

# Automatic MERCHANDISER

Convenience services for  
vending, micro markets  
and workplace beverages

## SURVEILLANCE & VIGILANCE

### Stepping Up Security

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## TECHNOLOGY

### Emerging or Rooted

Technology for vending,  
micro markets and OCS  
has a lot more dexterity  
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# A Comeback as They Come Back

## Evans Company

located in Metro  
New York keys into  
trends reshaping  
modern breakroom  
services.

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Bizz*



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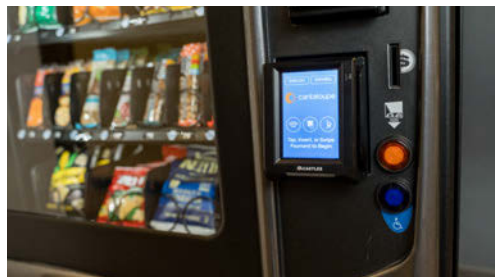
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**On the cover:** Jim Evans celebrates opening of latest micro market installation, which went online in mid-July at New Jersey's RB Manufacturing.

## ONLINE EXCLUSIVES

Visit [vendingmarketwatch.com](http://vendingmarketwatch.com) for more on hot topics in vending, micro markets and office coffee service

### Interviews, Expert Insight & Tips



#### OCS Operator

### 5 things will happen in New Orleans: Aug. 17



Bob Tullio

**A RECENT ARTICLE IN THE WALL STREET JOURNAL,** titled "The Pay Is High and Jobs Are Plentiful, but Few Want to Go into Sales," caught my attention. I have been thinking about it because I am presenting a preconference program at The NAMA Show: "Selling Convenience Services: A Playbook for Sales Professionals" on Aug. 17. If you attend, I can promise that five things will happen. [VendingMarketWatch.com/21230762](http://VendingMarketWatch.com/21230762)

#### viv | Back to school

Florida operator Manuel Barrios of CVM Services Inc. took advantage pandemic downtime to upgrade some accounts with Vagabond's hi-tech touchless payment platform. Notably, he installed viv on every vending machine he operates at Bethune-Cookman University in Daytona Beach.

[VendingMarketWatch.com/21230456](http://VendingMarketWatch.com/21230456)



#### Tip sheet | How to keep refrigeration units running

Refrigeration maintenance for micro market coolers, or the lack of it, impacts food safety. Neglecting routine care reduces energy efficiency, making equipment work harder and eventually break down. Minus Forty's Michael Robichaud offers some essential upkeep tips in this guest column.

[VendingMarketWatch.com/21230456](http://VendingMarketWatch.com/21230456)



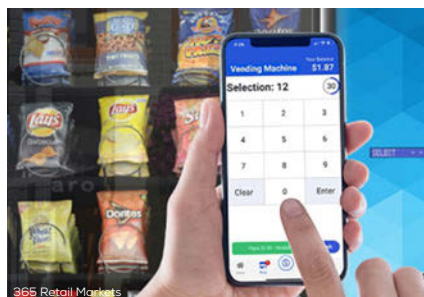
M. Robichaud

### Special Report



#### Micro Market

### Touchless payment options for your customers



#### MICRO MARKET NEWS

Throughout the pandemic, 365 Retail Markets saw a big uptick in the usage of its 365Pay app at kiosks and the new PicoCooler. 365Pay also enables touchless transactions at vending machines and OCS equipment.

[VendingMarketWatch.com/21225811](http://VendingMarketWatch.com/21225811)



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# The NAMA Show



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“

NAMA's annual trade show is a once-a-year opportunity to see the latest developments in technology, products and marketing for vending, micro markets and office coffee service.

## REJOICE! FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE APRIL 2019, THE

National Automatic Merchandising Association will be holding its flagship trade show, after the COVID-19 pandemic forced the postponement of its 2020 run in Nashville. This year—just as the coronavirus is brought under some control, and as more people are returning to work—The NAMA Show is back. It will be held from August 18 to 20 in New Orleans, and its timing could not be better.

The trade show takes place at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, located minutes from the Big Easy's French Quarter and the Mississippi River. The historic city, known for its festivals, is an apt setting to celebrate the The NAMA Show's return. And there is more to cheer. This 2021 show will be combined with NAMA's Coffee Tea & Water confab, the association's education program for the office coffee service sector, which during “normal” times took place in the fall.

On the show floor, visitors will see more new offerings than usual from food and beverage companies, equipment manufacturers and technology providers, given the two-year hiatus between events. In the education wing, participants will have access to 30 sessions featuring more than 70 speakers who will provide insights into and ideas for—operating in an economy that's been changed by the pandemic.

NAMA's annual trade show is a once-a-year opportunity to see the latest developments in technology, products and marketing for vending, micro markets and OCS. These efforts are driven by innovators' beliefs in the desires and needs of the market. It will be interesting to witness the intersection of the industry's vastly improved capabilities and the changes in consumer behavior that took place after March 2020. The NAMA Show will help pinpoint where those lines cross.

## IN PERSON VS. VIRTUAL

There's enthusiasm for returning to in-person trade shows and client appointments, but there's also consensus that virtual meetings are here to stay. In January, FTI Consulting published findings of a survey that asked 500 company decision-makers in the U.S. and UK about their trade show plans in 2021. Some 46% said they plan to increase their show budgets to above pre-pandemic levels. About 27% said they plan to keep budgets below pre-pandemic levels; among these, 49% indicated they will do so by reducing the number of events they attend.

Another study, which surveyed trade show exhibitors, found little eagerness for virtual events. Tradeshow Logic, an events solutions company, interviewed 343 exhibitors last year and 43% who had participated in a virtual trade show said they would not do so again. Some 67% of respondents who had participated in a virtual event said networking failed to meet their expectations.

We believe there will be a hybrid of in-person and virtual meetings for the foreseeable future, but nothing beats the real thing. The NAMA Show is all about networking and building relationships, face to face.

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## TOP NEWS

### Study finds digital payments outpace cash use at machines

[ TECHNOLOGY ]



#### WHILE USAGE OF CASH PAYMENTS

in 2019 was being outpaced by digital payments, consisting of magstripe credit cards, contactless cards and mobile, the number of digital payment transactions per vending machine on average exceeded those made with cash in April 2020 (137 digital and 135 cash transactions per machine), according to a joint study by Cantaloupe Inc. and Michigan State University. The monthly digital sales volume per machine in April 2020 was 47% higher on average than with cash (\$235 versus \$160).

#### Hospital and military sites soar

Professional settings ranked second in digital usage overall. Through the pandemic, hospitals saw a sharp rise, from 42% in November 2019 to 55% in November 2020. Military locations in particular showed the greatest increase over cash, increasing from 83% of all sales in November 2019 to 90% in November 2020.

[VendingMarketWatch.com/21227899](https://www.vendingmarketwatch.com/21227899)



#### 90% EMV accounts for all transactions on Nayax network

Recent data show that EMV contact and contactless payments account for more than 90% of all cashless transactions on Nayax devices in the U.S. Additionally, less than 10% of transactions are magnetic stripe (swipe) when operators are given the choice. Nayax has also seen a growth in contactless payments (NFC or EMV tap cards) from less than 1% in 2017 to more than 20% in 2021. EMV contact (card insertion) transactions also spiked during that period, from 2.5% in 2017 to 70% in 2021.

[VendingMarketWatch.com/21229511](https://www.vendingmarketwatch.com/21229511)



#### Cultiva unveils CBD vending machine with age verification

A Miami-based company unveiled the Wellness Pantry, described as an advanced automated dispensing system. Cultiva Wellness LLC said its vending machine supports remote monitoring and operation, touchless payments and the use of blockchain technology to verify a customer's age. Cultiva, which also has a CBD community mobile app, said it is betting big on

making hemp-derived and CBD products accessible to a mainstream market through its smart vending machine.

[VendingMarketWatch.com/21229451](https://www.vendingmarketwatch.com/21229451)



#### EVA releases results of industry survey

The Brussels-based European Vending Association released results of a new survey of operators and suppliers. Key findings:

- 56% of operators saw between 21% and 40% sales declines in 2020.
- 37% of the suppliers expect growth in 2022, compared with 2019.
- 91% of operators are impacted by people working from home
- 76% of suppliers are affected by reduced orders.

[VendingMarketWatch.com/21230191](https://www.vendingmarketwatch.com/21230191)



#### UpMeals to install machine at SFU

Vancouver-based UpMeals has partnered with Simon Fraser University to install its smart vender at SFU's Burnaby campus this fall. The machine's menu will be curated by students. In related news, UpMeals acquired Grubgrab, a digital meal subscription service geared toward post-secondary students.

[VendingMarketWatch.com/21229679](https://www.vendingmarketwatch.com/21229679)





Foodie Inc.

