

Making a Difference in the Industry

➔ Prepare to be **INSPIRED** by the 2019 Pros To Know page 12



Automatic MERCHANTISER

Convenience services for vending, micro markets and workplace beverages

STRIVING FOR Wellness

TED AND NIKI MORTON have grown a two-person operation into a thriving business covering 90 percent of Maine's automatic retail market | page 28



2020
FORECAST
Operators to leverage technology, customer service knowledge
page 22



The 2019 PROS TO KNOW AWARDS

12

Pros To Know

Learn about the individuals and teams who are raising the bar for the entire convenience services industry

Departments

6 Editor's Note
A Look Ahead

7 Industry News
A roundup of the latest, biggest news in vending

10 OCS Update
New products from CTW

33 Classifieds

34 Social Hubs
What's happening in the industry on social media

Success Story



Fresh, homemade muffins are a favorite treat in Casco Bay's micro markets and select vending machines. Food service professionals bake up batches of popular flavors almost every day.

Casco Bay Food and Beverage

28

Striving For Wellness Along The Northeast Coast

Ted and Niki Morton have grown a two-person operation into a thriving business covering 90 percent of Maine's automatic retail market



Feature

22

2020 Forecast

Operators to leverage technology, customer service knowledge in 2020

On the cover: Ted and Niki Morton are in front of the company's Lewiston corporate offices.

Casco Bay Food and Beverage

Grow your business with Nayax's complete solution



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ONLINE EXCLUSIVES

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

Interviews, Expert Insight & Tips



OCS

A Q&A With Howard Chapman, NAMA's 2019 Coffee Legend



Howard
Chapman

NAMA HONORED HOWARD CHAPMAN AS ITS 2019

Coffee Legend at its annual Coffee Tea & Water Show in November.

Chapman described his experience in leadership at NAMA and Royal Cup Coffee.

VendingMarketWatch.com/21113918



Awards | Nominations Are Open For 2020 Readers' Choice New Products Of The Year Awards

We will accept product nominations until Jan. 16, 2020, from suppliers and manufacturers. Email editor@VendingMarketWatch.com.

VendingMarketWatch.com/21111850

Guest Column | Operator's Thankful List - 2019

Bob Tullio provides seven new reasons why convenience services operators should be grateful this holiday season along with a recap of his 2018 list. Operators have a lot to be thankful for!

VendingMarketWatch.com/21114721



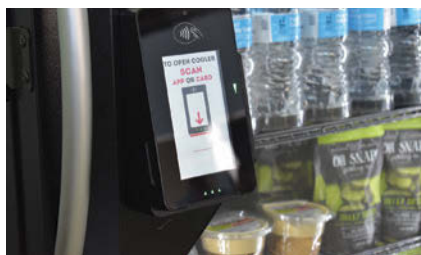
Bob Tullio

Special Report



Micro Market

Micro Markets Move Into Public Spaces



MICRO MARKET NEWS

Security tools, such as 365's forthcoming PicoMarket, enable micro market operators to directly compete with c-stores and grocery markets by opening markets in semi-public and public spaces.

VendingMarketWatch.com/21111372



DELIVERING CASHLESS EXCELLENCE TO UNATTENDED RETAIL

In a recent study conducted by
Michigan State University (MSU),

250,000 vending machines powered by USAT's cashless platform were evaluated to determine the bottom line impact of adopting cashless technology.



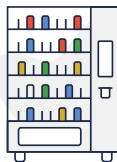
SALES

Over the first 18 months that machines were equipped with cashless technology, **top line sales increased 35%.**



TRANSACTIONS

After machines were equipped with USAT's cashless technology, MSU observed a **26% growth in the number of transactions** over 18 months.



LOW-PERFORMING MACHINES

Low-performing machines, classified as those that sell under \$2,000 of product annually, experienced a **110% increase in total sales.**

Download the results from the entire MSU study!

Visit go.usatech.com/MSUstudy



A Look Ahead



Abby White

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Maximize
your business
potential with
your existing
footprint.

Correction

On page 20 of the September issue, we mistakenly placed Wolfgang Puck with the wrong product. We apologize for the error and have made the correction online.

In 2020, the convenience services industry should anticipate continued change

AT THIS TIME LAST YEAR, FORMER AUTOMATIC MERCHANDISER editor Emily Refermat called 2018 “the year of acquisitions, mergers and consolidation” among operators and suppliers, citing several notable moves across the industry. However, 2019 may be more difficult to define.

For our annual forecast on the future of convenience services, we asked industry experts, including our editorial advisory board, how operators can best prepare for success in 2020. Unsurprisingly, technology will continue to play a large role. Last year’s conversation involved implementing technology to increase connectivity, effectively laying the groundwork for this year’s hot topic: consumer data. Now that many operators have technology in place to collect consumer data, they can use information gleaned from customers’ buying habits to engage with end users and offer customized shopping experiences. This helps foster loyalty with consumers and increase sales, making a big impact on your bottom line.

Like last year, our sources advised operators to consider alternative revenue streams beyond food and beverage items to compete with outsiders — convenience stores, delivery services, specialty grocers — who are encroaching into convenience services’ space. Competition may be high, but as an operator, you have an advantage by already having a footprint in locations where you can easily reach your consumers. What else can you do with that space, and where can you expand?

The better-for-you movement shows no signs of slowing down. NAMA recently announced its public health initiative to increase the availability of products sold in vending machines that meet nationally recognized public health standards, and operators continue to offer more better-for-you items in micro markets and vending. But, as discussed in our micro market trends feature in the October/November issue, operators still need to carry the traditional snacks, foods and beverages customers know and love, which means managing a larger, more diverse inventory of products to meet consumer demands.

Office coffee service (OCS) — and the rapidly growing pantry service — continues to thrive with a large number of employers offering premium beverages and services to their employees. At NAMA’s Coffee Tea & Water Show (CTW), we learned about some of the hottest products hitting the OCS channel. See page 10 for more.

And of course, the last issue of the year features our annual Pros To Know Awards, where we recognize industry professionals who continue to raise the bar. Curious to see who made the list? Flip to page 12.

We hope you enjoy some much-deserved time away from the office this holiday season. As we close the books on 2019, we wish you a wonderful year ahead.

Abby White

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Coffee

Jim Carbone
Tradecraft

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Thornton**
VendEdge

FDA Issues Final Rule On Vending Calorie Disclosure

[LEGISLATION]



The FDA issued its final rule regarding front-of-package calorie disclosure for vending.

THE FDA HAS ISSUED ITS FINAL rule to reverse the type size requirements for calorie labeling on packaged foods sold in glass-front vending machines. This is a major victory for NAMA, which strongly advocated to reduce the proposed front-of-package (FOP) declaration type size from at least 50 percent of the size of the largest printed matter on the label.

The final rule

This confirms the NAMA recommendation on FOP calorie declaration type size and reduces regulatory burdens on the convenience services industry while ensuring that calorie information is visible to consumers. The FDA ruling allows for off-machine signage to share information on products not carrying FOP disclosure to accommodate for changing products in machines. The compliance date for type size FOP labeling is July 1, 2021.



Campbell Completes Sale Of European Chips Business

Campbell Soup Company has completed the sale of its European Chips Business to Valeo Foods for approximately \$80 million. Campbell will use the proceeds from the divestiture to reduce debt.

Campbell will retain the Kettle Brand business in the U.S. and all other geographies except for Europe and the Middle East. **VendingMarketWatch.com/21110073**



Mondelēz Releases State of Snacking™ Report

Mondelēz International, Inc., announced its first-ever State of Snacking™ report, a global study examining the role snacking plays across the world in meeting consumers' evolving needs: busy modern lifestyles, the growing desire for community connection and a more holistic sense of wellbeing. The study reveals the rise of global snacking, underscored by regional parallels demonstrating how snacks are helping lead the future of food by delivering on the spectrum of needs that exists in our day-to-day lives.

VendingMarketWatch.com/21113919



U-Select-It Introduces PUSH-IT, A New Tray Delivery System

U-Select-It, Inc., introduced PUSH-IT, a new tray delivery system that allows operators to increase profitability by vending larger, high-margin products while also creating operating efficiencies. With no coils, PUSH-IT allows for greater capacity per selection and is adaptable to a wide variety of premium products, including different types, sizes, weight and form factors.

The PUSH-IT system is user-friendly and allows for flexible configuration. **VendingMarketWatch.com/21112759**



USAT Announces Results From Seed Implementation

USA Technologies, Inc., announced results reported by Automatic Food Services (AFS) following the successful installation of Seed Pro™, Seed Office™, and Seed Markets™.

After leveraging one enterprise-wide platform for its vending machine and office coffee business, AFS reports that it has seen more than a 45 percent increase in sales per route, while consolidating its total number of routes through an organization-wide simplification of scheduling, delivery and servicing. **VendingMarketWatch.com/21112255**

G&J Marketing Announces Changes In VP Of OCS

[MANAGEMENT]

G&J MARKETING AND SALES ANNOUNCED CHANGES IN

its leadership team to take effect Jan. 1, 2020. Ken Shea, G&J's VP of OCS, will be stepping into a special projects role for G&J and other industry companies. Replacing Ken Shea is longtime industry executive Howard Chapman, former president of Royal Cup, Inc.'s OCS division. Chapman will be responsible for growing G&J's OCS lines. Chapman will build on his partnerships with industry leading OCS providers to offer these products through G&J's national sales & marketing network and their extensive list of customer relationships. Chapman played an integral part in Royal Cup's growth during his 27-year tenure, particularly with respect to its Office Beverage Division.



