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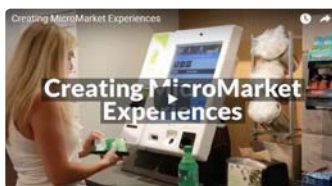
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## BLOGS, PODCASTS & VIDEOS



### ▶ MICRO MARKETS: 3 Ways You Know It's Time To Remodel

VendingMarketWatch.com/21033714



### ▶ VIDEO: The importance of design & creating experiences

VendingMarketWatch.com/12419815

### ▶ EXCLUSIVE: Here comes Amazon Go™ – 3000 Times

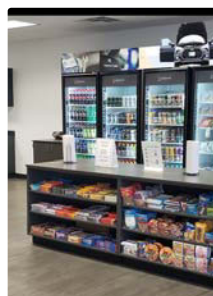
VendingMarketWatch.com/12434263



### ▶ STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT: Operators: Here Are 10 Reasons To Be Thankful

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# 2018: The Year Of Acquisitions, Mergers And Consolidation

**Consolidation continues with operators and reaches new heights with manufacturers in the coffee service segment.**

**T**here is safety in numbers, profits too it seems as 2018 looks to be the year of mergers and acquisitions.

Continental kicked off the year with its acquisition of Brighton, MI-based 24 Hr. Vending LLC. As part of the acquisition, the entire 24 Hr. Vending LLC staff joined the Continental team.

This was the second acquisition for Continental since late 2017 contributing to its proclaimed status as Michigan's largest food management company.

It also had one of the last acquisitions of the year (as of press time) with United Vending, its largest acquisition to date.

Vending giant Five Star Food Service continued its buying spree in 2018 with Mid South Services and Eagle Vending. Both were Canteen franchises that brought micro markets, vending and office coffee service to the business.



**GROWING**  
*the size of the business brings opportunities and challenges.*

## Coffee plays big role

Operations weren't the only businesses affected by consolidation. In 2018, there were a number of large mergers and partnerships among manufacturers and suppliers of products and equipment. One of the biggest was the merger of Keurig Green Mountain and Dr Pepper.

On January 29 of this year, Dr Pepper Snapple Group, Inc. and Keurig Green Mountain, Inc. announced that the companies had entered into a definitive merger agreement to create Keurig Dr Pepper, a new beverage company of scale with a portfolio of iconic consumer brands and unrivaled distribution capability.

This wasn't the only soda giant to align itself with the coffee segment. Late in the year, The Coca-Cola Company announced it was acquiring Costa, a well-known coffee brand in Europe, Asia Pacific, the Middle East and Africa. Not only did it gain the brand and various cafes around the globe, it also now likely owns the Costa coffee vending machines which provide the smells and sounds of a coffee shop while brewing the user's coffee.

Let's not forget that in March the EVOCA group bought the assets of VE Global Solutions, LLC, which was already promoting EVOCA products in the North American market including Necta, Wittenborg and SGL machines. The agreement stipulates that all VE employees be transferred over to EVOCA USA and that EVOCA USA would operate from the VE site. It is a sign EVOCA believes in growing its presence in the North American coffee market, especially in office coffee service.

Fast forward to October when Lavazza made a move that would surprise many. It purchased the Mars Drinks Business, which includes the Flavia and Klix single cup brewing systems, from Mars, Incorporated. Single-cup business in office coffee service (OCS) and vending has been increasing and this acquisition is a way for Lavazza Group to strengthen its position within the convenience services market through existing equipment lines.

## Pay to partner

What's in a name? If the name is Starbucks, it's \$7.15 billion. That is how much Nestlé agreed to pay for the perpetual rights to market Starbucks consumer and foodservice products globally, outside of the company's coffee shops. Nestlé plans to use this partnership to continue its growth in North America with leadership positions in the premium roast and ground and portioned coffee businesses.

Looking back, 2018 was filled with change, but much of it to create stronger companies. They see opportunity in the U.S. market, much of it around coffee, and that's a positive sign for 2019. | ◀

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## Vendors Exchange Acquires American Vending Machines

**V**endors Exchange International (VE) announced the acquisition of American Vending Machines (AVM). Located in St. Louis, MO, AVM was founded in 1997 and is a remanufacturer and supplier of equipment and parts to the vending industry.

The combination of the companies along with the additional operating site will allow VE to better serve its customers by generating shorter lead times and more cost-effective solutions. The St. Louis facility will provide added manufacturing space and a highly skilled workforce. Andy Hayes, owner and founder of AVM, will remain with the combined company and continue to serve the existing customer base while leading new growth initiatives.