## Sodexo buys Foodie

Sodexo acquired restaurant aggregator Foodie Inc., and said it will expand the foodservice platform for businesses with flexible workforces. The Foodie platform, now a part of Sodexo's corporate services segment, features 800-plus local restaurants in 14 cities across the U.S. and Canada. It's expected to expand offerings to New York City, Los Angeles, Dallas, and Montreal. **VendingMarketWatch.com/21230663**



Mohamed Hassan/Pixabay

## SBA RRF comes to messy end, 265K applicants eat dust

The \$28.6 billion Restaurant Revitalization Fund closed on Jun. 30, fulfilling fewer than a third of the applied for \$75 billion in federal relief. Some 370,000 foodservice businesses applied for funding, but only 105,000 of those were approved for grants, which averaged about \$272,000 each. **VendingMarketWatch.com/21229167**

## Google for Startups Israel features Griin Micro-Roaster

Israeli coffee tech firm Griin



Griin

said its compact, location-based bean roasting machine is now featured at the Tel Aviv branch of Google for Startups. Griin's countertop coffee roaster, placed at the Google campus by local office coffee service operator Keren Kedem-Rosenberg, will be available to Google employees and visitors. Griin is developing an on-demand coffee sourcing and roasting solution that is compact, clean and automatic for OCS operators. **VendingMarketWatch.com/21229505**

## MORE ONLINE



### Mastercard and Verizon pact on 5G contactless pay

VendingMarketWatch.com/2123048

### Nayax acquires Israeli retail tech startup Weezmo

VendingMarketWatch.com/21230395

### Crane Co. to divest Engineered Materials

VendingMarketWatch.com/21224140

### Welbilt okays Ali Group's \$4.8B offer

VendingMarketWatch.com/21230018

# PEOPLE IN THE NEWS



Kaericher

### Bart Kaericher is at the helm of Aramark's healthcare division

Kaericher comes to Aramark from Compass Group NAD, another foodservice leader, where he held executive roles in sales, marketing, and retention.



Kozak

### Former Red Bull chief takes reins at Guayaki Yerba Mate

The maker of yerba mate beverages appointed Stefan Kozak its new chief executive. He helped take Red Bull to the No. 2 non-alcoholic position in U.S.



Bergstein

### Sabra names new president and CEO

Hummus snack maker Sabra Dipping Co. LLC tapped Joey Bergstein to further position the company as the leading plant-based food brand. He comes from eco-friendly CPG company Seventh Generation.



Manor

### Nayax installs new financial chief

Nayax Ltd. has appointed Sagit Manor chief financial officer. She will be responsible for the payments company's global finance activities, supply chain and procurement operations. She succeeds Liron Grosman.



Andersen

### Tomra Systems appoints new chief

Tove Andersen will become the reverse vending machine pioneer's next president chief executive. She will succeed Stefan Ranstrand by Nov. 1. Norway's Tomra makes RVMs to automate the collection of used beverage containers.



West

### Coca-Cola Europacific Partners taps GM

Peter West, former managing director of Coca-Cola Amatil, is now general manager of the new Australia, Pacific and Indonesia business unit of Coca-Cola Europacific Partners. The latter combines Coca-Cola European Partners and Australia's Amatil.



171755164 | Pawel Tolojowski | Dreamstime

# The Rx for Success

How to get employees back to the office

By Bob Tullio, Contributing Editor

**OVER THE PAST MONTH, I HAVE** spoken to several operators and facility managers to get a handle on the direction of the workplace. Opinions vary and one new catchphrase has emerged when referring to the percentage of employees who will ultimately return to the office: 70% is the new 100%.

One note of encouragement for operators: there are many employers out there who want as many people back in the office as possible. When an operator is serving that type of client, they need to do what they can to support the “get-them-back” effort, even

if that means moving out of the typical operator’s comfort zone.

## QUITE THE NEW HQ

Andrew Barrett-Weiss is a senior operations executive at GoodRx, healthcare company based in Santa Monica, CA. His title – Director of Workplace Experience and Build Out the New HQ Guy – is a dead giveaway of how creative the work environment is at Good Rx, where they are determined to bring back employees.

Barrett-Weiss explained the thought process: “If you create an environment that people want to come

back to, they will come. Will it be a 100%? No, it’s not going to be a 100%. What we are finding is that some people want to be here every day and there are some people who want to be here three or four days a week, and there are some people never want to set foot in an office again.”

Barrett-Weiss explained the challenge like this: “If all your work is execution, you can probably do it at home. If your work is ideation, new idea development, creation of new programs and interaction, you must be in the office most of the time.”

## WHAT IS GOODRX DOING?

Look for this story at VendingMarket-Watch.com to see the video interview that accompanies this article.





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In the video, Barrett-Weiss treats us to a quick tour of GoodRx's amenity-laden facility. We need more companies thinking like GoodRx.

Barrett-Weiss noted that as his company opens up, there will be catered lunches every day, the addition



19998185 | Elena Elisseeva  
Dreamstime.com

of a courtyard for more outside work in the beautiful Santa Monica weather, an indoor game arcade will be added with classic 1980s games, a fitness area that also includes programs to enhance mental health and, as Barrett-Weiss put it, "lots of other good stuff to come."

## THE POWER OF FOMO

"We're making it a place that people can't resist," Barrett-Weiss said. "We are really open to anything we can do to drive them back into the office. It is absolutely with intention to encourage people – not to make them feel like they have to come in, but that they want to come in. I think FOMO – fear of missing out – is very powerful."

What can operators do when clients like Andrew Barrett-Weiss ask the question, "How can you help me bring employees back?" According to some operators, that question is being asked on a regular basis. On the OCS side, there are many good answers and as I noted earlier, sometimes it means that an operator must step out of their comfort zone.

Here're some ideas for office coffee service operators to promote FOMO and help clients get them back:

- Double up on your effort to make local roaster offerings a major part of your product mix. Make sure you know the story behind each one.
- Invest in bean-to-cup brewing. If the client has been reluctant to have one, now is the time to offer a bean-to-cup machine and watch your revenue grow. And fill those bean hoppers with premium local roasts.
- Offer the idea of a pantry service with "training wheels." Free beverages to start with and a modest selection of snacks. When that type of amenity newly appears in an office, it is a big deal.
- Seize the moment to introduce premium teas, flavored creamers and cold-brew coffee. If a client is ready to dispose of their pre-COVID frugality, make plenty of suggestions.
- Countertop ice makers are a nice addition to any office. How about adding the FRIIA water dispenser? This stylish little dispenser pays off like a long-term annuity for operators.



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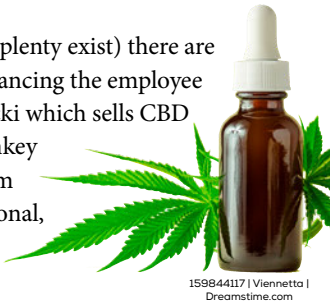
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- For offices like GoodRx (plenty exist) there are virtually no limits to enhancing the employee experience. Consider Vicki which sells CBD products as part of a turnkey unattended retail program from Chemos International, led by Josh Rosenberg, chairman of NAMA. ViaTouch Interactive Media developed VICKI and awarded Chemos the exclusive rights to use the kiosk for the CBD unattended retail market. CBD is all about wellness. In certain offices, it is a perfect fit.



“

You create an environment that people want to come back to, they will come. Will it be a 100%? No, it's not going to be a 100%.”

Andrew Barrett-Weiss, GoodRx

#### LOOKING DOWN THE ROAD

- ColdSnap will soon introduce a countertop machine makes everything from ice cream to frozen yogurt to coffee drinks. Prototypes are being launched soon. The ColdSnap unit is eco friendly, has no clean-up issues and is totally recyclable. For the amenity hungry office, Cold-Snap could be the answer when it becomes available.
- Recently, I wrote about the griin Micro Roaster – a compact unit that brings clean, quiet and AI-driven green coffee bean roasting to the workplace. So advanced, it looks like science fiction – but griin is real and it is coming soon to qualified operators. For operators who embrace it and locations who want the thrill of having the freshest coffee possible, griin offers an exciting solution that will promote a strong case of FOMO.

#### RECOUNG LOST DOLLARS

In January 2020, some clients were starting to put the brakes on spending a bit, forcing operators to sharpen their pencils after years of robust growth. Many of those same office managers are now looking for ways to ramp up spending to make the workplace more attractive to their employees.

Operators need to help them out. This is your time to expand offerings and to start recouping some of those lost dollars, even if 70% is the new 100%. ■

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# Stepping Up Security

**Pandemic ripple effect and police reform prompt operators to ramp up surveillance and vigilance**

*By Emily Jed,  
Contributing Editor*

**F**rom wrongdoers with pry bars and bolt cutters to cybercriminals hacking into networks, securing the assets of a vending and micro market business can be a full-time, costly job for many operators, and especially in the current climate.

The security-related challenges unique to vending machines, micro markets, ATMs and other unattended points of sale are inherent, but many operators report that they have become more pronounced as a result of COVID-19 shutdowns. Fewer people at locations and restricted access for route drivers have meant less opportunity for watchful eyes on equipment. The sudden, widespread unemployment resulting from the pandemic shutdown also fueled an uptick in internal and external theft.

What's more is that dramatic changes in attitudes toward law enforcement in many jurisdictions, heightened by the defund of police movement, have led to a lack of resources and new restrictions on enforcing nonviolent crimes like property theft.

This atmosphere has emboldened many criminals and left businesses more vulnerable, making it imperative that operators take charge by stepping up





surveillance and other measures to secure their assets, keep employees safe and protect facilities with locks and key controls.

The good news is increasingly sophisticated technologically advanced solutions go a long way to stay a step ahead of criminal minds.