Chapman

MORE ONLINE



Avanti Announces 10th Anniversary Celebration

VendingMarketWatch.com/21114323

Alchemista Intent On Disrupting Corporate Foodservice Industry

VendingMarketWatch.com/21112585

Xpresso Delight Signs Largest U.S. Deal

VendingMarketWatch.com/21109803

Ben E. Keith Breaks Ground On New Distribution Center

VendingMarketWatch.com/21110750

FixtureliteTM.com



Build more than a breakroom.
Build an experience.TM

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS



Bruno

Aramark Names Marc Bruno Chief Operating Officer, U.S. Food & Facilities

Marc Bruno has been promoted to COO, U.S. Food & Facilities. He will drive the company's hospitality culture and growth across Aramark.



Mehren

Kar's Nuts Names Veteran Snack Food Executive As CEO

Kar's Nuts announced the appointment of Victor Mehren as CEO. Mehren will lead a company that has invested significantly in growth, innovation and superior customer service.



Foster

Michael Foster Joins Sysco As Chief Information And Technology Officer

Michael Foster will serve as Sysco's senior technology leader with responsibility for all aspects of its global technology agenda. He will help shape the company's strategic direction and future growth agenda.



Cameron

Nestlé Appoints Rob Cameron As Global Head Of Public Affairs

Rob Cameron will join Nestlé as Global Head of Public Affairs. Cameron has over 20 years of experience in sustainability, corporate responsibility and stakeholder dialogue.



Day

Hormel Foods Announces The Retirement Of Tom Day

Tom Day, executive vice president, Refrigerated Foods, will retire effective at the end of the first quarter of FY 2020.



McDonald

Costa Coffee Announces Appointment Of Jill McDonald As CEO

Jill McDonald, an experienced business leader who has worked in senior roles across several industries including retail and airlines, joins Costa Coffee as CEO.

YOUR
SELFLESS LEADERSHIP
INSPIRES SUCCESS

"We are very proud to see our BBI Vend Leadership Team recognized. They have tremendous equity in this industry and have been key to our growth and success."

-Robert Taylor, CEO



Eric King
National Sales Manager

Paul Van Vleck
Vice President, Vending

John Seeberger
Vice President, Distribution

New Product Roundup

Hot (and cold) new products from the NAMA Coffee Tea & Water Show

By Abby White, Editor

THE 2019 NAMA COFFEE TEA & Water (CTW) show was filled with educational discussions, thought-provoking speakers and essential training sessions, giving operators the necessary tools for continued success in office coffee service (OCS). The CTW show floor was packed with suppliers promoting new and recently released products offered to OCS, micro market, pantry and vending channels. Here's a roundup of new products incorporating some of the most exciting trends in coffee service.

DAIRY ALTERNATIVES

La Colombe's Oatmilk Draft Latte is a vegan, gluten-free, ready-to-drink (RTD) beverage available in original, vanilla and caramel. The creamy, rich, plant-based beverage has 120 milligrams of caffeine and has an unmatched texture due to the company's patented packaging process using nitrous oxide.

Silk's Oat Yeah Oatmilk Creamer, previously available in 32-ounce cartons, is now offered in single-serve packaging in The Oatmeal Cookie One flavor. The vegan creamer has zero grams of saturated fat per serving and is free from dairy, nuts, soy and cholesterol. A carton comes with 192 Oatmilk Creamer singles.



Silk

COLD BREW BAG-IN-BOX AND CONCENTRATE

Wandering Bear's Bag-in-Box keg is a shelf-stable, 5-gallon, bag-in-box keg that contains 107 servings and is



Wandering Bear

designed for use in a kegerator. Like Wandering Bear's other offerings (fridge packs, tetra packs) the coffee is sugar- and dairy-free and 100 percent organic and fair trade.

La Colombe's

Pure Black Cold Brew Concentrate comes in a 32-ounce bottle and is formulated to make 1 gallon of cold brew (one bottle of concentrate mixed with three bottles of filtered water) to be enjoyed in single servings or large batches. The end user can also mix in their favorite dairy or non-dairy creamer. The cold brew is made with cold-pressed espresso that is extracted from La Colombe's single-origin Brazilian coffee.

ECO-FRIENDLY SINGLE-CUP

Copper Cow Coffee offers disposable single-serve pour over coffee packets in a ready-to-display box. To brew, a disposable filter is placed on top of a coffee cup, and the user pours hot water over it. Copper Cow Coffee has affordable monthly subscription plans offering black or assorted coffees (including Vietnamese coffee, which comes with a separate tube of sweetened, condensed milk) and classic and non-dairy creamers to meet the needs of its customers.

Steeped Coffee's single-serve bags are nitro-sealed to ensure a long shelf life and pre-portioned for optimal taste and strength. Steeped Coffee's guilt-free packaging is made with renewable

and compostable materials, and the coffee is ethically sourced directly from farmers in micro batches. To make a single cup of coffee, the user simply places the bag in a cup (like a bag of tea) and pours 8 ounces of hot water over the bag and steeps.



Steeped Coffee

READY-TO-DRINK CANS

SToK Triple Shot Cold Brew Coffee, offered in signature cold brew and creamy vanilla flavors, packs 225 milligrams of caffeine into a 15-ounce can. Despite the power punch of caffeine, the beverage is smooth, not bitter, as it's brewed "low and slow" — Arabica beans are brewed at lower temperatures and steeped for 10 hours. The vanilla flavor contains real dairy and cane sugar and has no artificial sweeteners, colors or flavors.



SToK Coffee

International Delight has two exciting new iced coffee flavors in RTD, pulling in a favorite from the snacking segment: Oreo and Caramel Macchiato. These iced coffees, packaged in 15-ounce cans, are made with real milk, cane sugar and cream, providing a nice balance of creaminess to coffee.



International Delight

TEA

Tea Drops are bagless, dissolvable tea capsules that instantly transform when added to hot water, eliminating the need to steep. Tea Drop single-serves

use 20 percent less packaging than normal tea bags and are 100 percent recyclable. Offered in multiple flavors (Blueberry Acai, Chai Spice, Chocolate Earl Grey, Turmeric and Matcha Green Tea), Tea Drops are organic and fair-trade.



Twinings

Twinings Cold Infuse herbal water enhancers are single-serve pouches that are easy to add to a water bottle —

simply shake and wait five minutes for the blend of fruit and herbs to brew. The infusers are low-calorie, sugar-free and contain all-natural flavors. They are offered in packs of 100 infusers per case and come in three flavors: Passionfruit, Mango and Blood Orange; Strawberry, Watermelon and Mint; and Blueberry, Apple and Blackcurrant.

SNACKS/PANTRY

Natural foods company **Purely Elizabeth** offers non-GMO project verified, certified vegan and gluten-free products that contain no soy or artificial additives. Its new offering is the **Cauli Hot Cereal**, the first grain-free hot cereal made with cauliflower, a paleo- and keto-friendly ingredient that mimics the look and feel of traditional oats. The cereal, made with a base of diced and freeze-dried cauliflower, coconut, chia and flax, is available in Cinnamon Almond and Strawberry Hazelnut flavors. The 1.4-ounce cups have 8 grams of protein and 3 grams of fiber.

Jif Power Ups Creamy Clusters are crunchy granola bites with peanut butter centers. Offered in Creamy Peanut Butter or Chocolate Chip flavors, these 1.3-ounce single-serve packages are a balance of protein, fiber and fats — peanuts are the first ingredient. The



Purely Elizabeth

10-count box offers flexible merchandising options, as it can be placed on a shelf, or the single-serve packages can hang on pegs.

Rip Van Wafels Protein Singles are the first protein waffle cookie on the market. This low-sugar, high-protein option contains 10 grams of protein, 6 grams of fiber and 5 grams of sugar. The individually wrapped snacks are displayed in a box of 12 and are available in Snickerdoodle, Cookies & Cream and Honey & Oats flavors.



Rip Van Wafel



Luna Bar

Launched this December, **Clif Bar & Company's Luna Mash-Ups** combine two favorite Luna flavors in one bar and are available in two flavors: Lemonzest + Blueberry and Peanut Butter + Fudge. The bars are gluten-free, non-GMO, have 7 to 8 grams of protein per bar and are made with organic oats.

Tosi SuperBites are nutrient-dense, organic, vegan, gluten-free, non-GMO and glyphosate-free snacks that are easily portable. The plant-based protein bars are available in four new flavors: Almond Dragonfruit, Cashew Coconut, Peanut, and Dark Chocolate and Sea Salt.

Organic RealBars are cold-pressed bars made with freeze-dried fruit bits, a protein base including cashew or almond butter, and superfood ingredients like quinoa crisps, chia seeds and prebiotic fiber. The cold-pressing process retains more nutrients from the fruit than other drying processes, and the bars are organic, kosher and gluten-free (vegan options are available). Flavors include Almond Cacao Nib, Chocolate and Pea Pumpkin.

CAFFEINE-INFUSED SNACKS

Clif Bar & Company launched the **Clif Bar Coffee Collection** this December. Each plant-based bar contains 65 milligrams of caffeine and is made with organic coffee beans. The bars are non-GMO, have nine grams of protein and are available in three flavors: Caramel Macchiato, Dark Chocolate Mocha and Vanilla Almond Latte.

