operator finally gets tired of running from the route to a service call to a sales call – that's when it's time to talk to me and see how Advantage Refreshments can help them escape that grind, working six or even seven days a week."

Brown is confident that Joyner has a lot to offer mainstream vendors. "Without a doubt, Gary would be a huge help to any operator today, but they must be willing to listen. He is the consummate teacher." Brown said.

For more information about Advantage Refreshments, contact Gary Joyner at 828-291-8323, email gary@ advantagerefreshments.com, or visit www.advantagerefreshments.



Automatic MERCHANDISER AWARDS

Automatic Merchandiser recognizes outstanding young individuals making a difference in the vending, micro market and office coffee service industry.

utomatic Merchandiser is proud to present this year's top 40 Under 40 award honorees. We recognize these individuals who demonstrate leadership and a commitment to advancing convenience services for vending, micro markets and office coffee service. Each one has shown dedication to their companies, their customers and the industry. Congratulations to the 40 Under 40 Class of 2022.

LOUIS BARESH

Louis Baresh holds a bachelor's degree in business management from Oklahoma State University. After graduating in 2019, he worked for Ben E. Keith Foods as a DSR and supply chain specialist. Beginning in April 2020, he came to work for the family company Executive Refreshments. Even though COVID had just started, he always says, "I joined the industry at the perfect time." Since coming on, Baresh helped reshape the company's marketing strategy through a partnership approach and innovative technology, helped diversify its customer base, and strengthened the company culture. With these efforts, Executive Refreshments was able to survive 2020 and see significant growth in early 2021. From his success, he was able to speak at the 2021 NAMA convention about preparing the next generation of leaders in the industry. Additionally, Baresh is a member of ELN, a committee member of TSAC, and sits on the NAMA Foundation Board.

CHRISTOPHER BETTI

Christopher Betti, director of sales at Betson Distributing, is involved in all aspects of the business. Not only is he committed to Betson and his customers but also to the growth of the industry as a whole. He is a long-standing member of NAMA and many state associations. He participates in local and national lobby efforts supporting the industry at large. Betti received his bachelor's degree from St. Thomas Aquinas College. He has a respect for the history of both the vending and game side of the business while being committed to keeping equipment distribution relevant to the next generation of vending and game operators.

CHRISTOPHER BLOMQUIST

Christopher Blomquist is the director of marketing at Parlevel Systems, a global solutions provider for unattended retail operators. An industry veteran of over seven years, he joined Parlevel after graduating from Trinity University in 2015 with a bachelor's degree in marketing and psychology. With a focus on brand storytelling, creative leadership and revenue marketing, he has helped transform Parlevel from tech startup to a major player in the wide world of unattended retail. Through his work at Parlevel, Blomquist has helped educate operators on methods to improve their business. To that end, he has published over 200 blogs including operator testimonials, technology spotlights, operational best practices and more. He has also collaborated with the National Automatic Merchandising Association (NAMA) to create over a dozen educational presentations on topics including the labor shortage, how to successfully run micro markets, evolving technology in unattended retail, and others.

MAC BOLAK

Mac Bolak has been starting companies in the artificial intelligence space since he was a teenager, including a venture capital-backed company that used AI to edit basketball footage autonomously for basketball coaches. In 2019, he



founded Panoptyc, a leading security company in the micro market industry. Panoptyc was awarded Automatic Merchandiser's 2022 Technology Product of the Year. The company works with industry leaders and is in over 4,000 micro markets across the U.S., Canada and Europe. Panoptyc uses cutting-edge Al software and smart cameras to decrease theft in micro markets and save operators time reviewing footage. As a young and determined visionary, Bolak knows the industry inside and out and is continuously looking to improve Panoptyc's services while also exploring new opportunities within the industry.

CARRIE BOMPIANI

Carrie Bompiani is an administrative assistant at Unified Strategies Group. She has been a part of the team for almost four years. In her position, she is a capable, determined and hardworking individual with a pleasant attitude. She maintains



the workflow of the office with thorough knowledge of policies and procedures. She has exemplary skills in customer service, communication, work quality, positivity and initiative. Her team enjoys working with her as she is always willing to lend a helping hand and adapts to challenges with ease. Her skill set has extended beyond the tasks for which she was hired.

DAN DOROMAL

Dan Doromal, director of operations and service at Everest, has been instrumental in helping his company climb to the top in reputation, earning a number of prestigious awards ranking Everest as one of the fastest-growing and best-



performing companies in the country. The company saw a 137% increase in revenue from 2020 to 2021, and Doromal is largely the driving force behind that success by negotiating contracts with vendors as well as hiring additional staff. He works endlessly to improve operations, communications and efficiency while simultaneously rapidly hiring additional employees to meet the demand for products. Everest more than doubled its employees in 2021 and has already nearly doubled it again within the first six months of 2022, expanding its workforce by 278% since the beginning of 2021. Under Doromal's leadership, Everest continues to set, meet and exceed ambitious goals for growth in all arenas - sales, size, performance and more.



LINDSAY EASTER

Lindsay Easter is a member of Gimme's operations team and wears many hats within the organization. While she is relatively new to this industry, she is quickly making an impact both within Gimme and the industry as a whole.



She has been recognized by Vending Market Watch and Automatic Merchandiser as one of 2021's Pros to Know and Most Influential Women in Convenience Services Awards in 2022. Using her experience in customer service and operations management, she liaises between developers and end users of Gimme's hardware and software for purposes of implementation, customer support needs and product testing. She is determined to constantly improve and share her knowledge of Gimme's products and the convenience services industry via Gimme's over 260 help desk articles.

LUIS FERNANDO GARCIA

Luis Fernando Garcia, chief marketing and operating officer with Marietta Cookies, is a retail and marketing professional with 17 years of experience in consumer goods. Garcia started his professional career at Procter & Gamble where he learned



how to develop and execute the best go-to market strategies to ensure brand success. While at P&G, he was awarded the 2009 Global Brand Building Award for Best Commercial Innovation and a 2010 Cannes Bronze Lion for an innovative digital campaign. In 2012, together with his dad, they started a new cookie company under the brand Marietta Cookies based in Texas. He has focused on creating innovative cookie items and market them in a unique way to ensure success. The brand has been successful, growing over 50% each year for the past three years and is currently present in over 40 states across the U.S., partnering with key distributors to correctly reach the self-service market.