#### **EMBOLDENED CRIMINALS**

Rich Morahan of Richard Morahan Associates has followed and written about the security lock industry for more than 25 years. In his view, since the start of the pandemic, and continuing now, thieves have become bolder in attacking vending machines, ATMs and kiosks.

“There are fewer people out around machines, and many companies are understaffed,” he pointed out. “Unattended locations allow thieves more time and privacy to commit brute-force theft and insert data skimmers, so you need physical protection. A camera and alarm system can record crime and deter criminals, but unless you have 24-hour video surveillance and a rapid response team, you better have on-the-spot physical barriers in place.”

Morahan is a consultant for Lock America Inc., a Corona, CA-based designer, developer and manufacturer of high-security locks and hardware,



### **How to avoid ransomware attacks**

Industry technology advisor and Tech 2 Success founder John Hickey warns that vending and micro market operators are vulnerable to the same types of cyber attack that are being carried out on big corporations and public utilities. Vending businesses have critical information and the ability, in most cases, to pay ransoms between \$10,000 and \$25,000, he said. Consider these nine steps to help prevent an attack:

- Update software applications;
- Update firmware on network devices;
- Enable multi-factor authentication everywhere;
- Improve email security and implement MFA;
- Secure Microsoft 365 (formerly Office 365) settings and protect admin accounts;
- Store data in a secure cloud environment and eliminate in office servers;
- Replace outdated firewalls (over three years old);
- Implement a secure offsite backup.
- Visit [tech2success.com](https://tech2success.com) for more information.

founded in 1981. Lock America's drill- and pick-resistant locks, along with its security hardware, are designed to deter and prevent brute-force attacks against vending machines, ATMs and kiosks. They also provide key control, replacing the original low-security shipper locks installed on original equipment with locks uniquely registered to each client.

He added that Lock America, together with its consultants, stays in close touch with its customers and industry associations to gauge worldwide security issues and continually address new threats and concerns as they arise.

"The increase in crude physical attacks has led us to develop additional security hardware and locks, particularly locks for ATM and vending machine enclosures," Morahan said.

In addition to locks and a variety of keyway options and systems, Lock America offers custom-designed and off-the-shelf security hardware, as well as developing solutions to its customers' unique security problems.

"With more than 40 years in security, Lock America remains confident that it can overcome and solve new

“

The increase in crude physical attacks has led us to develop additional security hardware and locks, particularly locks for ATM and vending machine enclosures.”

Rich Morahan,  
Richard Morahan Associates

security challenges,” Morahan said.

#### REMOTE CONTROL

Panoptyc, a newcomer to the industry founded in 2019 in Detroit, already equips more than 1,000 micro markets and almost all of the industry leaders with artificial intelligence software and state-of-the-art camera systems to alleviate theft. Larceny is the No. 1 concern operators have when considering whether to open an unattended location and a huge threat to profitability for existing micro markets.

The industry consensus, according to Panoptyc founder and chief executive, Mac Bolak, is that theft in micro markets accounts for about 4% of sales, which is around \$3,000 each year in the average micro market. According to industry surveys, the 4% theft rate at unattended open markets is double that of attended retail.

“So, that’s not as bad as some may think, but also, there’s a lot of room for improvement and that’s where Panoptyc comes in,” he said.

A micro market equipped with Panoptyc’s smart camera and artificial intelligence technology reportedly achieves 255% theft reduction, which puts thousands of dollars a year per market back in the operator’s pocket.

“With the reduction in on-premises workforce due to the pandemic, some

operators have concerns that their markets aren’t being tended to as much as they were pre-COVID-19,” Bolak said. “Even with businesses still operating, many place restrictions on who can enter from the operator side. In some cases, route drivers are allowed in markets, but management is not. This makes it difficult to keep up with inventory, merchandising and maintaining your peace of mind that your markets are being inspected and cared for as they had been pre-COVID-19.”

Since the early days of micro markets, operators have relied on DVR systems to give them visibility into the self-checkout stores, but much of the legacy video technology has become obsolete and cumbersome to view remotely.

“Issues like complicated port forwarding and limited data compression from existing DVRs restrain the amount of remote market viewing and oversight that operators can effectively do,” Bolak pointed out. “As a result, these days, they may only be remotely viewing and cross-checking some number of their locations.”

On the other hand, Panoptyc’s technology detects the most suspicious behavior at micro markets. It looks at anomalies and suspicious alerts within the data.

“Then we use what our cameras are seeing, basically through computer vision, which is a subcomponent of artificial intelligence,” Bolak explained. “Then, we investigate to determine whether the reason for the ‘blip’ is theft. If we conclude that it is, we provide our customers with the data and the images that prove it.”

Panoptyc’s technology is evolving to stay ahead of theft in micro markets.

#### OPERATIONAL INTELLIGENCE

The one great difference in the way businesses have operated throughout the pandemic is that personnel have been encouraged to work



Lock America's cam, pad and puck locks have more than 6 million key codes.

Images by Lock America Inc.



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remotely, or to avoid coming onsite to a central office location to avoid exposure and possible infection of a company's workforce.

"In many cases, businesses had to cut back on employees, meaning less personnel were available to attend sites and equipment that required servicing or monitoring," said Medeco's Bryan Allen. "Efficiency and productivity became even more important as businesses tried to keep their operations viable."

Medeco, an ASSA ABLOY Group company, founded in 1968 and headquartered in Salem, VA, is one of the world's leading producers of locks. High-security vending solutions are a Medeco specialty. Its locks also protect U.S. government and military installations, at home and abroad, as well as schools and universities, hospitals, banks, homes and offices.



Panoptyc's cameras use computer vision technology to detect behavior anomalies. Panoptyc

"Vending operations managers are constantly challenged with increasing revenue, making sure all inventory is accounted for, increasing productivity, ensuring accountability, managing, tracking collection time, data and location, and more," Allen observed.

"What if it were possible to gain 'operational intelligence' on day-to-day service and collection

activities?" he continued. "How much more efficient could vending operations be if you knew who was accessing what equipment and locks and when? How much revenue loss could be prevented, or efficiency could be gained?"

#### INTELLIGENT LOCKS AND KEYS

This technology can be achieved by replacing existing mechanical locks with Medeco intelligent locks and keys, according to Allen.

Medeco offers Intelligent Key electromechanical cylinders for vending equipment, which are tamper-proof and can control and track every opening or attempted opening of the cylinder.

The Intelligent Key system provides access control, monitoring and scheduling. It's made up of three elements: electronic locks,



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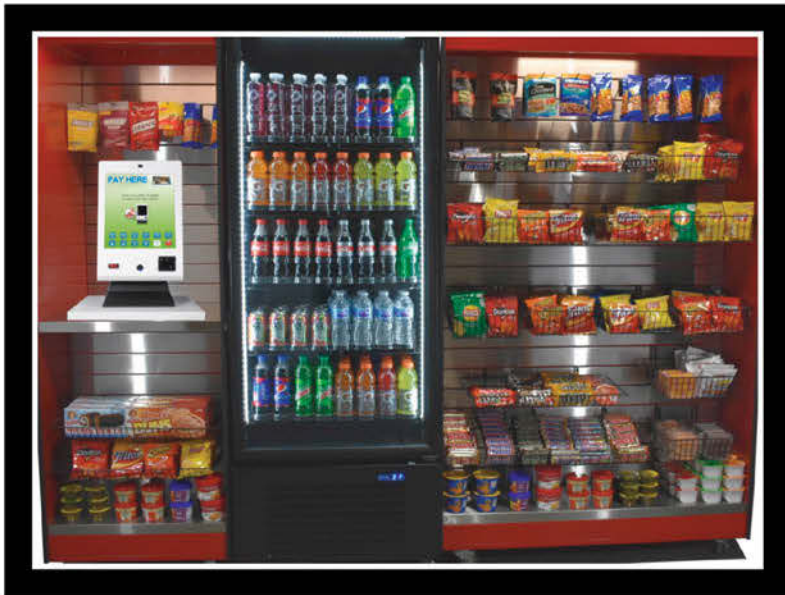
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programmable keys and web-based management software.

These elements work together to provide increased accountability and efficient route management for vending equipment, kiosks and other unattended equipment. The lock itself is plug-and-play. All power comes from the key, so there is no hardwiring. It's as simple as removing the mechanical lock and replacing it with the Medeco Intelligent lock.

Key holders can be assigned only certain locks, and their keys will only work within a pre-determined schedule. Audit information is recorded in both the key and lock, showing a time-and-date stamped record of every event, including authorized accesses and unauthorized access attempts.

Operations managers can respond quickly to security threats such as lost or stolen keys, or unexpected

personnel changes by expiring rights to the access of the affected keys, making them in-operable.

"While protecting your revenue and property, Medeco's intelligent locking system can also help to reduce operating costs and increase profits," Allen commented. "It reduces the threat of internal fraud by controlling when keys will be active and tracking all openings and attempted openings and restricting and tracking access to facilities and equipment and reducing write-offs due to theft."

These smart locking systems manages route-based operations more efficiently by using software to account for time and activities at remote locations. They identify gaps in driver and maintenance activities and enable quick responses through the web-based software by changing assignment of keys to locks. They also eliminate bulky



Shown here is a sampling of Medeco's vending machine hardware and software.