Eat Your Coffee's Caffeinated Snack Bites are made from whole ingredients and contain no added sugar, delivering a shot of espresso in every bar. The individually wrapped bites come in a case of 20 and are vegan, gluten-free, non-GMO, kosher, fair trade and contain 65 milligrams of caffeine.

AWAKE Chocolate launched a new flavor of its **supercharged chocolate bites**: Dark Chocolate Mint. Dubbed “snacks that wake you up,” one bite equals a half cup of coffee. Offered in single-serve packages in a box of 200, the bites are gluten-free, contain no artificial colors or flavors, and are 80 calories.



Clif Bar



Eat Your Coffee



AWAKE Chocolate

COFFEE BEANS

The Folger Coffee Co. now offers its Premium 1850 Coffee Roasts in 2-pound, whole bean bags in the 1850 Pioneer Blend Medium Roast and the 1850 Black Gold Dark Roast. Ideal for coffee drinkers who want a more authentic gourmet experience, 1850 is a bold but smooth coffee made with 100 percent Arabica beans. ■



The 2019 **PROS TO KNOW** **AWARDS**

By Mary Stroka, Associate Editor

For the sixth year, *Automatic Merchandiser* asked readers to nominate industry peers who deserve recognition for their exemplary work in vending, micro markets and office coffee service. Our 2019 Pros To Know Awards features individuals and teams who go the extra mile for coworkers and customers within their own businesses, raising the bar for the entire convenience services industry.



Beverly Bowers

Owner, Blue Moose Vending Management

Bowers has worked in the vending industry for 37 years. One of her first projects at Blue Moose was capitalizing on her knowledge of vending operators who are interested in growth by signing on 14 of California's premier vending companies. By working with those 14 companies, Blue Moose Vending Management has been able to close on 1,146 accounts. At Blue Moose, Bowers has ensured new vendors know their rights by providing them with free training and consultation, and by directing them to legitimate companies. She also assists operators with finding and training sales representatives and strives to help family-owned vending companies compete in today's market.



**Beverly
Bowers**

that ensure multi-channel success.

Casanova has a keen understanding of what it takes to successfully launch products in our industry and is eager to build lasting relationships between customers and distributors. She is a wealth of knowledge for brands looking to grow in OCS, vending and hospitality.

Erin Calkins

**Business Systems Manager,
365 Retail Markets**

Calkins started at 365 Retail Markets in 2013, when the company was focused on learning to sell MicroMarkets to locations. The number of installed MicroMarket locations has increased exponentially since then, and in 2017 the company made the decision to configure a new business system. Calkins was at the helm of this effort to house 365's manufacturing, inventory management, purchasing, sales management and account receivable functions. She led the selection, implementation and go-live of the company's new ERP system. As a business systems manager at 365, Calkins oversees business process improvements, business reporting and day-to-day operational needs within the system. Her natural ability to problem-solve has helped lead 365 to many opportunities and enhance its capability to handle increased order volume, bulk orders and international orders. Calkins constantly puts 365 and its customers first by developing processes that help support 365 teams to provide the best and most efficient experiences for customers.



**Erin
Calkins**

Tony Danna

**Director of International Sales,
Three Square Market**

Danna, 30, launched Three Square Market's international outreach in 2017 and has extended the company's reach to seven European countries with more than 150 micro markets across the continent. Each country has presented different challenges, and growing micro markets in each country will require detail, discipline and personal sacrifice. He continues to learn and educate many people and companies in the world on micro markets. Danna is an advocate for adapting to change and all the technology that is new to the industry. Danna started at Three Square Market in July 2016 as vice president of operations.



**Tony
Danna**

Bob Hurley

Senior Sales Director, USA Technologies, Inc.

After nearly 40 years in the industry, Hurley brings a wealth of experience in managing operations, coordinating and directing acquisitions, and leading business development. Hurley's career in vending began in 1980, when he took a job as a route driver with Canteen in an era highlighted by manual route cards and "the four C's": candy, cup soda, coffee and cigarettes. He subsequently held numerous management positions with Canteen, Servomation/Macke and Sodexo, in addition to regional and independent operations. With his operator background, Hurley can easily relate to operators and help them overcome challenges they face in their businesses. He believes that the industry will continue to be challenged by the integration of systems, especially with the pace at which operators must move in order to elevate their customer experience. By working hand-in-hand with operators, Hurley can help them determine if USAT's technology is the right solution for their business to simplify processes and systems. Hurley has contributed in state associations, participated at advocacy summits and continues to bring his knowledge and insight to help operators.



Bob Hurley

Leah Casanova

Director of Operations, National Coffee

Casanova has more than 15 years of experience in corporate marketing and sales team management. Since joining National Coffee, Casanova has tackled the challenges of distribution and ensuring operators have profitable product margins. She takes pride in working closely with distributors, manufacturers, national operators and independent operators to develop programs



**Leah
Casanova**

INDIVIDUAL PROS TO KNOW



Evan Jarecki

Co-founder & CCO, Gimme

Jarecki is a tech entrepreneur with a focus on helping the industry and all the operators in it. As co-founder of Gimme, he disrupts areas completely underserved by current technology and leads customer success and marketing as a product expert. Jarecki's efforts are evangelizing new technologies and tools that will increase the convenience service industry's relevancy to new generations, making the industry more competitive against would-be challengers. His ability to put others' needs above his own comes naturally and authentically. In 2019, Gimme launched its VMS, powered by AI and machine learning tools, and entered partnerships with key industry players including HighJump, a global provider of supply chain solutions, and Five Star Food Service on the Georgia Tech campus. Jarecki believes the main challenge the industry will face in 2020 involves maintaining a variety of product mix in markets and machines.



**Evan
Jarecki**

Michael Johnson

Co-founder & CEO, Yoke Payments

A strong leader and motivator, Johnson is often referred to internally as Yoke's VP of Happiness because he takes a genuine interest in those around him and understands how to keep teams excited while driving both business and personal growth. As co-founder and CEO, Johnson has built an organization that has already made an enormous impact on the vending and micro market industry. He is committed to leading by example, promoting this industry as a place that incubates innovation and growth for all. This year, he got Yoke Payments a seat on the NAMA VDI Task Force to drive innovation with best practices. He has actively integrated Yoke's platform with other industry technologies including Heartland, Stripe and USAT for payment processing, and VendSys, Cantaloupe, VendHQ, and Market Connect for inventory management. He believes that consolidation continues to challenge the convenience services industry, and that operators must properly identify and integrate new technologies that make a difference and keep those technology platforms communicating with one another. Johnson is part of NAMA's Emerging Leaders Network (ELN).



**Michael
Johnson**

Juan Jorquera

Co-founder & CMO, Vagabond

Jorquera manages Vagabond's commercial team and is an active participant in many industry efforts. He serves on NAMA's Education and Government Affairs Committees and has been a part of the NAMA ELN steering committee from its inception. Jorquera has attended every NAMA Fly-In and participates in lobbying efforts to ensure the industry is protected against detrimental legislation. He carries out Vagabond's mission to enable convenience services operators to reduce the amount of time and effort it takes to increase revenue, resulting in better service and satisfaction to consumers. He is bullish on Vagabond's viv commerce platform, which drives growth for convenience services operators by adding new revenue streams to their existing account relationships while requiring minimal capital investment. Jorquera expects the industry to face a number of challenges threatening market share, such as order ahead services, delivery services, meal prep programs and office supply companies. He also views these challenges as opportunities for operators to provide what consumers are asking for and to foster trusting and loyal relationships.



**Juan
Jorquera**

William Kolpasky

Product Manager, 365 Retail Markets

Kolpasky oversees micro market and VMS functionality for 365 Retail Markets and has led many successful technological innovations for the company. An adaptable 365 team member, Kolpasky started as an intern and has become a very knowledgeable source for industry leaders around the world. He cares about operators' success and is willing to go the extra mile to ensure 365's technology takes operators to the next level. Kolpasky has worked closely with top legal experts to fully comply with the changing landscape of consumer privacy laws to implement the necessary measures to protect consumers' personal data. He has expanded the scope of 365's Data Warehouse — an Excel connector that allows operators to build their own reports and dashboards — to incorporate product and sales data into a single consolidated tool that can be used to create responsive reports to gain insight into market trends and opportunities. He is excited about the continued growth of the industry and helping operators meet their goals through the use of technology.



**William
Kolpasky**



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INDIVIDUAL PROS TO KNOW

Michael Lovett

Founder & CEO, Vagabond

Lovett is the founding CEO of Vagabond, a technology solutions provider to the food, beverage and facilities service industry that has helped hundreds of middle-market route operators achieve higher margins by using technology to establish core business principles. Furthering his commitment to the food services industry, Michael co-founded Legend Capital, which operates \$30M worth of food services companies across the country and has made over \$2M in investments into small vending operators. Lovett believes that technology is only as good as the amount that it's used to drive operational excellence. He advises that operators commit to certain steps — connecting machines, respecting planograms, merchandising menus, prekitting, dynamic scheduling, consolidating routes, converting to break room markets and engaging directly with consumers — in order to be in a good place to lead the industry's charge against outside threats. He views traditional convenience stores, e-commerce and delivery services among the biggest threats to the industry but believes operators are uniquely qualified to address these threats by embracing break room markets and upgrading business processes in line with the rest of the retail world.