DETLEV GOEDBLOED

Detlev Goedbloed, chief development officer at API Tech North America Inc., received his MSc in commercial sciences, studying in Europe before moving to Morocco to gain experience in the field. His success led him to a sales manager



position in China where he was responsible for the Asia-Pacific region. During the following three years, Goedbloed received his IMBA from the Sauder School of Business in Canada and honed his craft and love of people and business even further. Besides his family, his strongest passion is helping companies grow and run more efficiently. In 2018, he moved to Australia to work as a management consultant and improved the operations of companies from all types of industries. In 2019, he moved to the USA and was hired as business development manager at API Tech, manufacturer of Smart Pizza Vending Machines. Goedbloed was promoted to chief development officer within the next two years.

SAM HAGAN

Sam Hagan is the business development manager at Quality Vending and Coffee. Prior to assuming this role, Hagan received a Bachelor of Science in business administration from Park University in Kansas City, Missouri. While earning his



degree, he worked for a national fitness chain, rising through the management ranks as he contributed to the organization's growth and improvement strategies in sales, marketing and operations. At Quality Vending and Coffee Inc., he leads the company's immediate and long-range business development plans with a focus on technology integration and client relations and acquisition. Hagan also oversees engagement plans to expand the family owned and operated company's presence on social media and in the field. He believes that the sky's the limit on the growth and potential of the convenience services sector, as both industry veterans and under 40 leaders continue to innovate and improve upon the customer experience.

DUBRAVKO HENDIJA

Dubravko Hendija, Televend's vice president of sales and marketing, always goes the extra mile for his team and colleagues. His passion is ensuring that everyone around him is set up for success. He leads by example, modernizing sales and marketing while promoting Televend's innovation. Hendija is determined to show that hard work always pays off. He likes to say that you can do big things if you put your mind to it, so don't forget to have fun in the process. For the past couple of years, he has focused on building relationships with customers, suppliers and distributors. Everyone wants to have him by their side as he has a positive impact on everything he does. His work ethic and dedication are two things his colleagues and partners highlight when speaking about him.

CORY HEWETT

Cory Hewett is the co-founder and CEO of Gimme, a venture-backed tech startup. He is professionally dedicated to helping full-line operators and direct-to-store-delivery (DSD) brands automate merchandising with computer vision and artificial intelligence.



Gimme builds Al-enabled markets and vending inventory control software. The company's hardware product, the Gimme Key, is now the #1 invoicing tool for DSD at grocery stores replacing outdated legacy handhelds. Hewett has been awarded multiple patents and copyrights by the USPTO and is extremely active in both the vending industry and the Atlanta technology community. Hewett serves on the board for Bloom Our Youth, a social service nonprofit serving foster-care children and families throughout Georgia and mentors first-time and aspiring entrepreneurs through the Create-X organization. He is currently playing an active role in the development of Fayette County's new Trilith development in greater Atlanta.

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HILLARY HIGGINS

Hillary Higgins, sales strategy manager with Ararmark, is utilizing her experience from the convenience store industry to elevate the customer experience in the micro market industry. She is passionate about driving product sales and product selection within micro markets. She is excited about the evolution of micro markets and what all they will become.

JAIME IBANEZ

Jaime Ibanez is the owner of Vending Bites, a vending machine company established in 2018 and serves the Dallas-Fort Worth area. Ibanez makes YouTube videos about his vending business and has over 485,000 subscribers.



The company has built long-lasting relationships with numerous customers all over Dallas-Fort Worth. Ibanez was recently featured in The Dallas Morning News as a successful young entrepreneur.

BLAKE JONES

Blake Jones is second-generation owner and vice president of Pot O' Gold Coffee Service, a large independent office coffee service in Washington state. Alongside running the company with his father, the majority of his time is spent on sales and



marketing. Since the devastating loss of business during the COVID-19 pandemic, he has worked tirelessly to gain 85% of its sales back, servicing over 180 new customers. A large part of the company's growth came from a decision made at the beginning of the pandemic. Jones took the steps to make a change – not only is it an office coffee service, but it is also now licensed and providing kegs, cans and bottles to its customers, officially making it a one-stop shop for the breakroom. Jones' and his team's dedication to clients got them where they are today.

BRIDGER KEALLY

Bridger Keally started as the sales director at Panoptyc with an extensive background in sales but little knowledge of the vending industry. After consulting with industry experts and operators, he quickly realized the stress that theft and labor shortages



were inflicting and the need for Panoptyc's solution. Since then, Keally has been instrumental in bringing Panoptyc to almost 3,000 active markets across the country. To keep up with this growth, Keally aims to integrate with kiosk providers and other key industry partners to make Panoptyc's services as seamless and accessible as possible for customers. Looking forward, he is focused on providing solutions for vendors outside of just micro market theft. He relishes the opportunity to meet with customers at conferences and site visits to explore their challenges and develop solutions. Keally is a graduate of the University of Colorado Boulder.

KEITH KRAIL

Keith Krail joined AVS Companies in August 2021 as a digital marketing manager, and he was quickly promoted to the director of marketing in March 2022. With prior marketing experience in the legal industry, his enthusiasm and his attention to detail have allowed the company to achieve great success with exciting new marketing initiatives and updated processes. Krail and his team provide marketing support for several divisions within the company, including: vending, amusements, gaming, parts and service. With a greater emphasis on customer growth and communication, he has made several important changes to better position AVS for the future, such as having larger presences at trade shows, where he was able to showcase the company's subsidiaries (US Products and Premium Product Group). Krail is overjoyed to be working for AVS Companies, and he is extremely grateful for the assistance provided to him by his marketing team (Rebekah Cartlidge and Eric Schreiner).

ALYSSA LESMEISTER

Alyssa Lesmeister is an experienced account management professional at Custom Data Solutions and has a proven track record of overseeing a portfolio of acclaimed clientele and an internal team of account managers and support specialists. Lesmeister earned her bachelor's in business administration and marketing from Western Michigan University, and over the past 12 years, she has demonstrated her expertise in account management, employee training and marketing, earning her promotions from an account support position to her current role as manager of the account services department. She manages a team of six and regularly conducts trainings, web demonstrations and sales presentations for potential and current clients and brokers. Lesmeister works closely with her CEO and national sales director to keep up with industry trends and attends trade shows. She is passionate about the services and results that Custom Data Solutions provides its clients and takes pride in her knowledge of the company and its products and services.