Images by Medeco





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rings of keys and speed up the amount of time spent at each machine, with only one key needed per route driver to access any equipment assigned to them.

“What’s more, key holders don’t have to return to a central office or site location to have their keys reprogrammed in the event that their route changes – either for an hour, a day or permanently,” Allen pointed out.

“The key holder can receive updates to their access rights – which locks they can open – and their access schedule wirelessly via Bluetooth using an app on their phone or other mobile device,” he added. “They can literally receive updates to the programming of their key on-the-go anywhere there is an internet connection.”

This is an ideal solution for remote locations, or large service areas as the time required to travel back to a central office is eliminated.

Similarly, the system administrator can program keys from anywhere there is an internet connection. Personnel do not need to be on site for these activities to occur, which provides flexibility to the workforce. The company’s security administrator can control access remotely, even from their home office, making management of access quicker and more convenient.

#### A STEP AHEAD

Security is a constantly evolving concept that is based on what attacks the criminals are currently using. CompX Security Products provides solutions to deter all types of criminal attacks.

“If they are picking locks, we address that attack with our high-security lock solutions. If they are drilling locks or handles, we have solutions to prevent this attack. If they are prying, then we offer high-strength



CompX products, from top are KeSet, System 64 and TuBar. Images by CompX Security Products



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handles and locks for this purpose,” said CompX’s Larry Springgate.

CompX is a domestic lock manufacturer that serves convenience services and many other markets with its standard locks and hardware, route management locking systems and high-security locks.

The company’s roots as a security leader trace back to 1903 when it was founded in Rockford, IL, as National Cabinet Lock. In 1982, its headquarters moved to Mauldin, SC, and as it acquired other lock companies, including Chicago Lock, Fort Lock and Timberline Lock, the company added an additional lock manufacturing facility in Grayslake, IL.

CompX Security Products manufactures up to 75,000 locks a day and serves more than 20 different markets through its four brands domestically. Its largest customers include the United States Postal Service and Harley Davidson.

“As a designated essential manufacturer, CompX has not stopped production during the pandemic,” Springgate said. “Our experience offering touch-free locking systems spans various other markets and we have the resources to provide this type of product for the vending market, as well.”

He added that a good portion of losses in vending businesses come from internal theft, which CompX addresses with its two mechanical route management lock systems. KeSet and System 64 provide up to 64 quick and easy key updates within the same lock.

CompX also manufactures the high-security TuBAR lock, which is basically two locks in one, with high-security features including precision tumblers and springs that make picking nearly impossible. The company makes all of its high-security keys exclusively in its factory and registers the codes so only the authorized operator can obtain keys.

Unattended locations give thieves the time they need to manipulate low-security locks and steal operators’ profits. For this reason, more than any, Springgate urges operators to upgrade to high-quality route-management or high-security locks that provide long-term defense against attacks. ■

“

If they are picking locks, we address that attack with our high-security lock solutions.”

Larry Springgate, CompX



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# Emerging and Rooted

Technology for vending, micro markets and OCS has a lot more dexterity

By Nick Montano, Editor

**T**echnology almost always accelerates during difficult times, so imagine what far-reaching advancements a pandemic can procreate for an industry that survives it. Contactless transactions, among other hi-tech tools for vending, micro markets and OCS, were at the forefront of industry discussions throughout the COVID-19 health crisis.

Dozens of cashless payments products, vending management systems and dynamic scheduling tools have proven effective for operators over the past six years, and many of these are still in use. *Automatic Merchandiser's* latest State of the Industry survey showed VMS deployment increasing from 51% in 2019 to almost 60% in 2020. Usage of telemeters and cashless

devices managed remotely through the cloud is also on the rise, increasing from 29% in 2019 to 36% in 2020. For the majority of U.S. operators, the pandemic has meant an acceleration in their digital transformation. Following are some highlights of the latest technology developments and an updated on existing platforms.

## SEAMLESS DELIVERY

Imagine a remote ordering solution that delivers fresh, local food and beverages to your clients. Avanti Markets did and designed a new concept specifically for vending and micro market operators. Called SimpleGet, the solution is available now.

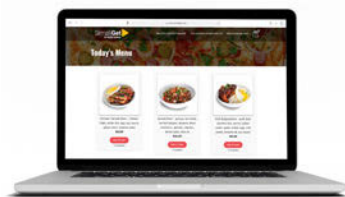




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Operators can use SimpliGet to set menus supporting local food orders that are delivered to secure lockers or other designated pickup areas. Customers place their orders on the SimpliGet website with funds from their Market Card accounts. Additional payment options will be added soon, Avanti said.

According to Avanti, customers will enjoy the benefits of other common food delivery services, but without the fees and tips typically associated with those apps. They can expect freshly made options delivered during a set window, with contactless delivery to ensure a safe experience. Notifications are sent via text and email messages, so there is no wondering when food has arrived. Personalization options for the service will be released later this year.



Operators use Avanti's SimpliGet app to set menus for local food orders that are delivered to secure lockers or other designated pickup areas.

Avanti Markets

"We expect SimpliGet to be a sea change event for our operators who are working diligently to meet changing demands of customers," said Avanti product head Lawrence Lerner. "By providing fresh and local food options at the workplace, our operators can continue to enhance amenities for their clients."

Operators set up SimpliGet locations through the Avanti Markets System, the company's existing management platform. Menus, order cutoffs and delivery times are managed through the companion SimpliGet Manage site. Orders are handled through active and future queues, and fulfillment is tracked by the foodservice provider.

This flexibility allows operators to use their own commissaries, outside kitchens or third-party food services. Menus can be rotated or changed as desired. Deliveries are made to pickup counters or Avanti's optional lockers.

The locker system lends itself to contactless distribution. Delivery personnel place the order in a secured cubby with a QR code. The customer will use a scan code sent by email or SMS message to retrieve their order from the lockers once notified of delivery. Lockers run a UV-sterilization sequence after an order has been removed from a cubby.



If not using lockers, an operator can drop off an order at a designated pickup counter and the customer will be notified for pickup. Avanti said its new application is especially useful for locations with onsite cafés or cafeterias that are looking to limit congregation at ordering or pickup sites.

"By offering multiple delivery options, we have made this solution relevant to many venues," said Avanti president John Reilly.

### THE SWISS ARMY KNIFE

Global self-service technology leader 365 Retail Markets introduced its 365 Touchless Vending, which allows customers to purchase vending items from their smartphone via the 365Pay app. The solution requires no connectivity set up, using a Bluetooth connection to work between a vending machine and the consumer's phone.

Similarly, 365 Touchless Coffee allows operators to automate the in-office coffee experience by connecting directly to the machine via 365Pay. The coffee equipment solution is powered by 365Beacon and BUNNlink, a cloud-based solution with a wide variety of hot beverage options.

"During the pandemic, 365 saw an incredible uptick in usage of our industry-leading 365Pay consumer app. Much of this was simply using the

app to pay at a V5 MicroMarket kiosk or the new PicoCooler using the QR code in the app,” explained 365 vice president of product Ryan McWhirter.

“That said, we also saw a record number of scan/pay transactions using 365Beacon and a rise in café/dining order ahead transactions from 365Pay,” McWhirter added. “Now Touchless Vending and Touchless Coffee join that same Swiss Army Knife for the convenience services industry, 365Pay, where all six of these touchless transaction technologies come together in one easy place.”

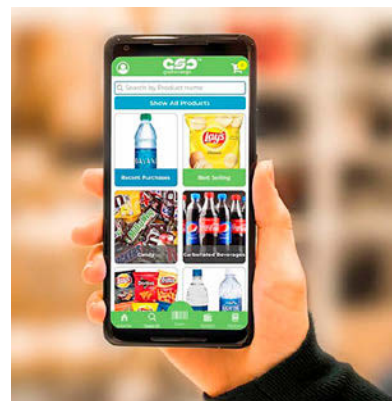
#### NO YOKE

Los Angeles-based Yoke, founded in 2015, is continuing to simplify self-checkout processes with plug-and-play hardware and mobile application in conjunction with software designed to integrate into existing VMS

platforms. In addition, the retail tech company provides business management tools offering real-time reporting and insightful analytics to help operators stay on top of key performance indicators.

The Yoke Pay Mobile App enables the sales and purchases of products through smartphones. It’s a combination of a mobile wallet and kiosk. It eliminates checkout lines and expensive hardware. Customers grab a product scan, pay and enjoy. YPMA works for locations that want the benefits of a standard micro market, but the location size does not warrant a full-size market.

When YPMA was introduced five years ago, many operators at first doubted the idea of phone app purchases being the sole way to pay, according to Yoke cofounder Benjamin A. Thomas. “But now it is the pri-



Averigo's GrabScanGo app as a contactless solution for micro markets of all sizes.

Averigo

mary method of paying for products and it is opening doors that were not open before.”