**Michael
Lovett**

David Marler

**VP, Sales & Marketing,
LightSpeed Automation**

Marler has managed the grassroots development of a sales strategy including lead generation, pipeline management and sales forecasting to drive sales for LightSpeed Automation. In response to the challenge of meeting operators' increased needs for technology in the warehouse for prekitting, his company created a subscription model to help operators afford the upfront cost of the picking system they need. His marketing approach positions LightSpeed Automation as a trusted partner and solutions-based provider for operators' inventory management needs. He has developed a wealth of experience in a relationship-based marketing program that engages both customers and prospects with educational benefits of technology and provides a venue for the exchanging of information within the industry.



**David
Marler**

Sharon A. Peyer

**VP, Business Development & Media, Crane
Connectivity Solutions**

In leading business development and media, Peyer focuses on growing Crane's electronic payment, enterprise resource management and consumer engagement offerings. Since joining the company in 2016, she has played a key role in developing and commercializing Crane's latest connectivity offerings, including Crane's Media Network, "MediaNet." This massive network has grown to over 40,000 vending screens nationwide and now engages over 20 million monthly consumers, while delivering compelling sales and consumer behavior insights to self-service retailers and third-party brands. In the year to come, it will continue to bring advertisers and operators incremental profits, while ensuring the industry breaks new ground with consumers, whose demands for personalized service, broad payment acceptance and immediate gratification are constantly evolving. Crane's suite of connectivity solutions will continue to address the remote management, transaction fulfillment and security challenges required to succeed in unattended retail, particularly in light of encroaching competition from omnichannel retail giants.



**Sharon A.
Peyer**

Brian Pollock

**Area Sales Manager for Phoenix, Rocky
Mountain, & Northwest, Vistar**

Pollock has been a part of the Vistar team since 2008. As a measure of his success, he has received multiple sales awards within the company. He has seen and adapted to the different segments and channels of business, taken on substantial projects and developed serious sales savvy, especially in the college retail sector. The team has expanded products to diversify its offerings as a distribution company and has adapted to the challenges it faces to remain a strong contender in the c-store segment. He believes embracing consumer trends and products that are thriving in different channels is key for the automatic retail industry. Pollock recently became area sales manager for the company and now oversees sales for the Phoenix, Northwest and Rocky Mountain regions. He is eager to make accomplishments for the company in this new role while embracing the exciting changes in the industry.



**Brian
Pollock**



Chuck Reed

**VP & GM for Vending,
Crane Payment Innovations**

Reed has worked in the vending industry for two decades and has developed expert understanding of how full-line operators leverage payment technology and telemetry to drive business growth. At CPI, Reed has driven the development and launch of multiple new vending payment products into global markets, including the company's comprehensive range of cash validation and e-cash products and vending management software. As a member of several boards and organizations, he remains educated on operators' concerns and needs, technology roadmaps and industry challenges. Since workers of different generations have different expectations of convenience services and preferences for payment, Reed believes that growing machine connectivity and flexibility of payment and food delivery options are key for success. Reed serves on the NAMA Board of Directors and is actively involved in its standing Government Affairs Committee, where he ensures vending interests are communicated in Washington, D.C. Reed is a consistent contributor to thought leadership and stands as a well-known, constant voice in the industry.



**Chuck
Reed**

Patrick Richards

**Product Manager - Electronic Payments,
Crane Connectivity Solutions**

Richards has led the development and launch of multiple cashless card readers, telemeters and touch screen products into the North American, European and Australian markets for Crane Connectivity Solutions. With over 15 years of experience in the payment industry, Richards has expertise in terminal development, contactless technologies, gateway services and developing value-added services for customers. He drives innovation into the development of new products and solutions, such as Crane's CORA platform, while ensuring that customers have a voice in the process. He ensures that Crane's products are designed to help customers eliminate complexity in the deployment and management of technology while maintaining upgradeability to protect that hardware investment. Richards believes that the industry will be challenged by maintaining compliance with mandatory technology changes and ensuring a positive consumer experience at the point of interaction. He is committed to ensuring next-generation Crane connectivity hardware includes best-in-class security features to protect its customers' business and consumer data.



**Patrick
Richards**

Laurence Saul

CEO & President, MYX Drinks

Under Saul's leadership, the beverage technology start-up MYX, in Exton, Pa., has become one of the fastest-growing beverage systems. He has brought the company from development to commercialization in 18 months. Previously, Saul assumed worldwide responsibility for Aramark's continued growth and success as its senior vice president for global operational excellence. He oversaw quality, efficiency and performance effectiveness for Aramark's \$10B in addressable costs, guiding the deployment and establishment of success measures that yielded \$80M in savings annually. Saul believes investment is required to drive new technology and that personalized offerings and better-for-you all are core to successful products for the industry and specifically for clients and their team members, the consumers. MYX created personalized products for the consumer and offered supplements of hydration, energy and immunity. It has invested in the planet's future by running its MYX kiosk on a platform that uses a patented thermoelectric chiller as opposed to a compressor coming off and on many times a day.



**Laurence
Saul**

Steven Vosika

**Corporate Recruiter,
Five Star Food Service**

As a member of the Five Star Food Service corporate team, Vosika manages and directs company-wide hiring programs across three company regions, the Five Star culinary center and its corporate office. Since joining Five Star a little over a year ago, he has been a key asset to Five Star's successful growth, and his efforts have improved customer satisfaction and employee retention rates. Vosika has assisted in reducing employee turnover at each of the company's branch locations, attracted world-class talent from across the Southeast and increased company morale across Five Star. He has also worked to improve Five Star's community relations, building hiring initiatives with special interest groups, including veterans and minorities. He believes the biggest challenge the industry faces is attracting and retaining top-tier talent, especially during a time of record low unemployment.



**Steven
Vosika**

TEAM PROS TO KNOW



BBI

Team Leader: Paul Van Vleck, VP & GM, Convenience Services **Team Members:** John Seeberger, VP, Distribution; Eric King, National Sales Manager; Dave Jorgensen, National Account Manager

Burdette Beckmann Inc. (BBI) provides brand information for category-expanding items in order to provide solutions and bring more consumers to its convenience service clients. The company is dedicated to identifying trends across all retail sales channels to maximize its understanding of consumer trends. The BBI team is intentional with new categories that bring more consumers to markets, pantries, machines and coffee counters as they know it's not enough for operators to swap items. Instead, they bring operators items that will increase sales. BBI has invested in incremental coverage options by opening a dedicated Tele-sales office in Appleton, Wisc. Inside sales associates can team sell with field sales associates, provide dedicated or blended coverage, engage in special packs management and cover widely dispersed locations such as hotels and concession directors. Finally, the internal systems on site include Salesforce and a full team of over 15 customer service and administrative support personnel dedicated to the channel.

Canteen

Team Leader: Marc Boman, Division President **Team Members:** Greg Snodgrass, Division Controller; Jerrell Blackmon, VP, Sales, Central US; Matt Hoffman, RVP Illinois, Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska; Byron Hurst, Regional Director, Arkansas; Wes Hiatt, RVP Texas; Chad Kennedy, Director of OCS; Cindy Sielck, Director of Vending; Michael Stoudt, Director of Micro Markets

The Central Division team of Canteen has seen tremendous growth over the last decade, more than doubling their business in recent years. The growth they've experienced is thanks to organic new business and via strategic acquisitions. In the midst of onboarding new business and integrating acquisitions, Canteen continues to keep their focus on providing excellent customer service, which is made easier by the efficient and sophisticated telematics in place in their warehouse. To keep pace with the incredible growth of the business and maintain their premium level of customer service, the Central Division Canteen team makes attracting and retaining the best people in the industry a top priority. Employee feedback surveys, local focus groups, a business growth incentive and employee recognition events are just a few of the examples of this team's commitment to retaining great people and enhancing company culture.



Fixturlite

Team Leader: Steve Orlando, Co-founder, **Team Members:** Troy Geis, Co-founder; Denny Richard, Customer Success Enthusiast; Kelly Tolson, Customer Success Enthusiast; Nicole Willinsky, Customer Success Enthusiast



Throughout 2019, Fixturlite has focused its efforts on on-site visits and mentoring operators in the refreshments space to better their micro market, OCS, and pantry designs and customer presentations with the Fixturlite virtual design tool. The impact? More significant account acquisition in new locations, business retention within existing accounts and increased revenue growth (as much as 40 percent in market locations) within the industry. Through the mentorship provided by Fixturlite, food safety practices have increased across the various lines of industry-related businesses. Through the Micro Market Design Newsletter, Fixturlite shares knowledge and customer case studies to show operators how to better their businesses. The Fixturlite booth at the NAMA Show provided a real-life example of the elements found within a customer experience-based design approach. Fixturlite attended the NAMA Executive Forum to learn key techniques to serve the operators with whom they work. Fixturlite teamed up with the Business Enterprise Program program in various locations across the U.S. to help operators build better, more profitable businesses.