"Bridger Keally has been instrumental in bringing Panoptyc to almost 3,000 active markets across the country."

365 Retail Markets' Brittany Westerman Earns 40 Under 40 Honor



365 Retail Markets would like to congratulate our Executive Vice President of Corporate Development and Operations, Brittany Westerman, on her recent honor as one of Automatic Merchandiser's 40 Under 40 award recipients.

Brittany joined 365 Retail Markets in 2015 working on cross-functional strategic projects, including acquisitions and integrations. Today, in her well-deserved role as the EVP of Corporate Development and Operations, she defines 365's growth strategy and evaluates new opportunities to expand its product offerings.

Westerman has been instrumental in fueling 365 Retail Markets' growth as well as that of the overall technology footprint in the convenience services industry.





As the global leader in unattended retail, 365 Retail Markets offers a full suite of products and solutions that address every step of the unattended retail and dining experience from product planograms and check-out kiosks to catering management software and hardware.

Whether you are operating your first of many micro markets or facilitating an on-site, corporate dining and catering service, 365 will be your partner in providing consumer convenience and optimized operations.

Contact a 365 representative to learn more about how 365 Retail Markets can help take your food service operations to the next level.

Sales@365smartshop.com



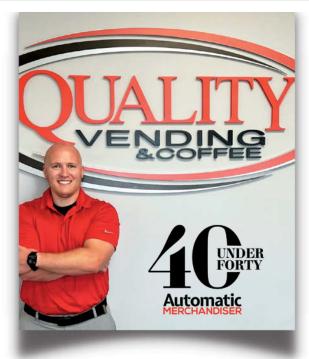


NICK MAROULES

A proven sales leader with 10+ years of management experience and over five years of director-level executive management experience, Nick Maroules with Royal Cup Inc. has a track record for leading high-performance teams, whether

it is implementing standard operating procedures on the distribution side of the business or accelerating growth with new business acquisition and account management. Maroules is a graduate of North Carolina State University with a B.S. in food science. He has completed the NAMasponsored Executive Development Program at Michigan State University and his Quality Coffee Certification and Certified Coffee Specialist, and he is HACCP certified. He is a founding member of NAMA's Emerging Leader Network where he has advocated for the industry on Capitol Hill. He has served on numerous philanthropic organizations including The Monday Morning Quarterback Club, Birmingham Zoo, and the Boy Scouts of America.

"Nick Maroules is a founding member of NAMA's Emerging Leader Network, advocating for the industry on Capitol Hill."



Samuel L. Hagan

Business Development Manager

Quality Vending & Coffee congratulates Sam and all 2022 honorees! Thanks for your leadership and service.

JOSH MCMILLAN

Josh McMillan joined Nayax in 2016
as a tech support agent and was
quickly promoted to team lead after
demonstrating his troubleshooting
abilities, document creation skills and
organization. He was appointed to the role
of support manager in 2020 as Nayax's customer base
grew. Prior to working at Nayax, McMillan held several
support positions at Global Payments. Throughout
his professional career, he has held on to the belief of
the importance of teamwork and building a personal
relationship with customers.

TEA MEŠTROVIĆ

For the past couple of years, Tea
Meštrović has been determined to build
Televend as the director of product.
She is the creative and innovative face
of Televend as she works on delivering
the newest solutions every day. Her
dedication, constant desire for progress, and vision
are transforming vending business right in front of
our eyes. Whether it is a brand brainstorming session,
creating new products, or just doing research, she
puts her heart and soul into it all. She is always looking
into the future and following trends to be sure to
implement those at Televend. Meštrović goes above
and beyond everything she does while inspiring
everyone who works with her to do their best.

BRENDAN MURPHY

Brendan Murphy, central region sales manager for Marco Beverage Systems, has over a decade of experience in foodservice equipment sales. He is a customer-first sales professional who understands the importance of creating long-lasting partnerships with consultants, designers and distributors. Murphy has built a reputation as being responsive and going above and beyond for his customers. He is a Certified Foodservice Professional through the North American Association of Food Equipment Manufacturers. He is also an industry speaker, most recently, holding a talk at the Specialty Coffee Expo in Boston.

"Brendan Murphy is a customer-first sales professional who understands the importance of creating long-lasting partnerships with consultants, designers and distributors."

LINDSAY NEWMAN

Lindsay Newman, brand manager of innovation for Lavazza North America, joined the OCS world over six years ago and quickly found a passion for coffee and innovation. She leads with a roll-upyour-sleeves approach to her work, which



she believes has enabled her to learn and grow her career. As a key leader on the marketing team, she has delivered over 30 innovation launches, including the Flavia C600 & Chill, the first all-in-one hot and cold single-serve beverage system. Newman also led a cross-functional team that developed a program to transform machine placements and accelerate growth in a post-COVID market, creating more opportunity for distribution partners as well as Lavazza. With her reputation for driving projects forward, she now leads both food and machine innovation across channels for Lavazza's North American market

JACOB PLASSMAN

Jacob Plassman is the chief marketing officer at Maumee Valley Group. He is responsible for the leadership of the company's strategic marketing, sales and operational initiatives. His oversight of this segment fuels customer growth, satisfaction and overall brand awareness. Plassman was previously purchasing manager within the company before transitioning to CMO. He attended Ashland University and Bowling Green State University prior to joining MVG in 2014.



Suzi Pullen is general manager of business operations with Casco Bay Food and Beverage. Entering the vending industry in 2014, she quickly learned that it is so much more than candy and soda. It is an everevolving world of technology aimed at



offering people convenient solutions. It is her desire to help people and her strong passion for problem-solving that makes this industry fulfilling to her. Pullen has had the privilege to experience all sides of the industry, from the office to the field. It is from this experience, and using data and technology, that Pullen has been able to assist in creating and streamlining processes that benefit both her customers and employees. Some of her favorite solutions she has been involved with are: developing an employee incentive program, developing a system to track cold food waste/sales, and using metrics to develop guidelines for scheduling that helped eliminate routes while still offering the same level of service to her customers.

GILBERT RAMIREZ JR.