Yoke is slated to show off some new features at 2021 the NAMA Show in New Orleans. These might include the ability to integrate Yoke

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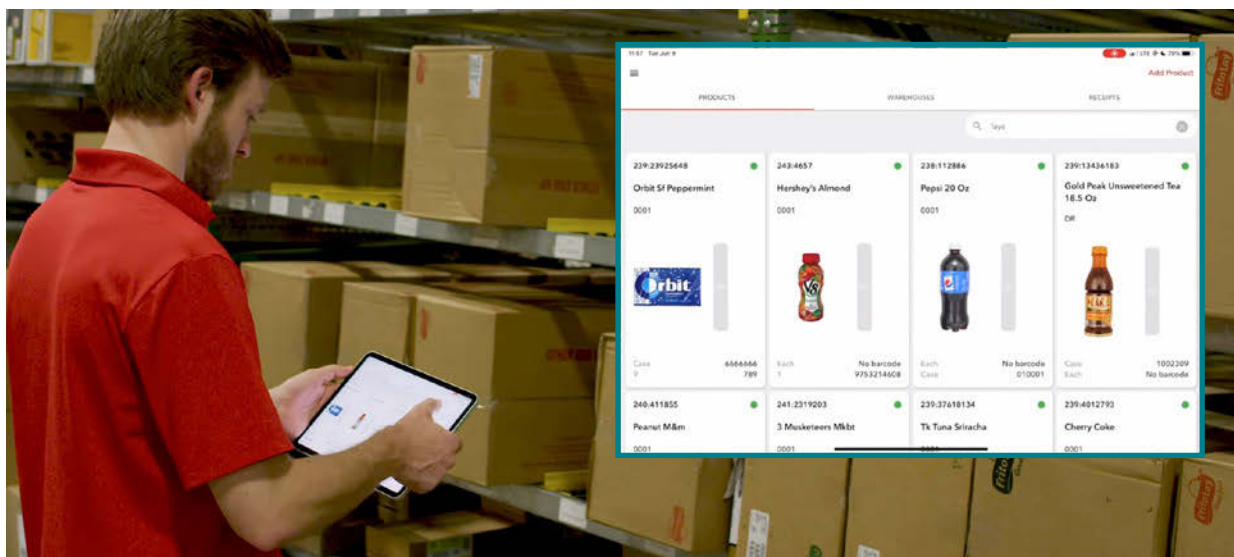


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payments at vending machines and smart coolers.

There are several “kioskless” market solutions available to operators, from both stalwart industry brands and newcomers. AveriGo, a three-year-old Cerritos, CA-based software company, provides mobile apps and cloud-based solutions to micro market operators. By eliminating the need of the physical kiosk, the company said its technology enables the quick deployment of micro markets.

AveriGo designed its GrabScanGo app as a “no-contact” solution for micro markets of all sizes. The app

Shipping in early fall 2021, ePort Engage will accept all digital payments, including EMV (chip and contactless), magstripe, mobile wallets, and bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies.

Cantaloupe Inc

turns a phone into a personal kiosk, allowing shoppers to purchase products in seconds without having to stand in a checkout line or interact with a physical kiosk.

#### GIMME FIVE!

When it comes management software and wireless DEX hardware, many operators go to Gimme Vending. The Atlanta-based enterprise introduced its first tools for vending, micro markets and office coffee service in 2014. Gimme is known for its onsite training programs and 365/24/7 phone and email support.

One of the company’s newest retail tools is Gimme VMS, a supply chain management system for vending, micro markets and OCS. The system is fully cloud-based, optimized for

Gimme VMS is a supply chain management system for vending, micro markets and OCS.

Gimme

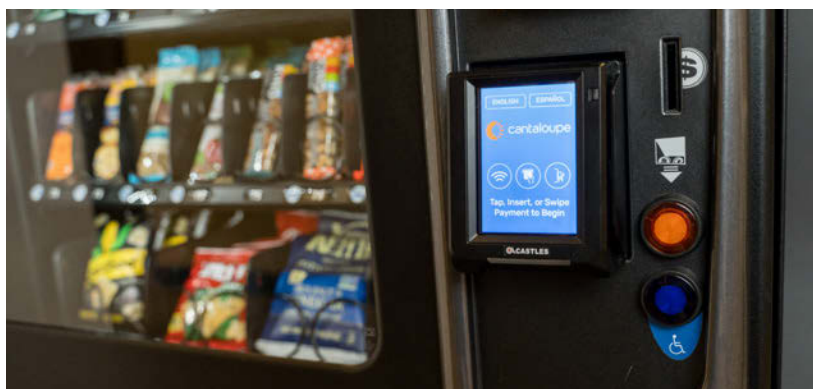
mobile devices and integrates with existing micro markets, as well as with cashless and pre-kitting products.

“Gimme provides hassle-free, white-glove database transitions from existing VMS platforms,” company cofounder Evan Jarecky said. “And our onsite deployment specialists assist with training and support throughout transitions and beyond.”

#### READY TO ENGAGE

Digital payments leader Cantaloupe Inc., formerly USA Technologies, will begin shipping a new generation of touchscreen devices this fall. EPort Engage and ePort Engage Combo are the latest iterations in the company’s ePort reader series. Cantaloupe said the new devices will give retailers the ability to “captivate consumers in new ways and enables truly frictionless purchasing.”

EPort Engage accepts all digital payments, including EMV (chip and contactless), magstripe and mobile wallets. It will reportedly support transactions for bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies. The new readers are designed to integrate with Cantaloupe’s Seed software.





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Cantaloupe observed that the past year has seen the adoption of contactless payments grow to help consumers be safer while shopping and dining out. But those consumers still want a personalized experience.

"We believe retailers across the board will benefit from this next generation of devices," said Cantaloupe chief technology officer Ravi Venkatesan. "The ePort Engage series is a great option for unattended retailers, as well as more traditional businesses wanting to shift to an autonomous retail experience."

## ONE BILLION, AND GOING

PayRange continues to provide the same mobile digital payment platform, introduced six years ago. The operator-friendly system was invented for vending and amusement machines, easily retrofitting on existing machines. It's available as an OEM-installed payment option from select manufacturers.

With more than 3 million app users and over 1 million BluKey devices sold, PayRange has become a leading mobile payment system. The payment network recently surpassed 1 billion cash and mobile transactions. The typical PayRange user averages 15 transactions a month.

The BluKey Plus is a small Bluetooth-enabled device that plugs into a MDB cable, allowing existing payment devices to function while adding a mobile (and touchless) pay-



BluKey Plus plugs into a MDB cable, allowing for existing payment devices to function while adding a mobile (and touchless) payment method.

PayRange

ment method – without the need for an Internet connection. Payment is made on the vending patron's smartphone. Installation takes about 30 seconds. BluKey Plus also integrates with any VMS.

## BEHIND BARS

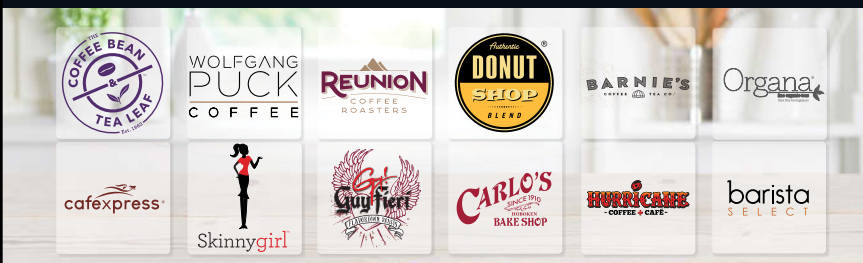
Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, operators servicing correctional facilities needed cashless payment system that could be used by prisoners, staff and visitors. For Thomasville, NC-based Microtronic US, payment solutions for jails and prisons have become its core business after a major payments group stopped supporting its systems in the custodial space.

Microtronic US developed a transfer station that allows existing card-key holders from end-of-life systems to transfer funds to its cards. This greatly reduces refunds that an operator would ordinarily have to send out and or hand out on site. A Microtronic US transfer station could later be converted into a loading station with a few minor tweaks.

By eliminating the need for changers and token machines, the system is designed to keep cash out of prisons, and reduce service calls. When visitors enter a facility's registration area, they can purchase a card from the dispenser and load it, paying with cash, or with a debit or credit card, where permitted. The card is the only currency allowed in the visitation area, where it can be used to purchase items

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from vending machines, equipped with Microtronic US readers. Readers are offline so they cannot be hacked; they read and write by directly interfacing with the card. Reports provide full accountability of both sales and loads using a small statistic key.

While the company's offline jail vending system is mainly intended for visitors, it can also integrate with Advanced Technologies Group's Offender Management Suite for use by inmates. While Microtronics US's transfer station, introduced in 2017, is becoming prison staple, it's also suitable for any location type with similar needs.

### CONNECTIVITY

Connected vending machines require strong and reliable communication applications to process transactions, track inventory, and perform maintenance and repairs. A weak Internet connection can hinder a vending operation, frustrating customers and reducing profits.

A not uncommon practice is to use a router and a data plan, leaving the maintenance and management up to the operator. This strategy might save on monthly fees, but result in lost sales.

There are several solutions specific to vending and other unattended points of sale (jukeboxes, ATMs, kiosks, etc.) to fully manage location-based connections. The right con-

Microtronic US's transfer station.

MicrotronicUS

nectivity product will improve uptime and provide an online dashboard that allows an operator to manage equipment portfolio. Naturally, a reliable connectivity service must be backed by a support program that's available 24/7.