Gimme

Team leader: Cory Hewett, Co-founder & CEO **Team members:** Rickman Ryals, VP, Enterprise Sales; Evan Jarecki, Co-founder & CCO; and Colleen Calahan, Director of Operations

In January 2019, Gimme announced the public availability of Gimme AutoDrive, software designed for micro markets and traditional vending that automates the inventory process from start to finish. Using computer vision that's verified by humans, this software identifies products, their placement and inventory levels, mitigating errors and manual effort from warehouse staff and route drivers. Route drivers can now shift focus from tracking products to delivering amazing customer experiences. With more automation comes an easing of the burden vending operators face as demands on their staff increase. Gimme was also named as one of Atlanta's "Coolest Companies" and a Top 40 Most Innovative Company in Georgia for the third year in a row. It has encouraged the adoption of innovative technology while relentlessly pursuing new advances that will keep our industry relevant and attractive to changing consumer demands and market pressures. The team believes operators have a strategic advantage over the legacy guys in the more integral ways they can connect to their customer, delivering the right product and the right amount of product every time, resulting in a premium user experience.



Healthy Living Vending

Team leader: Kimberly Jenkins, President **Team members:** Ed Boehm, Operations Manager; Tim Awad, Route Driver

Located in Manakin Sabot, Va., Healthy Living Vending is a new

vending and micro market business that Jenkins and her team built from scratch without sacrificing the vertical market strategy of healthy vending. Driven by the goal of "doing a common thing uncommonly well," Healthy Living Vending offers healthy products and service that exceeds the expectations of its customers. By taking on the initiatives of leadership and mentoring, Jenkins and her team have created their own operation manuals and inside training programs for every position within the company. The challenge they face in the company is to continue to grow their customer base while simultaneously building a solid infrastructure of hardware, software and general operation systems. Additional industry challenges that require all operators to improvise, adapt and overcome include incorporating cashless payment options, unattended micro market offerings and the current low unemployment rate.



MarketReach

Team leader: Amanda Puppo, CEO **Team members:** MarketReach Team

For more than a decade, MarketReach has been dedicated to assisting operators and suppliers with the toughest sales challenges they face, including consistently filling sales pipelines and closing deals. Puppo and her team are looking forward to growing the nanomarket niche with clients and technology providers that have figured out how to make smaller markets successful. MarketReach believes there is a large, untapped opportunity for operators to serve smaller markets across the country. The company strives to be forward-thinking in the way it uses technology and digital marketing to help clients increase sales, while also offering appointment-setting to help operators and suppliers get in front of their best prospects. Under the leadership of Puppo, the MarketReach team recently added new marketing services to help increase client brand awareness and create a demand generation formula for inbound leads. By using a multi-channel approach, the team has been able to reach a larger audience with the right message at the right time, delivering more value to clients.

TEAM PROS TO KNOW

Nayax

Team leader:

Dave Berlin,
Customer Support
Manager **Team**

members:

Josh
McMillan, Lead
Account Manager;
Fernando Flores,
Technical Account
Manager; Matt

Huff, Technical Account Manager; Taylor Fletcher,
Technical Account Manager; Zach Greenberg, Technical
Account Manager; Alex Vaserman, Technical Sales
Director; Amerra Walton, Technical Account Manager;
Aramis Alexander, Technical Account Manager; Candice
Winkler, Technical Account Manager; Duane Davis,
Technical Account Manager; Ty Griffin, Technical Account
Manager; Hien Pham, Technical Account Manager;
Joanne Dalfonzo, Set-up Support; Caitlin Williams, Set-up
Support; Anastasia Vaserman, Set-up Support
Nayax's technical support team ensures its payment platform
becomes a pivotal piece in its customers' operational success.
This team is dedicated to providing best-in-class product,
support and customer service to Nayax customers. Bridging



the gap between
development and
the operators, the
support team con-
veys the on-the-
ground operational
realities to Nayax's
extensive R&D
teams. By work-
ing with Nayax's
development team

to resolve issues and implement future requests, the support
team makes the customers' voice heard, keeping them at the
heart of the company's operations. The team offers proac-
tive training sessions on new features and diligently works to
create personal connections with customers to give them the
most value of Nayax's platform solution. To make sure that
all Nayax users get the personal attention they deserve, the
company continues to scale its support team as its customer
base expands, providing trained and knowledgeable support
members to answer the phone every time it rings, allowing for
any issue to be dealt with promptly. The support team mem-
bers have a knowledge of different machine types, are experts
on EMV and communication specifics, and understand new
developments in the unattended retail landscape.

Pot O' Gold Coffee Service

Team Leader:

Larry Jones,
President **Team Members:**
Laurie Sergeeff, Owner; Alex
Sergeeff, Sales Manager;
Blake Jones, Sales/Marketing
Specialist

Pot O' Gold Coffee Service,
a family-run business in the
greater Seattle area, is the larg-
est independent OCS provider
in Washington. The company,
which still pushes itself to grow
and innovate, continuously finds ways to ensure its ser-
vice is the best in town. The leadership believes in treating
every customer, regardless of the size of account, just like
he or she is part of the Pot O' Gold family. Pot O' Gold was



selected this year as a winner
of Seattle Business Magazine's
Family Business Award. To
ensure it tackles the challenge
of choosing a solid lineup for its
equipment, the company keeps
up with industry news and con-
sistently checks in with differ-
ent equipment manufacturers on
the new brewers coming to the
industry. Technicians at Pot O'
Gold work closely with manu-
facturers' technicians to ensure
they master the equipment and
are committed to responding

within two hours to service calls so the customer can get
coffee as soon as possible. Customer service is what this
OCS provider is all about.



Tahoe Vending/Sonoran Coffee and Food Services

Team Leader: Jarrad Duxbury, CEO **Team Members:** Tahoe Vending: Diana Koether, CFO; George Caruso, CTO; Colin A. Watley, CMO; Annette Sundland, Branch Administrator; Pierre Sundland, Sales Director; Scott SantAmour, Database Administrator. Sonoran Coffee and Food Services: Jose Palafox, Branch Manager; Carlos Garcia Rodriguez, Service Tech, Nathan Middaugh, Lead Driver

Tahoe Vending and Sonoran Coffee and Food Services is a young, aggressive company committed to a superior customer experience. Launched in Northern Nevada in July 2018, the company now has over 600 points of sale with more than \$4M in annual revenue. From the onset, the company

made the decision to purchase its own beverage vending equipment, enabling its leadership to greatly expand the variety of drinks offered to clients. The company became a Canteen franchise in order to receive the best in market pricing for products and equipment, allowing for further growth. They are USConnect affiliates and Randolph Sheppard Act Operators, and they work with all the major vending management companies. The company looks at secondary sources of revenue — advertising, water delivery and distribution — to help the bottom line and expand offerings to customers. They believe in offering diversity in products, including fresh food from a local baker and other small and local suppliers. The leadership says the biggest challenge for the company will be continuing to add accounts and broaden product offerings while maintaining the highest level of customer support.

Translucent LLC

Team leader: Patty Closser, Head Coach; Steve Closser, Head Integrator. **Team members:** Patrick Closser, CFO; Bailey Lang, Marketing Guru; Stephanie Closser, Merchandising/Logistics Specialist; Kathy Baumstark, Construction Expert; Denis Baumstark, Construction Expert; Alec Closser, Assistant Head Coach; Rachel Graef, Graphic Design Specialist, Herb Williams, Construction Coach.

Translucent LLC, in Kansas City, Mo., makes a difference for the better in the industry through the team's actions, influence, education and experience. They collect the data that proves changing the approach to product selection in micro market and pantry services results in increased profits. Translucent leadership believes that a perpetual push for new ideas within the industry will be key in 2020, especially in terms of creativity in the design and use of space in micro markets. Maintaining a quality supply chain system is another challenge as new, interesting products and services will help keep customers engaged. As the outside nominator states, the team is "pure awesomeness." ■



2020 FORECAST

**Operators to leverage technology,
customer service knowledge in 2020**

By Abby White, Editor

Many operators in convenience services have invested in technology that has enabled the industry to deliver a better experience to clients and customers. As 2019 draws to a close, outside competitors continue to move into areas traditionally served by vending, micro markets and office coffee service (OCS). In addition to the increased availability of food and beverage delivery and pickup services, we're seeing expanded offerings from convenience stores, drug stores and specialty grocers. Everybody is trying to win the race of giving consumers exactly what they want, when they want it.

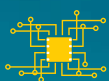
While these competitors certainly pose a threat to business owners in convenience services, they also present an opportunity as operators have the unique advantage of already being on-site at the workplace.

"We spend more time at work than home or play, so the ability to deliver convenience across new categories is a great way to differentiate, capture new dollars and reduce the demand on traditional product margin," explained Josh Rosenberg, CEO of

PLNTSOP, a wellness company focused on developing, marketing and distributing CBD-infused products.

As the convenience services industry continues to evolve, successful operators will need to adopt new strategies and new product offerings to encourage loyalty and customer retention in the long run. We asked the *Automatic Merchandiser* editorial advisory board and other industry experts how operators can stay competitive in 2020.

TECHNOLOGY UPGRADES



REMAIN ESSENTIAL

When it comes to implementing technology, you're never truly finished. Fortunately, once you have all your machines running on a connected network, it's easier to incorporate the next innovative solution to increase efficiency, grow customer engagement and, ultimately, boost revenue.

"Technology continues to rapidly change the landscape of our industry," said C.J. Recher, vice president of marketing at Five Star Food Service. "[This] technology [is] focused on making commerce easier and more convenient — giving customers what they want, when and how they want it, at a fair price."

"Growing machine connectivity will remain an important strategy to enhance efficiency and payment options," added Chuck Reed, vice president and general manager, vending, Crane Payment Innovations (CPI).