Gilbert Ramirez Jr., marketing manager at Everest, can best be described as a motivated and determined individual who offers innovative ideas and creative solutions to improve the company, as well as



happily wearing many hats to contribute what he can to his team and fellow employees. Since his start with Everest, he has consistently enhanced the company's image, website and communications – both internally and externally. Ramirez has been instrumental in helping the company lead the industry in online content and presence. Because of his efforts, outreach and new partnerships, Everest's online presence increased by 1,934%, which has led to increased brand awareness, sales and market share. Gilbert has accomplished a variety of impressive projects, including spearheading the company's participation in the 2022 Orgill Trade Show in Orlando, Florida, as well as creating the Everest Cares initiative, a branch of the company that gives back to the community.





LINDA SALDANA

Linda Saldana is the co-founder and CEO of Seventh Wave Refreshments. She joined the industry almost 12 years ago as a sales director at Southern Refreshment Service and fell in love with the industry. Seventh Wave Refreshments was established in



2020 with a mission to "Bring Joy to the Workplace" in the most unsettling time in refreshments. With a deep passion for the customers and a heart for innovation in the industry, Seventh Wave Refreshments has led a refreshment revolution in Atlanta – pioneering new ways of servicing and offering a white glove approach to hundreds of offices in just two years.

PATRICK SHEEHAN

Patrick Sheehan, president of Sheehan Brothers Vending, has driven his family's business to new heights in 2022. His leadership the last six years has grown the southwest Ohio operation from 60 employees to 130 and increased revenue by 150%. The company recently opened a 14,000-square-foot commissary that supports 150 markets and offers sandwiches with fresh baked bread. As a third-generation Sheehan, he has embraced the 66 years of experience his father mentored him with, while bringing new innovative ways to drive business and profitability. Sheehan has been active in the industry, serving on a USG committee, vice president of the Ohio Automatic Merchandising Association, and helping create a new national network of independent operators called Guardian Refresh.

JASMIN SMITH

Jasmin Smith is the founder of a large, fast-growing custom vending machine company that distributes vending machines with products geared toward infants, toddlers, children and breast-feeding mothers. Smith is an Alaska Top 40 Under 40, Alaska Business of Achievement award winner, YWCA Women of Achievement award winner, and Alaska Woman Entrepreneur of the Year award winner, and she is the only woman-owned and black-owned vending machine company in the state. Smith was also ranked in the top 3 For the State of Alaska tech companies. She has been covered in many news outlets and publications. Her vending company is currently located in 13 states with over 40 locations.

ROBBIE SMITH

Robbie Smith is skillful and committed with a background in data analytics. As the technical operations director at Panoptyc, he is working with cross-functional teams on high impact process improvement projects. Smith always finds ways to build



toward product optimization, ensuring that Panoptyc's technology is able to adapt to the demands of the customers and the industry. With Panoptyc's continuous growth and success, Smith aims to be more involved in the industry. His goal is to help micro market operators reduce friction in their operations by identifying and solving for unfulfilled needs.

JUSTIN STEUBER

Justin Steuber is the customer success director at Associated Services in northern California. He received his business administration degree from the University of Nevada, Reno. In 2019, Steuber returned to the San Francisco



Bay area to work for the company that his grandparents founded, which, this year, is celebrating 50 years in business. Steuber wears many hats in the company. He leads the account management team and works directly with customers of all sizes. He is also working on a task force with a goal of fostering a better work culture. In his spare time, he keeps the fleet of box trucks on the road by replacing catalytic converters and welding on theft deterrents to keep Associated's deliveries on time.

MARK T. STUBBLEFIELD

Since joining Five Star Food Service in 2013, Mark Stubblefield has been a part of the leadership team to streamline and automate accounts receivable, accounts payable, acquisition sampling and valuation, expense reporting,



financial reporting and operational reporting. In 2020, Stubblefield started building a business intelligence department and has utilized his understanding of the industry and knowledge of the systems to continue building a set of business intelligence tools and processes for the Five Star leadership to be more effective. He believes in an iterative approach to success where each mistake along the way is a learning opportunity to do better next time, and he is learning that expectations and communication are critical to that recipe of success. His success comes from his aptitude to learn and understand processes and procedures by asking critical questions and his aspiration to improve upon them by challenging assumptions. He appreciates those around him who helped him achieve success.

BEN THOMAS

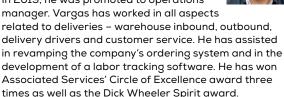
As a co-founder of Yoke Payments, and now vice president of micro market strategy as part of the Cantaloupe family, Ben Thomas is a pioneer of small market solutions in the micro market industry. His



passion for product development and innovation has had a massive impact on the speed of adoption of the micro market concept. Thomas understands the value of teamwork and is a true team player, always looking to better those around him and help the group as a whole. His out-of-the-box approach to solving problems has brought a fresh perspective to the vending industry, and his ideas highlighted the flexibility of where micro markets could be placed, greatly accelerating market growth and product development across the entire industry.

GILBERT VARGAS

Gilbert Vargas, customer care coordinator and snack guru, started with Associated Coffee in 2016 when he was 22 years old, in the customer care department. In 2019, he was promoted to operations manager. Vargas has worked in all aspects



ROBINA VERBEEK

Robina Verbeek is the co-founder and co-CEO of SOS, a company redefining wellness on-the-go through a network of state-of-the-art smart vending machines. The company has partnered with teams across the MLB, NFL and NHL as well as firms like Tishman Speyer and Equinox. The company holds seven global patents and has been featured in Fast Company, Forbes and TechCrunch. SOS was named one of the Top 20 Emerging Brands in Retail by ICSC and is a Techstars portfolio company.

"Robing Verbeek is the co-founder and co-CEO of SOS, a company redefining wellness on-the-go through smart vending machines."

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without these two. We are sure we can achieve a lot more with their knowledge, passion, and expertise.



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GUS WALTER

Since joining Coffee Break Refreshments in 2018, Gus Walter has been an integral part in implementing new technology and best practices he saw while working with Avanti's clients as its midwest account manager. Walter works with Coffee



Break's current and prospective clients to develop custom food and beverage solutions that will fuel the clients' associates and culture. Over five decades and three generations, Coffee Break Refreshments has grown from a small OCS operator to a full-line food and beverage service company and coffee roaster. He credits Coffee Break's growth over the years to having a great team that will do whatever it takes to serve the greater Cincinnati area's breakroom, restaurant and C-stores with its locally roasted coffee and creative automated retail solutions.