Introduced late last year, neo2 is OptConnect's "next evolution in fully managed cellular connectivity for the Internet of Things." Neo2 is said to deliver nearly twice the speed, twice the carrier coverage and twice the connectivity power as its predecessor.

The distinguishing feature of the neo2 device is failover switching to a redundant network. It's equipped with two onboard cellular connections, AT&T and Verizon, and if one connection fails, the other takes over. The compact LTE (Cat 4) neo2 also has

Neo2 is the next evolution of OptConnect's fully managed cellular technology.

OptConnect

two Ethernet ports and an LED array to indicate signal strength.

"We've taken everything customers love about the original neo and made it twice as good. Customers are now connecting more devices that need faster access to the cloud and to data," said OptConnect's chief experience officer Kevin Dalton.

Downtime is always bad, but as connectivity to the cloud becomes more critical, any interruption becomes more costly, Dalton emphasized.

"Neo2 adds connections, speed and carrier redundancy to ensure high uptime," Dalton explained. "And it is a truly compact, full-featured high-speed cellular router that fits almost anywhere, enabling equipment connections to cloud services. Dual, redundant cellular connections give peace of mind while full integration with managed wireless service makes for a headache-free experience."

### B2B OCS INTEGRATION

IT authority Tech 2 Success helps convenience services companies leverage technology to accelerate and automate their business processes and achieve goals. A new Tech 2 Success service is an e-commerce integration for office coffee delivery services, which enables OCS operators to give their clients the same online shopping experiences they would receive from Amazon, Staples and Walmart.

According to Tech 2 Success's John Hickey, operators can leverage cross-sell and upsell opportunities with an e-commerce solution integration into their backend system. Operators can also automated messages to promote additional and larger more orders. And they can create direct-to-consumer programs, which could be subsidized by savvy employers looking to retain talent working from home. "This is a true B2B e-commerce platform for OCS operators," Hickey said. ■







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of sales is retaining the account. If you are not soliciting new business everyday stop complaining.

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Slatwall or Gridwall options. Counter tops are constructed of steel with a durable powder coated hammer finish. Cabinet doors and bases are constructed out of steel with a durable powder coated finish and then wrapped in 3M vinyl.

Shelving is constructed out of steel wire with a durable powder coated finish. Depth of shelving is 19 inches. Shelving comes with product dividers and product pushers that are adjustable in 1-inch increments. Additional pegs and baskets are included. Countertops have a depth of 19, 28, 35 inches.

GTP will continue to strive for excellence. You see I am not in it for the money, I am in it for the hunt. Thank you for your business. When you are replacing those overweight Micro Markets that are falling apart and cannot be moved, consider Graphics That Pop.

## Better Engineering = Better Products.

# Making a Comeback as They Come Back

**Metro New York's Evans Co. keys into trends reshaping modern breakroom service**

*By Emily Jed, Contributing Editor*



**E**mbazoned in Jim Evans' memory is the Monday that he drove into his Moonachie, NJ, headquarters after the pandemic quarantine shut down New York. It was a feeling of apocalyptic unknown in what has until that moment been the bustling greater metropolitan area of the city that never sleeps.

"The phone stopped ringing. The roads were empty," the second-generation operator recalled. "I reached out to some friends in the industry, and we said, 'What does this mean?' We all knew it would damage us and that things would not be the same, but we were all wrong about how long it would last. Never did we think it

would be over a year, and finally we're moving in a positive direction. But there's a long way to go."

Evans' essential business clients including manufacturers critical to the supply chain and healthcare facilities remained open, so the provider of vending, micro market and office coffee service didn't shut down for a single day to continue to serve them.

As operators from coast to coast know all too well, however, the majority of locations that could switch to remote work did, and many have still not reopened. But the return of rush-hour gridlock and ringing phones signals that the return to the workplace is ramping up.

"People have worked from home for 18 months and not experienced the office and many are still afraid to come back," the vending operator commented. "It's up to each company to make staff as comfortable as possible and we're an important part of that process."

#### **TOUCHLESS IS HERE TO STAY**

Some locations Evans Co. serves, especially those that operate on a national or global scale, have addressed pandemic-related health concerns by establishing rules that allow only a certain number of touchpoints from the time employees enter the building until they sit at their





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— **152** —

“

**Touchless will appease people who are very concerned until the virus really wanes, and companies will likely want us to provide it for the foreseeable future.”**

Jim Evans

Office team members, from left, Yingqi Luo, Rosa Morzan and Dawn Smith work closely with Jim Evans to ensure they do their part to carry on Jim's parents' legacy of providing top-notch service.

Photos by Emily Jlad



desks. As part of the process, a health professional evaluates the breakroom for touchpoints. That includes door-knobs, cooler doors, and vending and coffee machines.

“If the guidelines call for eliminating touchpoints, you can’t eliminate a door or an elevator button, but you can make a coffee machine touchless,” Evans pointed out. “Touchless will appease people who are very concerned until the virus really wanes, and companies will likely want us to provide it for the foreseeable future. Of course, people are going to touch things, but it’s also a liability to employers not to mitigate potential issues and follow protocol.”

The company instituted its own protocol on day one of the pandemic. That includes wiping door handles, social distancing and having only a few pickers working together in the



Jim Evans applauds timely delivery of coolers and fixtures for a Three Square micro market installation amid challenges that have emerged with supply chain issues.

warehouse at a time. It continues to follow these measures for the safety of its employees and customers.

With locations steadily reopening, Evans Co. created a “restart sheet” for its route drivers to follow onsite to ensure a fresh, clean reboot after months of equipment sitting idle. The checklist includes changing filters and thoroughly cleaning machines.

#### BIG APPLE, BIG IMPACT

Evans pointed out that the New York metro area was especially hard hit not only as the early epicenter of the virus’s spread, but also because of the early statewide shutdown and vast number of white-collar clientele that had the option to transition to remote work at home.

“I know some operators in Florida who were barely affected since the state never really shut down,” Evans commented. “Our micro market suppliers – Avanti and Three Square Markets – have birds-eye views and said New York and California were the most hammered, partly because of the mandated shutdowns and partly because of the types of clientele we serve. Restaurants and cafeterias in buildings in

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our market took a big hit. It will take time and be different but we're in the food and beverage business and people will always need food and beverage and this industry has a history of adapting and reinventing and we will again."

Evans expressed his gratitude for the ties he has forged with fellow operators over the decades and how they have relied on each other to strategize and for moral support when times are tough.

"I said in April, a month into New York's quarantine, to an operator friend: 'I'm not going to go out like this,' and I meant it," he recalled. "The industry has survived the financial crisis, Superstorm Sandy, 9/11, which impacted the greater New York City area the worst. We've dealt with skyrocketing interest rates and unemployment, recessions, and we survived. Let



alone coffee shortages, gas prices, oil embargoes. We survive and then once again we will thrive."

#### SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME

"What I think we will see is employers spending more for concessions to entice people to come back to work and feel more comfortable and to make up for closed cafeterias," Evans

Damian Hernandez loads one of Evans' trucks that serve some 2,000 corporate accounts of all sizes in all sectors in the Big Apple and surrounding New York and New Jersey area.

Emily Jed

predicted. "We're already seeing it, but we will see it more."

Fueling the movement at least in the New York metro region is that many tenant leases require food-

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# **The Annual** STATE OF THE INDUSTRY **COFFEE SERVICE** **INDUSTRY**

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This report will provide invaluable information about the performance of office coffee service and workplace beverages during the COVID-19 crisis of 2020.

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service in buildings. When tenants abruptly vacated their offices amid the pandemic, foodservice providers were forced to close. And they are not coming back soon if at all without the onsite workforce required to make their businesses viable, according to Evans.

Since landlords must still fill their contractual obligations to tenants, Evans has had more calls for micro markets and food delivery.

"I visited two places where the main floor was gutted to be set up for communal space," Evans said. "They'll have a conference area, bar, pool tables, gym, comfy lounge space and outside space. They asked us to propose markets for those. Some say 50% of the workforce will come back to the office, some say 70%. Landlords are stressed and are using vacant space to make a country club atmosphere

and amenities available to bring tenants back and help them entice their employees back."

Google is credited for beginning the movement to provide such amenities to attract and retain highly sought-after talent which gave rise to the pantry service concept. And tech firms like Yelp and Indeed followed suit. What's different about the trend emerging now, Evans observed, is that landlords are giving up two floors of a 30-story building to provide all tenants access to a common space.

Locations with less lavish reopening plans also want to feed and please their employees in the post-pandemic metro area.

"One client is bringing back employees in September with micro markets in two locations – one in Manhattan, one in New Jersey," according to Evans. "They're look-



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Evans Co. uses Cantaloupe's Seed vending management system to facilitate prekitting in its warehouse. From left, Manuel Paulino, Jose Genad and Roy Rivadeneira ready deliveries.

Emily Jed

ing at foodservice differently. Half of restaurants in some areas are closed. It will get back but not yet because restaurateurs are waiting for people to come back first. The way locations will want to feed people will be different, which includes a shift from bulk bins that had become popular in pantry service to individual snacks and from cafeterias to delivered foodservice."

Evans' fresh food comes from three companies throughout New York and New Jersey. One produces only salads; another provides meals and sandwiches; and the third supplies muffins and cakes.