Paul Bardy, director of guest experience and insight analytics at Continental, said they continually work on improving and increasing customer engagement through technology — primarily mobile and tablet-based platforms — to lift sales.

Relying upon scannable QR codes and real-time customer feedback via tablets, analysts can quickly examine data so the purchasing and customer service teams can expeditiously order, restock and merchandise the items customers crave. In 2020, data analysts at Continental will be using a new business intelligence platform to help the company's teams make informed real-time decisions, plan for culinary innovations and procure top-trending packaged products. By using this platform, the company anticipates faster report-out and response to stales, bestsellers and more, which translates to better managing its locations.

"In the field, guest experience teams will engage customers and educate them about the flexibility of a digital retail experience that utilizes the company's mobile app and [the] variety of payment options available, including all credit-debit cards and contactless payment like Google Wallet, Apple Pay and more," said Brent Basch, Continental's vice president of market operations. "The company is increasingly focused on kiosk promotions [such as] enter-to-win programs based on guests' purchasing top-selling products."

Rosenberg said that he believes many of these technologies will decrease in cost, making them available to a wider variety of businesses, particularly smaller operations.

"Equipment technology will continue to come down in cost, bring wider adoption and drive down operating expenses," he said. "Technology will continue to enable topline sales growth through leveraging AI, merchandising data, and equipment to improve space to sales, right product/right price and velocity, all driving efficiency and consumer retention."

Nowadays, operators can analyze data from their accounts and quickly implement changes to avoid spoilage or loss, which is essential if they offer freshly prepared foods in their vending

machines and micro markets. Operators can effectively manage everything from decreasing or eliminating weak-selling items to consolidating delivery routes.

"As an operator we will continue to look at our account profitability and work diligently to shrink the tail on underperforming assets to be redeployed, repositioned or change in terms to maintain our desired threshold on performance," Rosenberg added. "Today we have a coffee, vending, and a market route all going to the same business location. These will be consolidated for efficiency and scale to deliver all from one truck."

USING DATA TO CREATE CUSTOMIZED EXPERIENCES



Consumers want to feel like they're getting an elevated, customized experience every time they

shop. Operators who have invested in implementing technology to better manage their businesses are likely to have the necessary data to deliver this customized experience to end users.

"If you think about the trajectory of vending, we went from mass distribution to what we could call 'mass customization,'" said Maeve McKenna Duska, chief marketing officer at USA Technologies, Inc. "We've been able to get more specific in the products and services that we provide to customers. What's driving this is data; our operators have lots of data now. But it's also the consumer — they're requiring it. Consumers want to feel like their experience is customized and that the brands being offered are brands that they see as valuable. They're not willing to compromise just for convenience's sake, which is something that I think is a new trend."

Through data collection and analysis, Duska said that operators can provide hyper-customization to consumers by pinpointing the individual customer profiles in each of their accounts. This

can be as simple as targeting separate products for different areas of a business, such as white-collar office and blue-collar manufacturing, or as sophisticated as launching a loyalty program that tracks what a customer buys and offers promotions based on those purchases.

“Now, rather than just following intuition, we have empirical data that supports the different product mixes of these different accounts,” Duska continued. “I do think that’s something we’ve all been dabbling in, and that will start to pick up momentum in 2020.”

According to Bardy, operators should use data gleaned from what customers purchase to deliver a best-in-class experience, ultimately boosting sales.

“QR code technology gives us a wealth of data that sharpens our focus on the latest culinary preferences and consumer buying habits,” Bardy said. “It also helps validate what new products and fresh food items we’re testing.”

EXPECT EMPLOYER-PAID SERVICES TO GROW



Many operators have added pantry service to their OCS routes based on client demand to offer premium paid amenities to their employees. This trend is unlikely to slow down as long as unemployment is low and the economy is strong.

“Employer paid services — pantry, OCS — continue to grow with a strong contribution of money per employee in order for employers to sustain culture, retention and recruitment efforts,” Rosenberg said.

Jim Carbone, vice president of strategic development at Tradecraft Outfitters, a division of Canteen, said that competitive employers are providing — and paying for — pantry service and elevated beverage options such as loose-leaf teas, craft coffee and draft beverages.

“Draft beverages — cold brew coffee, kombucha and kegerators in offices



Now, rather than just following intuition, we have empirical data that supports the different product mixes of these different accounts.”

Maeve McKenna Duska, chief marketing officer at USA Technologies

— are very popular with millennials, and that is driving one of the most profitable parts of the convenience services business, which is pantry programs, or free snacks and beverages.” Carbone said. “Bringing craft coffee into these offices helps not only attract talent, but also retain talent.”

Carbone said that he’s seeing an increasing number of employers going the extra mile in premium services by offering in-house baristas in the workplace.

“Who would have ever thought we’d see baristas on staff making incredible quality coffee drinks for employees for free? I put programs like that in place, where there are literally baristas on staff from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m., serving an espresso or latte or cappuccino, keeping employees in place instead of going down the street to Starbucks,” Carbone said. “There’s a lot of money in it. Everybody’s looking for something better and they’re willing to spend the money.”

Steve LaPorte, president, refreshment services group at Continental, said that his company plans to partner with clients to identify the best employee benefits programs highlighted by pantry services and OCS.

“It’s something we’re trying to capitalize on this year,” LaPorte said.

NEW REVENUE STREAMS ABOUND



Operators who have integrated VMS software are now looking at their network of connected machines and wondering how they can drive more value to their business.

Recher said that in 2020, Five Star plans to leverage much of the technology it’s invested in to maximize its potential for the company.

“Specifically in vending, we are deploying 4,000 additional USAT ePort Interactive card readers with digital screens to replace traditional card readers that will be redeployed to lower-volume, cash-only machines,” Recher explained, noting that this will allow the company to enable machines with cashless payment technology and leverage digital advertisements and promotions to drive incremental sales.

Duska said that she believes 2020 will mark a year of interesting incremental growth opportunities for operators.

“In addition to ads offered by supplier partners, we have operators who are negotiating their own advertising deals directly with CPG companies that they have relationships with, and even local businesses,” Duska explained.

“Getting regional and local advertising from a non-competing business down the road? There’s ad dollars there and there’s value there. People are already getting creative — they’re already rolling these advertisements out and they’re getting incremental revenue from it.

“And then you have the positive impact of running ads on the sales of products in the machine,” she continued. “We’re showing that there’s definitely an incremental lift in products that you advertise. So even if you don’t have an advertising deal, an operator can advertise [a product offered in vending or micro markets] and see a lift in sales.”

IT'S TIME — TO — SHINE



Enter Your Product into the Products of the Year Competition

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

Product entry deadline: January 16, 2020

If you launched a NEW vending, OCS or micro market product in 2019 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 no later than January 16, 2020. If you have any questions, please call Abby White, editor, at 615-358-7132.

Please note that all products considered for the award MUST have been launched in 2019.



Automatic | **Vending**
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Duska said that enterprising operators should also acknowledge the tremendous opportunity in the fact that today's consumers are conditioned to serve themselves beyond food and beverage.

"Operators can start looking outside of their traditional food, snack and beverage business model to other non-traditional vending," she said. "Companies have diversified with micro markets, pantry services and OCS, but they're still very focused within food, snack and beverage. I think there's an opportunity for these companies to take a look at things like non-traditional vending — electronics, beauty and apparel."

Rosenberg agreed that operators should consider revenue streams beyond food and beverage, especially as new players enter the convenience services space through existing platforms to expand their retail presence.

"Innovation in product offering is the most critical means for an operator to stay healthy," Rosenberg said. "This means diversity beyond just snack, beverage, food and coffee. Operators who diversify through new product categories — electronics, cosmetics, CBD — will find new lines of revenue."

"Convenience stores are creeping into our space with retail offerings," Thornton added. "We must adapt and become retailers and become good at it."

For operators who are concerned about competition from delivery services, fast-casual restaurants or specialty grocers, they can encourage customer loyalty by providing superior customer service.

"Local high-end grocers, pop-in restaurants, DoorDash, Uber Eats and other delivery services like Snack Nation are on our radar from a competitive standpoint," said LaPorte. "Our answer to all to new competition inside our industry is making sure we're engaged with the customer the



[Innovation] means diversity beyond just snack, beverage, food and coffee. Operators who diversify through new product categories — electronics, cosmetics, CBD — will find new lines of revenue."

Josh Rosenberg, CEO of PLNTSOP

right way as often as possible, creating long-term personal relationships."

BETTER-FOR-YOU EXPANDS IN 2020



Consumers are likely to continue to demand better-for-you offerings in 2020, and those with restricted diets will turn elsewhere if they can't find what they want in vending or micro markets.

"Eating habits are continuing to change in the marketplace," said Thornton. "Consumers are shifting to healthier choices and away from sugar snacks and beverages. While these categories remain the largest share of business, a shift is occurring and will continue. NAMA's public health initiative will likely speed up the process of offering better-for-you options. [In 2020] we will be offering more better-for-you items and implementing NAMA's public health initiative."

As Thornton pointed out, embracing NAMA's public health commitment to increase the percentage of better-for-you offerings to 33 percent in the nation's vending machines (announced by the organization in October 2019) can help remove the misperception that vending machines only offer "junk" food.

"NAMA's new partnership with organizations focused on increasing healthier food options should be an inflection point for our industry in removing the inaccurate claims that vending is causing obesity," Reed added. "With the industry now on our

front foot on this issue, we can prove that we are part of the solution."