HONORABLE MENTIONS

Cassidy Munoz Office Manager, Tahoe Vending Jeffrey S Wachowicz II Sales Rep, Smart Vending Solutions Summer Claudio Vice President of Operations, Convenience Services Group

BRITTANY WESTERMAN

convenience services industry.

Brittany Westerman joined 365 Retail Markets in 2015 working on cross-functional strategic projects. By combining her strong academic background (BSE and MBA from the University of Michigan) with her keen grasp of the convenience services industry, Westerman has successfully welcomed and accomplished increasingly challenging responsibilities at 365. Today, in her well-deserved role as the executive vice president of corporate development and operations, she defines 365's growth strategy and evaluates new opportunities to expand. Westerman and her team have collaborated with several suppliers to identify alternate sources in order to keep 365's production operations afloat during the past few years, thereby helping operators throughout the industry continue to support their clients. Through her direct involvement in evaluating new opportunities for the company's mergers and acquisitions and overseeing post-transaction integration, Westerman has been instrumental in fueling 365's growth as well as that of the overall technology footprint in the









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Cold brew solutions in OCS

Take advantage of this revenue opportunity.

By Adrienne Klein, Contributing Editor

N CASE YOU HAVEN'T HEARD, COLD BREW COFFEE IS

one of the hottest trends in the U.S. coffee market. According to a 2022 report published by Statista, the total size of this market stood at around \$166 million in 2017, and by 2025, this figure is forecast to increase to around \$944 million. Another market study by Technavio even has the cold brew coffee market figures to increase by \$1.37 billion from 2020 to 2025.

Cold brew coffee is not a new concept – it is simply steeped coffee grounds in cold water for several hours - but every year, it continues to heat up in favor with consumers.

I remember traveling to see a Wisconsin-based operator nearly eight years ago who was offering nitro cold brew on tap to some of his customers. He was the outlier at that time - an operator who was taking a chance on a trend that was yet to be solidified. Nearly a decade later, many other operators around the country are offering cold brew to their customers. Cold brew coffee is not a trend anymore; it is a staple in coffee service, and operators who can - should be taking advantage of this revenue opportunity.

EQUIPMENT OPTIONS

Previously, cold brew coffee offerings were a challenge for operators. Kegs and CO2 tanks were extra barriers, keeping some OCS operators out of the cold brew coffee business. But manufacturers have seen that hurdle and replied with equipment that makes offering cold brew coffee a possibility.

At the NAMA Show earlier this year, Bunn showcased its keg-free nitro cold brew machine Nitron. The Nitron comes with two dispense options: the Nitro/Still or the All-Nitro. With the Nitro/Still, consumers have the option to dispense a nitro-infused beverage from one tap or a still beverage from the other. The All-Nitro model dispenses nitro-infusion from both taps, which gives operators the ability to meet higher volume needs and double the selection of nitro beverages. The Nitron comes with two door types as well: removable graphic door model and the all-black door model. With the removable graphic door model, operators can easily - without tools - change the marketing panel on the front of the machine. This allows an operator or location to promote unique brands and beverage offerings.

Various models available use either two 1-gallon (3.8liter) concentrate BIBs (bag-in-box) or Bunn refillable containers (for ball-valve models), two ½-gallon (1.9-liter) concentrate BIBs or a single 1-gallon concentrate BIB (for Scholle models) that staff are already familiar with, and each BIB yields multiple gallons of finished drinks.

Earlier this year, illycaffe announced its new cold brew dispenser system, the illy Cold Brew Blade dispenser, a onetouch system that makes two different cold brew preparations with the twist of knob and venturi spout. Without the need for nitrogen tanks or an external compressed air source, the Cold Brew Blade dispenses illy Cold Brew or nitro-style illy Cold Brew Aria.

The Cold Brew Blade utilizes a 4.5-liter soft pack of cold brew consisting of the signature illy blend equipped with disposable dispensing tubes, which eliminates the need to



clean any internal elements. This not only improves its food safety features but also reduces day-to-day maintenance needed from staff.



Dan Ragan • Dan@RoyalAloha.com • 571.228.4331 BADASSCOFFEE.COM/WHOLESALE

The unit base footprint is 8.5 inches wide by 11 inches long and is designed to keep the coffee fresh with a 14-day shelf life while in the dispensing unit.

Also at the 2022 NAMA Show, Segafredo Zanetti



showed off its
NitroTap, a twoin-one cold brew
on-draft dispensing unit. NitroTap
dispenses both
cold brew and
nitro brew coffee.
With no nitrogen
gas service and no
waterline connections needed, the
NitroTap takes up
minimal space with its
small countertop design.

It provides easy installation by simply plugging in the machine, connecting the bag and enjoying draft cold brew coffee, giving operators the ability to serve both low- and high-volume clientele.

In 2021, Marco Beverage Systems introduced its cold coffee dispenser called Pour'd, available in ready-to-drink



Marco Beverage

(RTD) or concentrate variants. In the RTD option, cold coffee is dispensed from a BIB, urn or container kept in a fridge, kegerator or under the counter. The Pour'd RTD is available in a one-button font for push and hold, a handsfree font for hygienic activation or a three-button font.

The concentrate models can dispense beverages from a single concentrate source, automating the dilution process using either chilled or mains water to dilute the concentrate for cold coffee. The system is compatible with concentrate ratios from 1:1 to 9:1. It also allows operators to preprogram up to three beverage choices and volumes.

The Pour'd three-button

companies showcased uding many different at milk. This is ings at coffee retailers, Allied Market Research reamer market size was is projected to reach \$2.3

Don't skip the extras

At the 2022 NAMA Show, several companies showcased plant-based coffee creamers, including many different varieties of increasingly popular oat milk. This is unsurprising considering the offerings at coffee retailers, convenience and grocery stores. Allied Market Research found that the global non-dairy creamer market size was valued at \$1.7 million in 2019 and is projected to reach \$2.3 million by 2027.

Among the many plant-based creamers available, Chobani, earlier this year, launched its first plant-based coffee creamers in Sweet &

based coffee creamers in Sweet & Creamy, French Vanilla, Chocolate Hazelnut and Caramel Macchiato.

Additionally, Nestle's Coffee Mate will launch plant-based almond and oat creamers in January 2023.