Evans Co. is developing an "Uber Eats-type concept," that is modified to tie in with and redefine lunchrooms or onsite cafeterias. The plan is for the new service to involve one person delivering cold or hot meals all at the same time daily, rather than employees

ordering at different times from different places and receiving orders from multiple delivery people.

"Avanti is working on software to handle it and we expect to see it come to fruition especially in Manhattan," Evans commented.

Evans is confident that micro markets will remain the strongest sector of the industry moving forward, and just wrapped up four installations in the month of June alone.

"I see micro markets really benefiting from the post-COVID-19 climate," Evans predicted. "Manual foodservice is not coming back because staffing is not there to justify it. It's easy for employers to provide a micro market and incentivize employees with a meal allowance or subsidy."

A newer opportunity for micro markets that's been gaining traction is at residential complexes where

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property managers want to attract high-quality, long-term tenants to their communities.

“As more and more condos and complexes pop up throughout the New York, New Jersey and Connecticut tri-state region, properties are looking for ways to distinguish themselves from one another,” he remarked. “Our ‘self-pay convenience stores’ benefit their community’s residents by offering fresh quality food, toiletries, snacks and beverages, medicines, batteries and toilet paper literally just steps away from their homes.”

#### TOTAL REFRESHMENTS

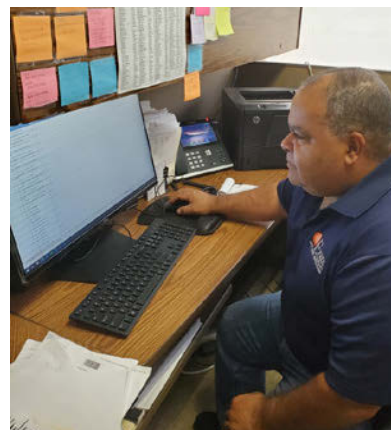
Despite micro markets taking the spotlight these days, vending still has its place and always will, Evans stressed. His company has several hundred in operation, all equipped with the latest technology including

remote machine monitoring and cashless payment.

“We still put out vending machines, all the time. Throughout the pandemic, we installed vending machines in convention centers that were used as temporary hospitals; that’s just one example of the many places ideal for vending,” Evans reported. “Vending is not going away and there are many places where micro markets don’t work.

Evans is also changing the way our clients think about vending as we are committed to better understanding their needs and goals for wellness in the workplace and providing alternative choices to support a healthy lifestyle.”

Office coffee service is another door opener for Evans. The OCS segment took the biggest hit from the pandemic, but providing quality coffee



General manager Martin Abreu leverages remote machine monitoring and data gleaned from Cantaloupe Seed to provide just-in-time service with just the right products best-suited to the tastes of each location.

Evans Co.

that rivals local coffee shops to reward discerning employees and encourage them to remain onsite is still a given for most offices as they reopen.

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## Güdpod Expands Footprint to Launch Compostable Pods in North America



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Güdpod Compostables™ are a first-of-their-kind pod-based beverage technology that is 100% compostable in only 90 days inside commercial composting facilities. Now available in North America and compatible with Keurig K-Cup and Nespresso brewing platforms.





“One office coffee service program does not fit the many unique businesses in the New York Metro area. That’s why we have varied, flexible coffee program options to fully meet the needs of our customers with individualized attention, service and product lines,” Evans said.

That includes Cafection and Starbucks bean-to-cup machines, Newco’s CX Touch pod brewer and the Lavazza and Flavia Barista authentic espresso machines for a full range of coffeehouse favorites. Most are now equipped with touchless technology.

With premium coffee in high demand, Evans’ offers a wide range, from national names like Peet’s, Green Mountain and Starbucks to local roaster favorites like Grammercy Park and Lacas Coffee.

Evans rounds out its coffee service with more than 3,500 breakroom

products, including cold beverages, snacks and fresh fruit, along with janitorial and first-aid supplies, as well as sundries.

#### GOING GREEN

The operator noted that during the financial crisis of the mid-2000s, locations became less focused on the environment, but it’s since resurfaced as a central focus in the breakroom. That’s a trend clearly here to stay.

Evans’ eco-friendly repertoire includes Greenware plates and bowls made from biodegradable sugarcane and Solo Bare cups made of post-consumer fiber, and facial tissues, napkins and paper towels made from recycled paper from Certo Products.

Point-of-use water filtration is increasingly favored for its sustainability by eliminating the carbon footprint throughout the supply chain that is

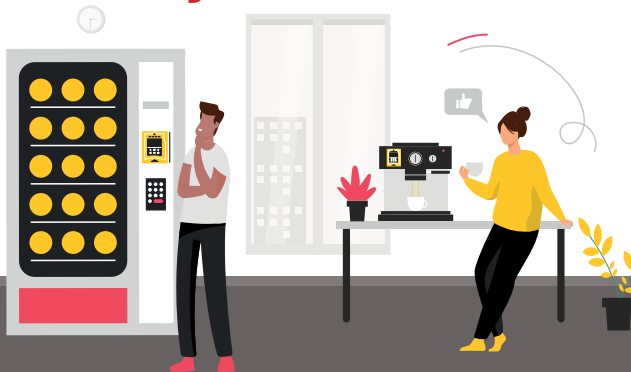


The industry has survived the financial crisis, Superstorm Sandy, 9/11, which impacted the greater New York City area the worst. We’ve dealt with skyrocketing interest rates and unemployment, recessions, and we survived. Let alone coffee shortages, gas prices, oil embargoes. We survive and then once again we will thrive.”

Jim Evans

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inherent with bottled water, along with its ease of use. Evans is an expert at assessing each location's needs and providing the required solutions, including UV purification, carbon filtration and reverse osmosis.

A shining star in its water offerings is the Bevi filtered water machine that allows users to build their own customized still and sparkling waters with unsweetened, zero-calorie, or organically sweetened flavors.

Evans also offers its own proprietary spring water from the Nescopeck Mountains of Pennsylvania.

#### THE BIG PICTURE

Evans Co. services some 2,000 corporate accounts of all sizes and in all sectors in the greater New York and New Jersey metropolitan area, including Fortune 500 companies, manufacturing, technology, healthcare,



Technician Daly Abreu works his magic to refurbish a Newco Fresh Cup brewer to like-new condition for redeployment.

Evans Co.

construction, education, hospitality and government.

The company began in the basement of the Evans family home in Moonachie in 1960, when Jim's father, Edward, who was only 19, invested

\$500 in a mobile catering truck, a novel concept at the time.

A customer request led the mobile caterer into vending and soon after into office coffee service, which was another pioneering concept in the 1970s.

"Coffee remains a big part of our business and made us who we are. It created the most in the way of opportunity," Jim recalled.

Ed Evans worked as the salesman, the routeman and the technician, while his wife Mildred handled the paperwork and ran a home daycare service to make ends meet before the company grew exponentially and prospered.

Mildred and Edward built Evans Co.'s current 16,000-sq.ft. building in 1980, which included a commissary. By the end of the decade, with fast-food options abounding on every corner, they exited mobile catering, but fresh food remained a focal point

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and the Evans operation continued to run its commissary to provide quality foods for vending machines. The Evans also operated several cafeterias and won the coveted business to provide meals to Amtrak.

But over time, with increased competition from fast food, just as happened with mobile catering, the foodservice segment became stagnant while the coffee business boomed. So, Evans closed its commissary and outsourced its fresh food to make way for more warehousing for its OCS and vending business.

Jim joined the family business at 23 years old straight out of college. He took the reins in 2011 and continues his parents' customer-centric legacy.

"We are the refreshment professionals, offering white-glove service," Jim underscored. "We've been refreshing businesses since 1960,

always bringing in what is new while maintaining the old-fashioned quality and service they deserve."

The Evans family's vision is shared by a staff of 30, who the second-generation operator credited for constantly thinking up new and exciting ways to keep its customers happy. The company was forced to reduce its staff as a result of the pandemic but has been rehiring as it rebounds.

"Our friendly and knowledgeable team is committed to serving with skill and problem-solving tenacity, we cherish this spirit, as it constantly drives us to improve," Evans commented. "Some of our best ideas come from our team in the field, solving problems they are up against every day, and these ideas transform not just our own company, but the entire industry. We are a better company today because of the



Jim's parents, Mildred and Edward Evans, began the business in 1960 with a \$500 investment in a hot food truck and a steadfast commitment to quality food and superior service.

Evans Co.