The acquisition took place November 1, 2018.

### Shared goal

Matt Shene, CEO of Vendors Exchange International said, "I am excited about the acquisition. The ability of a company to serve its customers starts with its employees. Andy is an energetic leader with a wealth of industry knowledge. He and his team will bring an added element to VE. I am looking forward to working together as we continue to drive toward our goal of better serving the industry."



VE will use this buy to expand remanufacturing.



a top office coffee service innovator.

Consumers will now be able to purchase coffee at a Cafection coffee machine that is fitted with a 365 Inside and checkout with the 365Pay mobile app.

Operators can also receive real-time reporting on their machine's sales, profitability analysis and refill status with the 365 Inside.

### USAT Update: Nasdaq Notification Of Deficiency

▶ USA Technologies, Inc. announced that, as expected, it received a notice from The Nasdaq Stock Market LLC notifying the company that, as a result of its failure to timely file its Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q for the fiscal quarter ended September 30, 2018, the company is noncompliant with Nasdaq Listing Rule 5250(c)(1).

The company had previously received an original notice from Nasdaq of noncompliance with the rule due to the failure of the company to timely file its Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2018. Pursuant to the original notice, the company had submitted to Nasdaq a plan to regain compliance, and on November 13, 2018, Nasdaq notified the company that it had accepted the plan and had granted the company until March 12, 2019 in order to file the quarterly report and the annual report with the SEC.



### K & M Coffee Celebrates 50 Year Anniversary

▶ K & M Coffee, based in North Canton, OH, was founded in 1968 by husband and wife, Dean and Sharon Kendall. K & M stands for

Kendall & Mrs. It has thrived for 50 years, thanks to the commitment to customer service and the leadership of President Bob Grimsley, the Kendall's son-in-law who purchased the business in 1999.

### Continental Acquires United Vending & Market Services

▶ Continental, Michigan's largest food management company, has acquired United Vending & Market Services (United Vending), located in Ferndale, MI. As part of the transaction, the entire United Vending leadership team and staff will join

the Continental team. Financial terms of the transaction were not disclosed.

This is the fourth add-on acquisition completed by Continental in the past year, and its largest acquisition to date, as Continental continues to pursue its growth and expansion objectives.

### 365, Cafection Provide Connected Coffee Machines

▶ 365 Inside device is now compatible with Cafection bean-to-cup Innovation and Encore series brewers. This marks the second partnership for 365 and



## The Venders Unveil Slim Footprint Vending Machine With T3 Conveyor System

▶ The Venders unveiled its newest innovation nicknamed “OLLIE.” The advanced system features new technologies and features, including a patent-pending conveyor system that allows the machine to vend a wide variety of products from a remarkably small footprint.

In contrast to the trend of building bigger and bulkier machines that are costly to own and operate, The Venders took a different approach and designed OLLIE to allow it to be installed in locations that were previously unsuitable for vending.



## 7-Eleven Franchise Owners Vote No Confidence in Corporate Leadership

▶ The Board of the National Coalition of Associations of 7-Eleven Franchisees (NCASEF) has taken a vote of No Confidence in the management of 7-Eleven, Inc. (SEI.) The

board's decision reflects franchisees' belief that SEI has failed to focus resources and energy on improving declining store-level net profits, instead shoring up corporate gross profits at franchisee's expense.

NCASEF is the national trade association for 7-Eleven franchisees, representing the owners of nearly 7,000 franchised locations in the U.S. The National Coalition's No Confidence vote reflects a number of related issues, including:

- Presenting owners with a new Franchise Agreement which will lead to the continued decline of profitability – and doing so in a coercive, “take it or leave it” fashion without collaboration, input or negotiation with owners
- Failing to devote capital to stores in dire need of remodeling and refurbishing
- Failing to replace worn out equipment
- Failing to disclose to prospective franchisees the substantial risks associated with investing in an SEI franchise

## Imperial Coffee Buys Madison County Food & Beverage Co.

▶ Mark Steiner, president of Imperial Coffee and Services Inc., announced the acquisition of The Madison County Food & Beverage Company based in Orillia, Ontario, Canada.

The acquisition further strengthens Imperial Coffee's position as the premier beverage supplier within Ontario and allows the company greater efficiencies in servicing accounts north of the Greater Toronto Area.