Of course, none of this would make sense if it didn't help an operator's bottom line, and Duska noted that NAMA's public health initiative wouldn't have been possible if NAMA didn't have the data from operators to back it up.

"NAMA's healthier initiative in partnership with the FDA is all data-based," she said. "That would not even have been possible 10 years ago. Now they're going to government and association stakeholders and saying, 'Here's something we want to do — we want to provide healthier choices for people. Let's take a look at what we're currently offering and make some meaningful changes and see how that impacts consumer behavior.' We have data now and it opens the door to a world of new initiatives and revenue streams."

LOOKING FURTHER

2020 Another trend operators have been curious about is CBD. While some may question whether CBD-infused beverages and food should be offered in the workplace, many operators are looking into it as consumers grow more accepting of CBD products.

"We are actively researching CBD products and where they would fit in our offerings," Thornton said.

While artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning may have seemed like far-off concepts for this industry a few years ago, they're start-

ing to be put into practice to help operators better identify trends and respond to changes in their accounts. Duska said that AI is still in the investigative phase, but operators are interested in finding practical applications for this technology.

“There’s a lot of interest but not a lot of commercialization of these AI solutions,” she said. “I think that will happen in 2020, particularly toward the end of the year as we see results of extended field trials and those results motivate others to move forward. I think those results, combined with the consumers’ drive and desire for hyper-customization, are going to start pushing people towards a machine learning business model. Being able to deliver a hyper-customized solution can become very manual and time-consuming to deliver effectively – it’s too hard

to scale without automation. This is what AI will offer.”

IN CONCLUSION

While 2020 is clearly ripe with opportunity for operators, there are many threats to the convenience services industry beyond delivery services, convenience stores, restaurants and Amazon Go. Sometimes the biggest threats are closest to home.

“The greatest threat to convenience services is our race to the bottom,” Rosenberg said. “As operators have experienced tremendous growth, the industry has started to compete against ourselves.”

Rosenberg added that the convenience services industry is well-positioned due to the strong workforce, proximity retail and technology advancements enabling a more diverse product offering. But the cost of capi-

tal, labor and the influx of the uberization of modern retail will challenge industry profitability.

“The risk of a softening economy could add to the cost pressure operators face as they try to improve bottom-line performance,” he said.

If the economy experiences a downturn in 2020, operators who are quick to react to a rapidly changing market will have a better chance of weathering this storm.

“One of the greatest threats to our industry is — and has been for the past five years — the rate at which we adapt to the changes in the business environment,” Recher said. “If we as individual operators and as a collective industry don’t adapt quickly enough, we risk losing potential incremental growth opportunities as well as allowing external competition to creep into the space.” ■

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STRIVING FOR WELLNESS ALONG THE NORTHEAST COAST

Ted and Niki Morton have grown a two-person operation into a thriving business covering 90 percent of Maine's automatic retail market

By Mary Stroka, Associate Editor

Just about 30 miles from the Atlantic Ocean inlet it's named after, Casco Bay Food and Beverage is headquartered in Lewiston, Maine, nestled in the beautiful state that is known for its rocky coastline and cold winters. Ted Morton, the company's president and CEO, grew up on the coast of Casco Bay. Niki Morton, his wife, who hails from the Midwest, joined the company as executive vice president in February 2017.

A "die-hard Mainer," Ted's grandchildren are the fourth generation of his family that has been in the same school system within the state. His grandfather and uncles were lobstermen, and he grew up fishing in the ocean with his father, going to the beaches and camping on nearby islands.

"I have such a passion for Casco Bay itself – it's a beautiful part of the state – that we named our company Casco Bay



A chicken/bacon/ranch wrap, made fresh in Casco Bay's culinary center and stocked in select vending and micro market locations.

Photos courtesy of Casco Bay Food and Beverage

[Food and Beverage]," he said.

The company, which launched in 2008, started out with just two employees. Today, it has 110. Despite the considerable growth, the company culture hasn't changed, the Mortons say. Casco Bay ardently keeps a lookout for healthier options to provide its customers and employees through its business practices.

A START IN TECHNOLOGY

Technology is one of the reasons that the Mortons first got into the vending business in 2008, Niki said.

They had just moved back to Maine from Boston to be closer to their grandchildren and Ted's aging parents. In Boston, he had been working for a real estate investment trust company, where he spearheaded repairs and improvements to high-rise buildings, so he was paying close attention to advances in technology.

"No matter what it is, somehow technology will find a better way to do it," Ted said.

Upon his return to Maine, Ted started researching the local market, looking for work. He noticed a vending company selling franchises. While he was unfamiliar with vending, he saw the company used an emerging technology that he believed would prove valuable to the overall industry: VendSys, an unattended retail, remote management system.

"Eleven years ago, there were nine substantial operators in Maine, all still utilizing the warehouse truck-style vending. It certainly wasn't the level of technology it is today," Ted said. "And I

CASCO BAY



FOOD and BEVERAGE



thought, 'I may not know the industry, but I certainly understand technology and how to move a company forward.' Utilizing this technology made sense to me, and I knew it could be a profitable venture for us to go into."

The Mortons decided to purchase the two franchise routes that were for sale, which landed them with 335 vending machines and the employment of two people.

"The company we initially acquired used wireless monitoring technology, so we knew exactly what sold in each machine, what we needed to bring for product and what the machine should have in it for money," Niki said.

Ted inherited a third route that was within Maine when the parent franchise company went out of business. He quickly had to adjust to working independently within the vending industry rather than relying on support



Casco Bay Food and Beverage sandwiches made by hand in the company's Bangor Culinary Center ready to ship out to hungry Mainers across the state.

from franchise management. He had to learn as much as possible about it, "almost overnight."

"Two weeks after purchasing our first routes, I got to work and everybody on the franchise transition team was gone. All of a sudden, I had to figure

Data analysts, account managers, administrative professionals, marketing specialists and customer service liaisons take a moment together at the corporate office in Lewiston, Maine.

out this industry that I jumped into without the support of the franchisor," Ted said. "Looking back, this actually helped make us a stronger company. We weren't saddled by the paradigms of the industry; we truly looked at everything with a fresh perspective. Ultimately, we knew if we didn't take care of our customers, we'd be in a lot of trouble. So we figured it out quickly!"

Ted began working directly with VendSys, which had developed the software for the first routes Ted had bought, and for several years had a great experience with the company.

Two years ago, however, Casco Bay made the decision to transition to Cantaloupe Systems, a VMS system now owned by USA Technologies that allows the company to use dynamic

scheduling and run consolidated reports across all of its platforms. This allowed them to efficiently analyze revenue trends, inventory and all other aspects of the business.

“The report writing functionality in Cantaloupe is very impressive. This reporting is what we believe sets Cantaloupe apart from the other VMS systems. The way they’re able to sort through data and the custom reports we can write are pretty amazing,” Ted said. “It helps us tremendously with understanding the various segments of the company and where to focus our energies.”

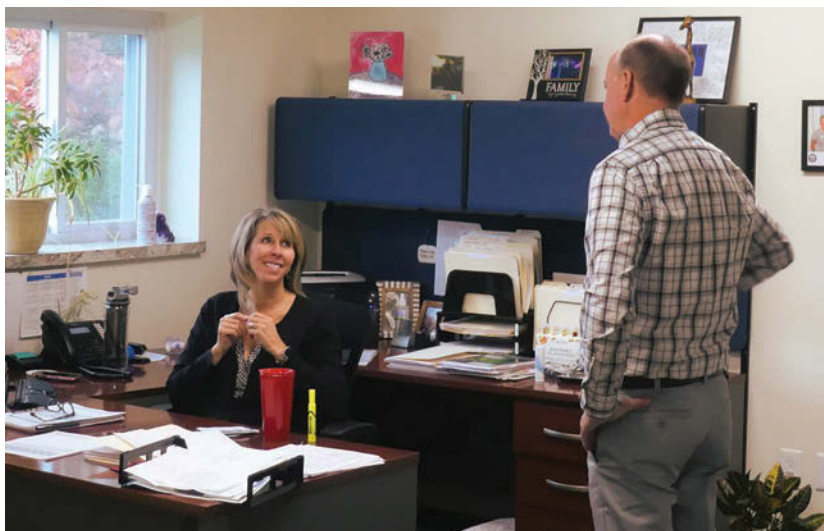
On Jan. 1, 2017, Casco Bay acquired its two largest competitors: Canteen of Maine and Pine State Vending. With the acquisitions, the company went from having just under 1,000 vending machines to 3,200 vending machines and 62 micro markets and grew from 19 employees to 120 employees in one day. It added 32 routes and a 5,000-square-foot culinary center. It also became a Canteen franchise.

“[The acquisitions] happened the first full business day of the new year, and we’re proud of the company we have today,” Ted said. “It was, to say the least, a challenge. The first year was a struggle, trying to merge three different cultures. We knew the culture we wanted because it was the culture we had been practicing and developing for the previous nine years, but to get that culture through to our new company of that size, at one time, was an incredible feat.”

The company then switched its focus to Cantaloupe in what Ted termed “a heck of a project.”

THE MISSION IN ACTION

“Whenever we make decisions, we always ask ‘How will it impact the families [of employees] we support? If we’re doing a great job, that’s awesome. If we were to make a bad decision, how would that impact these families? And



Ted and Niki Morton enjoying the serious work of supplying hardworking Mainers with healthy, fresh and convenient refreshments.