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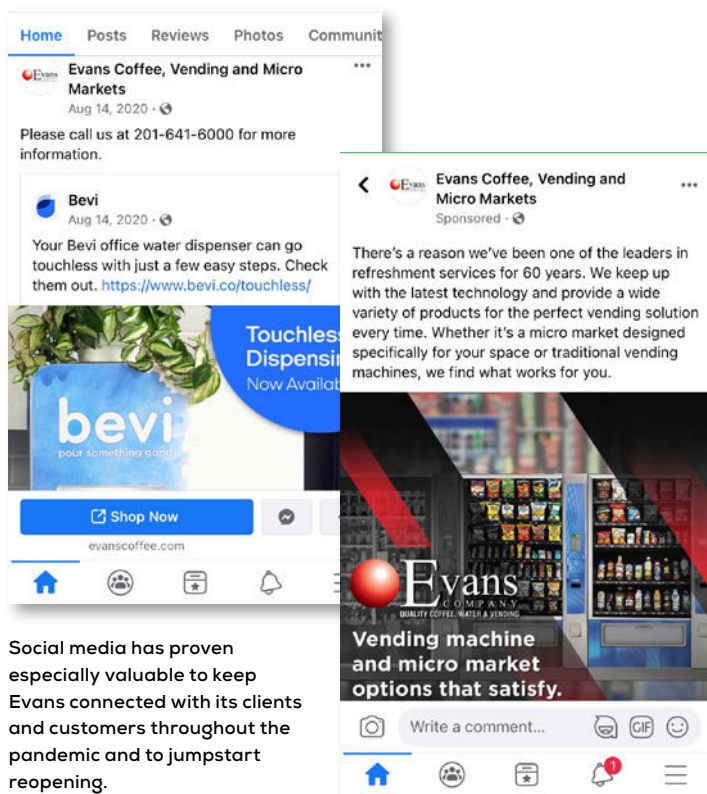
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Social media has proven especially valuable to keep Evans connected with its clients and customers throughout the pandemic and to jumpstart reopening.

people we have, and the innovation we create together.”

### THE POWER OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Evans has worked closely with a New Jersey-based marketing company that over the past few years has to increase its social media presence to grow its brand through awareness and by increasing shares and followers on its social media platforms. Its social media effort proved especially valuable to keep connected with its clients and customers throughout the pandemic.

“We engage our customers; they are our best advocates. We use social media to listen to both our current and future customers,” Evans said. “We love comments, mentions and likes. We are looking to drive more leads and sales though web clicks, mail sign-ups and such. We improve customer retention through testimonials and

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support through social media.”

He added that Evans’ page ranks are up, and its social media content has significantly improved. The results are more leads and more sales.

Monthly meetings with the marketing company help gauge what is and is not working and set short- and long-term goals.

#### TURNING THE TIDE

“I can’t tell you as we sit here this day in June that I have all the answers. But I have the questions that locations are starting to ask for services and products in our space...but outside the realm of what we did,” he said. “We have to answer and provide solutions no matter what it is, but I don’t know what that is now. Their questions will guide us.”

He emphasized that all great sports figures and businesspeople from George Foreman and Moham-

mad Ali to Tom Brady and Lee Iococa have reinvented themselves to come back from adversity.

With 2020’s pandemic challenges rippling from the shutdown easing, 2021’s biggest challenges are labor shortages and supply chain issues, Evans thinks.

“I need more labor – techs, drivers, warehouse, sales, pickers -- after having to lay off employees at the beginning,” he said. “It’s a sign that things are coming back, but it’s a challenge the whole country in every industry is facing.”

One thing he’s sure of is a comeback is under way.

“I love this industry and the people in it and we’re coming back. It will be different and smaller, but the people who survive will be stronger than ever,” Evans concluded. “It’s a positive move forward for the industry and country as we get back to our lives and work.” ■



#### OPERATION PROFILE

### Evan Co.

Headquarters: Moonachie, NJ

Year founded: 1960 No. of employees: 30 No of routes: 9

No. of vending machines: 500

No. of micro markets: 20

Equipment providers: Crane Merchandising Systems, Fastcorp, Newco, Keurig, Flavia, Lavazza, Bevi, Elkay Smartwell, Nespresso, Cafecion

Tech providers: Avanti Markets, Three Square Markets, Cantaloupe

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# St. Louis operation uses new dining platform technology to compete

By Adrienne Zimmer, Contributing Editor

**E**xecutive Dining in St. Louis, MO, is no stranger to change. Formed in 2001 as the corporate foodservice division of Chiles Foodservice, Executive Dining was created in order to meet the growing needs for restaurant-quality food in the work and office environment.

Nearly two decades later, in 2019, owner Greg Chiles opened Executive Dining Express to meet the needs of office and industry environments to

offer the benefit of fresh food, beverages and snacks 24 hours per day. As part of the planning stages for the opening of Executive Dining Express, Chiles opened 25 micro markets in Missouri and Illinois with 365 Retail Markets.

In 2020, Executive Dining began deploying 365Dining technology for its efficiency and compatibility with the Executive Dining Express Market Kiosks. “At that time, we began implementing the self-checkout option, which our customers adopted quickly,” said Executive Dining Express district manager David Porter. “The user-

friendly format and software speed helps move customers through the pay stations efficiently.”

The new dining platform 365Dining has given Executive Dining customers the ability to order ahead, to purchase fresh foods 24/7, and to have a self-check-out functionality. Meanwhile, it has helped the company compete in a highly competitive industry.

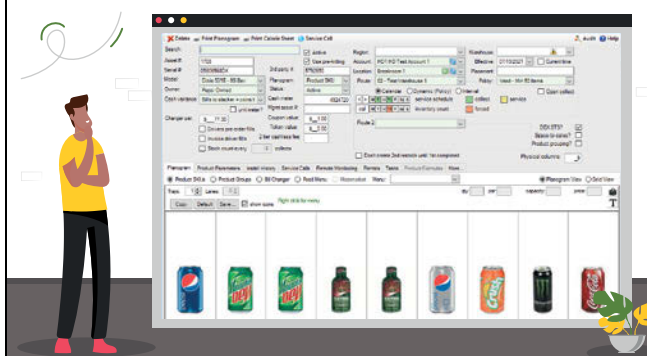
## MAKING AN IMPACT

One benefit that 365Dining technology has provided Executive Dining is the opportunity for the company to bridge its expertise in fresh-made food with 24/7 customer accessibility in the markets. “We are no longer limited to serving chef-driven food from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m.,” Porter said.

The order-ahead option has also let enabled customers to order and pay from their desk or any other

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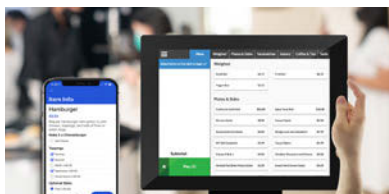




onsite location. "After ordering, customers can choose rapid pick up at the café or have their food delivered onsite," he said.

This has helped improve the company's speed of service, while simultaneously reducing staff and increasing sales. 365Dining's order-ahead system has allowed Executive Dining to continue to serve its customers safely during the pandemic. Porter says that 365Dining also enables the company to engage with customers through the app to send notifications of promotions, deals and customized loyalty rewards.

Although the café business has slowed with most office employees working from home during the pandemic, Executive Dining Express



365Dining transitions from cashier to self-service at the push of a button.

365 Retail Markets]

has been growing at record rates, says Porter, "because our customers are looking for options to provide quality fresh food to their employees that are on site during this time."

Alex Koritz, senior director of micro market operations at Executive Dining Express, noted that with the diverse technology provided by 365, Executive Dining and Executive Dining Express have the tools necessary to

offer our clients a variety of fresh food, beverages and snack options, allowing Executive Dining Express to compete in a highly competitive industry and continue to provide exceptional service.

"From a single micro market to a full-service café, we can offer fresh restaurant quality food 24/7, catering, order ahead, pay by phone and self-service checkout to all our clients," he said. "From companies with as few as 75 employees to businesses with thousands we have the solutions to meet their needs."

Last year showed that touchless transactions, self-service and order-ahead options are customer requirements going forward, and 365Dining technology gives operators that chance to transform cafés in response. ■

# Marketplace

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**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!



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## in THE OFFICE



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### Benjamin Pierce

This is just one of the delicious hot grab-and-go option that is homemade onsite then delivered to our markets here at Spirit Aerosystem in Wichita, Kansas. Our customer has many options to choose from out of the food warmers located in every market. Going the extra mile and creating customized solutions for every meal service is crucial  
#smotheredburritos  
#inspirethroughfood  
#eurest



## in VIEW



### William Mandile

@Handle

The thing that makes a great Pantry or Micromarket solution is the attention to detail. I have been on the corporate side and the independent side of foodservice. The biggest difference is that an independent company can be more flexible and can really give a client bespoke service. I have learned so much having seen both types of companies but if I had to sum it up in one word it would be passion! Marché has a team that has the most of that as I've ever seen... So glad to be back doing what's in my DNA.



## FOLLOWING



### Canteen North America

@canteenusa

Meijer in Hudsonville, Michigan now has Canteen's CRAFTED handmade meals! Our Midwest Dining Team have been working hard to create these meals and make them ready to eat!



### Sodexo USA

@sodexomain

To help our clients attract and retain great teams, we have acquired Foodee an industry leader and innovator in food technology. Foodee provides menu-planning software and exceptional off-premises delivery services for businesses to bring daily and weekly meals to the evolving workplace.



## TWEET & RETWEET



### Kyle Loughran

@kylealoughran

The Legend Food Service team continues to knock it out of the park on the market deployments! Great job David Murphy Kevin Cunningham Steve Celone and the rest of the team in East Haven!



### Crave Fresh Markets

@crave\_fresh

Meet Elijah, our recently hired Driver. He worked with our sister company @CorwinBeverage for 4 yrs and transferred to our team earlier this year. In his free time, Elijah enjoys hunting and fishing. We are excited to have you on board with the Crave Fresh Crew.  
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Have something we shouldn't miss? Tag us or email us at [editor@vendingmarketwatch.com](mailto:editor@vendingmarketwatch.com).





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