Although traditional creamers are still a necessary offering, plant-based creamers are gaining traction. gives users flexibility over their offerings, including the ability to use a shot of concentrate for mochas or iced lattes, cold brew and even a hot water stream for teas or Americanos.

Speaking with Automatic Merchandiser's Bob Tullio in early 2022, Marco's North American Sales Director Matt Dudley said, "Pour'd eliminates the need for kegs and for CO2 tanks. It enables the use of concentrates or RTD. It adds flexibility and takes away a lot of the cumbersome aspects of a traditional cold brew program." In late 2021, the company announced La Colombe's ready-to-drink, shelf-stable BIB cold brew compatibility with its Pour'd dispenser.

RTD OPTIONS

If adding cold brew equipment isn't a possibility at a particular location or for your business at this moment, there are many RTD options on the market. Rise Brewing Co. offers its Nitro Cold Brew Coffee in 7-fl.oz. cans. Monster Energy announced earlier this year that its Java Monster Cold Brew in a can is available in Latte and Sweet Black flavors. And in May, Lavazza launched its organic

ready-to-drink cans of cold brew coffee in four flavor profiles: Classic Cold Brew, Nitro Cold Brew, Cappuccino Cold Brew with Milk, and Double Shot Cold Brew with Oat Milk.

Illy also introduced two new ready-to-drink products, illy Cold Brew Cappuccino and Latte Macchiato, in 8.45-oz. slim cans. This comes after the company introduced its first-ever RTD cold brew in 2020. "The expansion of our illy Cold Brew drinks positions illy to meet coffee lovers' ongoing appetite for super premium cold coffee preparations," said Jack Edwards, president of illy caffè North America, in the company's announcement. "The illy Cold Brew portfolio represents the newest innovations from illy and delivers on our unwavering commitment to superior taste, quality and sustainability that is recognized around the world."

It is clear that cold brew coffee is not a fad that will be going away. It has been gaining traction for the better part of a decade. If you are still in doubt, take a look at grocery retailers and the number of cold brew options available to customers today. In this post-pandemic workplace, operators are challenged to look outside of the box to find new revenue streams, and cold brew coffee offerings could provide the boost in sales that's needed.

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BRINGING JOY TO THE



Centered on that simple mission to bring joy to the workplace, Seventh Wave Refreshments' founders are no newcomers to Atlanta's workplaces, but they're off and running with a fresh approach.

By Emily Cambriello, Contributing Edito

WORKPLACE



EVENTH WAVE REFRESHMENTS was established in March 2020, at what few operators would argue was the most unsettling and unpredictable time for workplace refreshments. Its founders, fueled by a deep passion for customers and innovation, had the simplest of business plans: bringing joy to the workplace.

Linda Saldaña, a self-described "super-passionate salesperson," and her partner Dave Carroll, who she admires as a "nothing-is-too-big operations guru," had worked together for many years at Southern Refreshment Services where they created and installed refreshment solutions for hundreds of Atlanta workplaces. The company was acquired by Five Star Food Service, one of the largest regional convenience service providers serving the Southeast and Midwest, which was when the duo decided to pursue their own venture.

Why Seventh Wave? The business name was birthed from a passion for refreshments and the desire to create a movement that would bring joy. "Since coffee comes in waves, the Seventh Wave would represent creation and completion." Saldaña explained. "It also represents our partnerships. Waves don't run alone. They run in groups, and together, they have impact."

This people-first, white-glove approach rooted in delivering joy, Saldaña declared, has led to fulfilling her quest to deliver the best coffee, tastiest food experiences and most innovative solutions. The company has grown to serve hundreds of locations throughout the greater Atlanta market with office coffee and pantry service and micro markets.

In recognition of Seventh Wave Refreshments' running start to success, Automatic Merchandiser recognized Saldaña among its 2022 40 Under 40 Award winners, who are featured in this issue. The awards highlight innovators who demonstrate leadership and a commitment to advancing convenience



Have you ever felt so passionate about something that you risk absolutely everything to see it come to life?"

- Linda Saldaña

services for vending, micro markets and office coffee service. Saldaña credits her partner Carroll, her team and loyal suppliers who share Seventh Wave's vision and go above and beyond to help bring it to life.

MEET THE CO-FOUNDERS

Saldaña's passion for coffee was what led her to the refreshment industry

nine years ago as a salesperson at Southern

Refreshment Services.
In those years, she
advanced to director
of sales and reportedly sold more than
\$22 million in coffee,

vending and micro

Linda Saldaña market business.



Dave Carroll

owned and delivered the ultimate refreshment experience to breakrooms around Atlanta.

She took a bold step and approached Carroll, who was set to retire, and convinced him to instead



The Seventh Wave Refreshments team, now 30-strong, gathers to celebrate the employee-owned company's second anniversary.

take a leap of faith and join her to launch Seventh Wave Refreshments.

Carroll brings 37 years of experience in the refreshment industry to Seventh Wave Refreshments. He began his career working for Servatron, distributing OCS products to customers throughout Southern California and advanced to vice president of sales. After Vistar acquired Servatron, he left to accept a position as general manager for Aramark in Atlanta. In 1992, he became general manager of Southern Refreshment Services and oversaw its growth from six routes to more than 60 servicing the metro Atlanta area during his tenure.

Together, he and Saldaña pooled their experience and their passion and set out to launch their employeeowned company dedicated to creating a refreshment revolution.

A WING AND A PRAYER

"Have you ever felt so passionate about something that you risk absolutely

everything to see it come to life?" Saldaña asked. "That is where Seventh Wave Refreshments came from."

Starting just as the pandemic had shut down much of the world had its challenges, but there was also no way to go but up, and as it turned out, there were also many unexpected silver linings.

"Launching one week before the pandemic locked everyone down in March 2020, the greatest tool to grow was LinkedIn," she recalled. "Everyone was working from home or at home working on their resumes when we started. We shared our story, and facility directors saw it on social media. It created an opportunity for storytelling and accountability; because we shared what we promised and delivered for our earliest customers, so we had to do it for others."

Another unexpected door opener was that Seventh Wave Refreshments entered the scene offering an arsenal of hand sanitizers, antibacterial soaps and UV light fixtures to disinfect

the air. Concern over the virus's spread was especially high, and such products were in scarce supply and high demand.