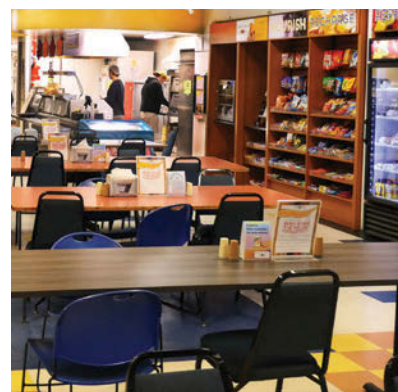


The USS Michael Monsoor, a Zumwalt class warship, is one of the U.S. Navy ships that Casco Bay Food And Beverage has provided foodservice during U.S. Navy sea trials. The company provided foodservice to 400+ onboard personnel during six-day, five-night Bravo and Acceptance trials on this ship.

how do we make each one of these teams a little bit better every day?’ That’s part of our mission – helping make people just a little bit better every day,” Ted said. “They take that home with them. They spread that out to society. Our workplace becomes a happier place, a better place to be.”

The company often solicits input from employees who will be most impacted by the daily business decisions it makes and generally holds quarterly meetings to review its strategy. Management will frequently talk with employees who work in the field as they work closely with customers.

“We take that opportunity to solicit



The Board Room Bistro is a micro market in which Casco Bay also offers full dining services, including daily specials, made-to-order items and grab-and-go items.

that knowledge from them and use that information to help us make our best decisions,” Ted said.

One of the most substantial examples of working hand-in-hand with staff was the transition from VendSys to Cantaloupe.

“We realized upfront that it was a huge change that could cause quite a bit of anxiety among our employees,” Ted said.

As the technology change would likely impact everyone, the Mortons wanted all staff to have a clear understanding of how the changes would improve the company. They also wanted to see if employees had any

feedback. That way, the company was able to get some buy-in from employees prior to the rollout.

“We reached across the company to different departments, explaining what we saw as the future of the company, how this new technology would allow us to get to that future, the path that would need to be taken and how it affected them,” Ted said. “To me, it’s all positive effects, but it was a big change, and people generally don’t like change.”

Over the course of a few weeks, they explained to employees what operations adjustments and improvements were in store. Employees were able to recommend how to make the rollout more efficient and share concerns about the changes. Upper management was able to reassure employees and address those concerns.

“We’re really committed to having a great team, keeping the right members on the team and moving them forward,” Ted said.

Casco Bay now runs its office coffee service, vending and micro markets through Cantaloupe. Running quality reports to see the buying trends for the industries they serve is critical, Ted said.

“I strongly believe the future of our industry depends upon us understanding technology and understanding the trends of our customers,” Ted said.

SERVICE FOR THE STATE

Niki, who joined the company when Ted acquired Pine State Vending and Canteen, has enjoyed seeing the rapid evolution within the industry. She also likes the multifaceted aspects of the industry, which has the business-to-business component, in which operators work with the businesses they have as clients, and the business-to-consumer component, in which operators serve the individual people who are making product selections from the vending machines, micro markets and dining centers.

“No two days are the same because technology is advancing so quickly that



Another busy day at one of Casco Bay’s three strategically placed warehouses that service the state of Maine.



Assembling sandwiches at the Bangor Culinary Center. With a rotating menu of over 180 unique items, the company uses local and whole ingredients as much as possible. Offering Maine-made meals to the hardworking employees of the many organizations it partners with has raised the level of quality in what can be expected from the convenience industry.

it’s really allowing us to dig into the operations of our business and find new, better and more efficient ways to service our customers and our clients,” she said.

As a relatively new professional in the industry, she has also noticed that consumers, in general, don’t always notice the impact of vending.

“I think what surprised me is that people take vending for granted. They just see it as a group of machines sitting in a corner where you can get a beverage or a snack,” Niki said. “I find it surprising that so many people miss the bigger impact those machines have.”

For example, Casco Bay has vending machines in emergency rooms,

where family members might wait for hours to hear about the condition of their loved ones and where staff have to eat quickly during long shifts.

“In some cases, sandwiches and entrees in our cold food machines could be the only wholesome meal some of those folks will have in a given day,” Niki said. “We’re really providing sustenance to hardworking Mainers and therefore become an extension of an employer’s benefits program.”

Casco Bay also encourages its employees to become involved in the community. It gives locally on an ongoing basis to certain organizations, like the American Heart Association, Big Brothers Big Sisters and Coffee For Our Troops, a local organization that supports American military troops from Maine who are stationed in the Middle East.

Casco Bay has partnered with Coffee For Our Troops to send snacks, toiletries, popcorn and sundries to these military members in appreciation for their service. In return, the soldiers send letters and pictures.

“We’re putting together holiday boxes right now that will include Christmas lights, stockings, games and snacks, to let our troops know we’re thinking about them,” Niki said.

FILLING A VARIETY OF NEEDS

Casco Bay has about 90 percent of the automatic retail market in Maine. Its services include micro markets, OCS, dining service, catering and more. It has an in-house culinary center with 10 employees. Clients range from small to large companies and from white-collar offices to shipyards.

Ted said that while the technique of servicing shipyards, apart from increased security protocols, is much the same as it would be for any other vending operation in the country, Casco Bay has the extraordinary opportunity of providing foodservice on sea trials for the local shipyard. The shipyard, along with the U.S. Navy, conducts sea trials to test all the new Navy vessels, such as destroyers, that are constructed at the Maine shipyard. About 425 staff and crew participate in the sea trials and are out to sea for several days at a time.

"We take generally about 14 to 17 of our team members, load up enough food for about five days, and we provide all the meals and foodservice for the staff aboard the ship during the trial," Ted said.

Casco Bay assumed the contract with its acquisition of Canteen of Maine, which had previously serviced the sea trials, and it has since expanded the relationship. The company is now the only one in Maine to provide foodservice during sea trials.

Unlike catering on land, the company must be certain it has enough food and plan ahead to be prepared for any adverse conditions – such as 20-foot waves that could toss the ship around – that could impact foodservice. Regardless of any rough conditions that may occur, the company still has to produce meals for the crew.

"Once you're out to sea, several hundred miles out, there's no walking down to a store," Ted quipped.

Back ashore, the company has begun to expand upon its delivery of OCS and micro markets. The company



OPERATION PROFILE

Casco Bay Food and Beverage

Headquarters: Lewiston, ME

Owners: Ted and Niki Morton

Year founded: 2008

Number of employees: 110

Equipment Providers: 365
Retail Markets, Avanti Markets,
Crane, USA Technologies

Technology Providers: USA
Technologies, Crane

Main Suppliers: Vistar, Coke,
Pepsi

Number of Micro Markets: 62

Number of Vending Machines:
3,400

**Number of Micro Market
Routes:** 3 designated routes

Number of Vending Routes: 29

Number of OCS Routes: 2
designated routes

hired a salesperson and a marketing associate to promote its OCS options. The Mortons have noticed while monitoring national trends that consumers, especially millennials, are demanding higher-quality, customized coffee, such as bean-to-cup.

"Based on what we knew about office coffee, there certainly was no reason we couldn't branch out and try to capture that market and fill that need of our customers," Niki said.

With Maine's rural nature, it has less population density than many other states and therefore has less of a need for micro markets since there are fewer large-size companies in the state for Casco Bay to service. For its 62 micro markets, Casco Bay provides a retail business with a push toward healthy food and sustainability. Niki said the

company makes most of its own fresh food in its culinary center, using whole grain breads, fresh vegetables and lean meats. The company is also the state's only distributor of the Bevi smart water dispenser, which eliminates plastic water bottles going to landfills.

"Society is moving towards healthier eating and we're there to provide these options for our customers," Ted said.

Casco Bay also sells electronics, toiletries and other items Mainers definitely need, like windshield wiper fluid in the winter for customers' vehicles. Aspirin, antacids and cell phone chargers are among the non-food items that have sold well.

"Micro markets have been tremendous for the industry. We all know that, as over the past six or seven years there's been an enormous influx to the market," Ted said. "It's a much better experience for the customer. Customers can check out multiple items at a time, spending less time waiting in line to pay. As we keep evolving the micro market system, it'll become a stronger segment in the industry."

EMBRACE THE TRENDS, TECHNOLOGY

The Mortons encourage other vending operators to continue embracing technology and reviewing trends. As the company has few vending operator competitors remaining in the state, it looks to the trends in the convenience store industry and in vending in other parts of the U.S. to see what's ahead.

Once operators see trends that they can act on, they should act quickly, Ted said.

"We make informed decisions, but we make them quickly and move forward," he said. "You can make a few mistakes and correct those, but you can't wait forever to make a decision because by the time you make it, the moment has gone by and you will have missed that opportunity." ■

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Barry Joyce
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We had a fantastic time providing coffee and flavored water at a lobby demo/Halloween contest at One Broward. First Choice is ready to improve your break time experiences **#fantastic #water #experiences #halloween**



Jarod A. F.
Director of Business
Development
& Retention at
Cardinal Canteen

Great meeting Evan Jarecki Co-Founder of Gimme Vending! His Technology Talk was awesome at the ACE show in Myrtle Beach!



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1. Nielsen, xAOC plus Convenience, 52 weeks ending 12/29/18
2. Kantar Millward Brown, April 2018