## People in the News

### Howard Chapman To Retire From Royal Cup Coffee & Tea

Royal Cup Coffee & Tea announced that Howard Chapman, president of its office beverage division, will retire from full-time employment effective January 1, 2019. He will remain with Royal Cup in a strategic advisory role to assist its sales team until the end of 2019.



Chapman

### Seaga's Andrew Chesney Elected To Illinois State Representative

Andrew Chesney, a division sales manager with Seaga Manufacturing, was elected to represent the 89th district in the Illinois State House of Representatives.



Chesney

### Jon Ford Wins Second Term In Indiana State Senate

Jon Ford of Terre Haute, IN, won a second term to the Indiana State Senate with a victory over challenger Chris Gambill.



Ford

### Robert Friedman To Retire At Year's End

Coffee Distributing Corp. announced the retirement of its president, Robert Friedman, after 43 years with the company. Friedman is planning to continue working through the end of 2018.



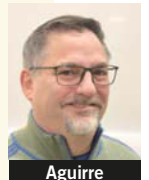
Friedman

### Nuzee, Inc. Appoints Bryan Flowers National Sales Manager

NuZee, Inc. (d/b/a/ Coffee Blenders®) announced the appointment of Bryan Flowers as national sales manager, effective October 29, 2018.

### Michael Aguirre Joins Server Products

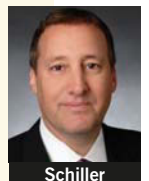
Server Products is pleased to announce the hiring of Michael Aguirre as the key account manager for the Western U.S. region.



Aguirre

### Hain Celestial Names Mark L. Schiller Chief Executive Officer

The Hain Celestial Group, Inc. announced that its board of directors has named veteran consumer packaged foods executive Mark L. Schiller as the company's new president and chief executive officer, effective November 5, 2018. Schiller will be nominated as a director of the company and will succeed Irwin D. Simon, Hain Celestial's founder, president and CEO.



Schiller

# Pod Pack International Ranks 49 On Annual LSU 100 List

**D**uring a gala event at L'Auberge Casino Hotel in Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University (LSU) announced the official rankings for the eighth annual LSU 100: Fastest Growing Tiger Businesses. Pod Pack International was ranked No. 49, up from No. 72 the previous year.



Pod Pack again made the LSU 100 list.

## LSU 100

The LSU 100 is a highly competitive program that identifies, recognizes and celebrates the 100 fastest growing LSU graduate-owned or LSU graduate-led businesses in the world. Pod Pack has made this prestigious list for the third consecutive year.



interviewed by Bloomberg about PepsiCo's expansion with bubly Fountain and Vending. PepsiCo is now using bubly on branded vending machines to capitalize on the success of its sparkling water brand.

## USConnect Selects Nayax's Cashless Payment Solution



▶ USConnect, North America's only wireless, integrated food service network, has endorsed Nayax's cashless payment solution, the VPOS Touch, as a preferred cashless and telemetry device. Nayax provides operators of unattended automatic machines a complete cashless solution. USConnect's recommendation to its affiliate network, which includes

operators across the U.S. and Canada, will provide the latest solutions in cashless payments to help operators optimize their operations and elevate their revenue.



## BUNN Earns First Energy Star® Certification For A Commercial Brewer

▶ The new Infusion Series® Soft Heat® brewers are the first commercial coffee brewers to earn the U.S. Environ-

mental Protection Agency's ENERGY STAR certification. This certification signifies that the brewers meet the energy efficiency guidelines the U.S. EPA have established for this category of equipment.

BUNN engineers have developed construction and control methods which optimize the heating of the brew water, and minimize heat loss. Innovative control algorithms maintain the hot water tank temperature at precise levels with the minimum energy used.

## PepsiCo's Bubly Fountain And Vending Machine Are Getting Attention

▶ Anne Fink, president, Global Foodservice, was



## Seaga Adds Garrison™ Industrial Vender

▶ Seaga Manufacturing introduces an addition to its Intelligent Inventory Control family—the Garrison™. Designed to provide opportunities for the small and medium account locations yet provide the same cost advantages as the larger markets. The Garrison™ was developed to meet customer demand for an industrial vending machine that provided the same accountability and control for accounts with limited resources and fewer employees.

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# Capitalize On Creamers

The latest look at what consumers add to their brewed coffee.