"Hand sanitizer got us in the door and then people said: 'That girl with the hand sanitizer, she has coffee, too!" Saldaña recalled.

Despite their combined decades of convenience service expertise, the pandemic required a whole new level of strategy - as they navigated the ways it so drastically changed the workplace environment and how they could most effectively and practically serve it while upholding their highest of standards, Saldaña said.

"We had to be very strategic and say hard things to educate the customer," she recalled. "We had to say this is the program for now, until 2,000 people come back, which hasn't happened in most places and



Linda Saldaña and pantry director Katie Felumlee are a united force in bringing joy to the workplace.

most likely never will. We had to shrink down programs that they had before us and consolidate and do a lot of cleanup work for the new reality of the downsized, remote and

hybrid workforce. It's a lot of education that was not needed before, and we had to be much more intentional than just depending upon what the customer said."



BRINGING JOY TO THE WORKPLACE



to its growth in two-and-a-half of the

most tumultuous years in the industry.

WORD OF MOUTH

Seventh Wave's first customer to sign on for its service was a large business in Atlanta that was "the name drop of all businesses," according to Saldaña. The power of word of mouth has led

seventh Wave serves more than 200 customers with four micro market routes, two pantry routes and one coffee service route.

"We've grown strictly by referrals because we did something impactful

"We've grown strictly by referrals because we did something impactful for our initial customer and each customer that has followed," Saldaña commented. "We've only dealt with really big customers or ones that wanted to get people back into the office with more than just OCS who asked us to provide pantry service or micro markets, so we have not had to dip into vending and don't plan to. What was really needed was a great food program, which can only be available through a micro market. It's been a huge differentiator for us."

Another silver lining to launching during the early days of COVID was that it led to Seventh Wave partnering with some large food management companies to install and operate micro markets in place of cafeterias that they were forced to shut down without enough employees onsite to support them. And for those still wanting hot meals, Seventh Wave worked with its food

Seventh Wave stages all of its micro markets in-house before installation. This one is headed to Six Flags Over Georgia.

(A) -

OPERATION PROFILE

Seventh Wave Refreshments

Founded: March 2020

Headquarters: Lawrenceville,

Website:

seventhwaverefreshments.

Number of routes: 7

Number of acquisitions: $\boldsymbol{0}$

Number of micro markets: 60

Tech/equipment providers: 365 Retail Markets, Cafection, De Jong Duke, Bravilor, Newco, Bunn, Bevi, Lavit, Keurig, Minus Forty, Genesis Décor

Distributors: Vistar, KeHE, UNFI, Coca-Cola, Pepsi supplier partners to provide a "pop up" concept at several sites.

THE MORE THE MERRIER

"Companies are still wanting to offer more, and many want to fully subsidize refreshments to entice people to come back and attract talent. That transition has been big," said Saldaña. "The hybrid workplace is working for a lot of businesses, and micro markets lend themselves to that. Even in blue-collar environments that were not traditionally micro market locations, we converted many from vending machines."

She added that many manufacturing locations had essential workers and stayed open throughout the pandemic, and employers wanted to keep them onsite by adding food to the mix and reward them by subsidizing their purchases.

Seventh Wave set up its first "pantry room" in a blue-collar environment three months ago, which is proving its value outside of the white-collar offices that had traditionally been the only

types of sites that provided the service prior to the pandemic.

"We've had lots of stops and goes over the past two-and-a-half years and learned a lot and adapted to a very different environment than the industry has ever seen," the operator reflected. "Pantry has blown up, and it has been the sweetest surprise to watch it blossom for the ones who are in the office, from employers who want to offer them more ... bring them jov."

THE RIGHT MIX

Micro markets have also been exploding in popularity, bringing employees hundreds of items right in the breakroom with little reason to go elsewhere. Seventh Wave starts by merchandising the known national and regional top sellers and then, over the first 30 days, makes it a mission to learn directly from employees what specifically they want and the appropriate price points.

QR codes posted in every micro market and on fliers that employers can distribute invite end users to submit suggestions for products and equipment that will bring them joy. This approach has proven to bring in a steady stream of valuable feedback and suggestions to match the right products to each customer base, with some exception.

"If they want a super-duper, fancyschmancy bar, for example, we might look at what else might sell better and also bring joy," Saldaña said. "After 30 days, every market is completely customized. The big fit that's had a far bigger impact has been focusing on the people present at each location, versus the money or set programs."

FOOD GLORIOUS FOOD

The centerpiece of every micro market is fresh, locally made, artisan-inspired food, the majority of which is available through Seventh Wave's partnership



Seventh Wave has partnered with contract foodservice providers to replace corporate cafeterias shut down by the pandemic with micro markets, like the one shown above.



Employees at this Atlanta video game company are rewarded with a pantry and food program.

with Atlanta-based, locally owned, high-end caterers.

Hand-crafted by experienced chefs, the products offered at each location are carefully chosen with employee preferences and employer goals in mind. On-trend selections like Budda Bowls, Southwestern Fiesta Bowls, and Ham Po Boy sandwiches are just a few examples.

"We set out to transform the caliber of food traditionally expected from a vending machine and from many micro markets to rival that of local delis and restaurants in our micro markets, and we succeeded." Saldaña said. "But we had no idea of the level to which the pandemic would lead



Seventh Wave micro market brings refreshments to multiple tenants in lobby of Atlanta office building.



Upscale NorthPark Market creates an oasis where employees congregate for meals.

to a movement of many businesses replacing their cafeterias with micro markets, providing more demand than we could have imagined."



THE PRICE IS RIGHT

The operators have found that they can charge a fair price for food, ranging from \$3.99 for snack-type items like fresh fruit and parfaits, to \$12.50 for heat-and-eat from-scratch entrees in microwavable containers.

"We've also been forced to pass along two prices increases because of the crazy world we live in, and customers understand and value having delicious, high-quality food right in the office," said Saldaña. "Because our goal is so people focused, it flows both ways. My customers text me just to ask how we're doing with all of today's challenges, from gas prices and product costs to the pandemic, and that is a dream."

The convenience service veterans have structured Seventh Wave

Refreshments to be 100% cashless, since micro market customers have the ability to use touchless transaction technology via 365 Retail Market's 365 PayApp, loyalty cards and biometrics, along with credit and debit cards.

"We took over a lot of manufacturing firms that were traditionally used to paying with cash more so than white-collar locations do," the operator recalled. "We went in and said, with COVID, everything is cashless to minimize surface contact with the virus's spread, which helped set the foundation, and we were pleasantly surprised to find overwhelming acceptance that has stuck."

Many employers also choose to subsidize their micro markets by adding funds to employees' market accounts.

Linda Saldaña and Dave Carroll have built their business to a seven-route fleet by staying true to their mission to bring joy to the workplace.

AT YOUR SERVICE

In addition to providing micro markets, many businesses are taking it a step further and catering in meals for their employees to make them feel valued and to boost productivity by encouraging them to remain focused and on site. Seventh Wave owns the relationship and works with Atlanta's top caterers, who deliver the food and pack it up at the end of the day, whether it's daily, weekly or monthly, to suit the location's budget and needs.

Their food partners' message to employers, which Seventh Wave spreads, is that providing free lunch can save 30 minutes of commute time, five days a week, for 50 weeks a year, that adds up to 125 hours. That's the equivalent of roughly three weeks of full-time work per employee that they feed. Not leaving for lunch also helps employees reduce their carbon footprint - with sustainability front and center of many minds on both a personal and corporate level these days.

With selling fresh food, there's always a concern about waste and spoilage. Seventh Wave's philosophy is that the better the food and the more closely tailored it is to what customers eat outside the workplace, the higher the turns and the lower the spoilage. Also, Seventh Wave's agreement with the majority of the locations it serves with fresh food is that the employer absorbs the cost of all waste.

COFFEEHOUSE APPEAL

While the pandemic has certainly had its impact on the number of employees on site at many locations, a quality coffee program is more important than ever in the Atlanta market, according to Saldaña. To reward those who have returned to the office and to entice back those who have not. and recruit new ones, Seventh Wave is finding many employers investing in creating an experience that rivals the local coffee house.

"Our mission is to create the ideal coffee service space for each Atlanta business partner we have, to bring an oasis to the workplace that will inspire and engage employees," Saldaña commented. "That means that these break areas aren't massproduced, but thoughtfully designed to cultivate productivity and community with advanced brewers designed to create a cafe atmosphere with specialty drink offerings."

Seventh Wave can install any type of solution, from Cafection bean-tocup brewers, Starbucks, Newco and

cold brew coffee on tap, to an onsite coffee bar with a high-quality espresso machine complete with fresh milk.

Craft coffee is in high demand, and there's no limit to the brands and blends Seventh Wave can deliver. Sustainability is also important to both Seventh Wave Refreshments and many of its customers.

"From bean to cup, we take pride in partnering with coffee companies that offer sustainability programs," Saldaña emphasized. "From livable wages to less waste in landfills, our partners are taking steps toward a greener world with each sip of coffee."

CLEAR CHOICE

Pure water is a vital component of most workplace refreshment programs, and whether it's a bottled cooler or point-of-use filtration service, Seventh Wave provides it.

Beyond the basics, Seventh Wave offers Bevi and Lavit machines, which allow users to add fruit flavors, sparkle and sweetener to create a customized drink. Many locations opt for these machines both for the variety they provide and because cups and bottles can be refilled, which saves money and cuts down on waste.

DREAM TEAM

To support Seventh Wave's rapid growth, holding true to its cofounders' employee-owned commitment, the operators have hired only family, friends and friends of friends, none of whom hailed from the industry. Their team has grown to 30 strong.

"With everyone who has joined us, they knew it was not just about filling a machine or shelves, but to do something real and big," Saldaña explained. "We have developed amazing managers as passionate as we are, and the customers have fallen deeply in love with them. We can say absolutely that our secret sauce to our growth and success has been our people in two-plus very short years."

Saldaña also takes every opportunity for her children, Lucas, 14; Jacob, 12; and Yeselyn, 11, to do their part to pitch in and feel personally connected to Seventh Wave Refreshments and its mission to deliver joy.

Additionally, she credits the longestablished relationships the operators had with suppliers, including Nestle, Segafredo and Bevi that carried over to their new venture, as being critical to Seventh Wave's success.



Seventh Wave keeps the team spirit alive and joy at the heart of its own operation with its monthly cookouts.



Linda's daughter Yeselyn helps pull orders. Her other two children, Lucas and Jacob, enjoy pitching in at every opportunity to help bring joy to Seventh Wave customers.

"We felt so supported in the middle of a pandemic," said Saldaña. "The greatest blessing was to win together in that season and continue to build upon that foundation."

The good news is that with the darkest days of COVID in the rearview mirror, many existing accounts continue to grow as more employees return, some fully and many on a hybrid basis.

"We work with every company's budget and product options to create the right solution," Saldaña summed up. "We transform the breakroom into an employee recruitment and retention tool with a fully managed pantry, OCS or micro market solution. And for the



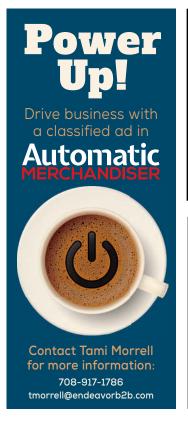
The greatest blessing was to win together in that season and continue to build upon that foundation."

- Linda Saldaña

record ... as romantic as it all sounds, bringing joy to the workplace is not easy ... there are a lot of long hours, sleepless nights and sacrifice. We are looking forward to what is ahead!"

Marketplace

Inquiries to Tami Morrell: Phone: 708-917-1786 Email: tmorrell@endeavorb2b.com





Jo Ann Lichtman

Manufacturer's Representative for Vending, OCS and Micro-Market Products

2019 Forest Creek Libertyville, Illinois 60048 (847) 680-4790 • 800-801-7453 (847) 680-4796 FAX Email: joann@ lichtmanandassociates.com



SELLING?

Mike Ferguson - VMAC Solutions has over 32+ years' Vending & OCS industry experience, an ex-operator turned intermediary business broker. I speak fluent Vending and Office Coffee.



All conversations are confidential!



Contact Mike@VMACsolutions.com or 713-569-6463



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Frank Saverino, Sr.

Founder - CEO

Ph 630-868-2626 Cell 708-373-4376 Fax 630-597-2809

538 Randy Road Carol Stream, IL 60188-2122 franksr@TeamSaverino.com

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