By Emily Refermat, Editor

**W**hile many in the coffee industry prefer coffee black, it's not as common with end users. According to research done by Datassential and presented at the 2018 Coffee, Tea & Water show, 64 percent of consumers add creamer to coffee and 34 percent add sweeteners. Away from home has the lowest percentage of black coffee drinkers, making this extremely relevant to office coffee service providers. Female and younger consumers are the most likely to use coffee additive, much more than other end users.

## **Creamer preference is changing**

The research indicates that flavored and unflavored creamers are top preferences for coffee drinkers who use additives, used by 64 percent of consumers outside the home when combined. When taken individually, however, milk starts to suffer with a 22 percent decline

from its use 5 years ago. Unflavored liquid creamer on the other hand, experienced 38 percent growth from 5 years ago.

Mark DiDomenico of Datassential said where the company sees the most growth is in plant-based creamers. This is a segment that includes soy milk, almond milk, and coconut milk. A majority of consumers, 83 percent, reported interest in the plant-based creamers. However, only 67 percent were currently using it.

"The difference could be it [plant-based creamers] not being available away from home, so this could be a missed opportunity," DiDomenico said. This is supported by other research that shows that of the consumers who use this type of creamer away from home, 56 percent use it at a coffeeshop, while at work/school that percentage drops to 11 percent. It just isn't as widely available at OCS-type locations.

The primary reason behind the surge in plant-based creamers is that consumers believe it's a healthier alternative to dairy-based creamers. Almond milk tops the list with both consumers who have tried alternative

## 6 out of 10 people add creamer to brewed coffee

creamers and to those whom alternative creamers appeal. People prefer almond milk to soy milk, according to the research, with 17 percent saying they love almond milk compared to 9 percent who say the same for soy milk. Coconut milk ranks higher than soy, but not almond milk among those who use plant-based creamers in their coffee.

### Sugar ranks high

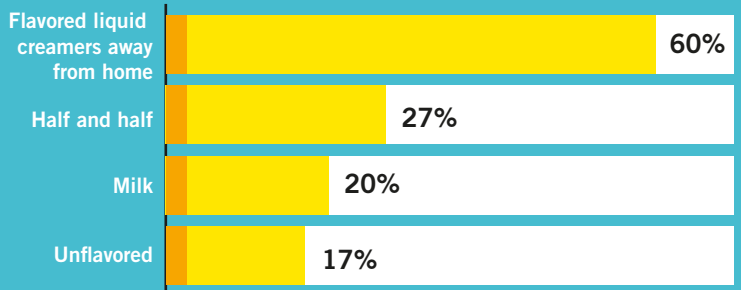
Just over a third of consumers add some form of sweetener to their coffee, with sugar being the strong preference. Some interesting trends in the research point to raw sugar, flavored syrup and even honey as additional options consumers use to sweeten drinks. Flavored syrup has the advantage of also adding another flavor, which is something consumers want. They crave variety, and that includes flavors and the mouth feel of their coffee drinks, says DiDomenico.

### Flavors stay flat

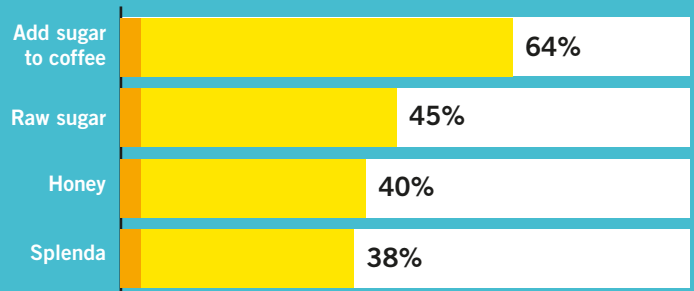
Not much has changed in terms of flavored coffee, DiDomenico added. Less than a quarter like brewed flavored coffee, while the rest of consumers prefer to add the flavor in after the coffee has been brewed. The flavor preferences remain largely unchanged with vanilla the steadfast winner in popularity. However, for OCS providers looking to set themselves apart, this could present a vast opportunity. DiDomenico made the point that today's consumer wants variety, wants personalization. By offering some unique options to the coffee drinker at work, the operator has a competitive advantage. Some flavor suggestions include dessert flavors, such as key lime, Nutella, and tiramisu. Flavors like peanut butter and Dulce de leche are logical pairings as well that provide some unique variety without stepping too far from flavors consumers would know and appreciate.

More people drink coffee every year. With more than half of them also wanting to add a little something extra to the cup, it's important to track trends and add proper offerings to product lines. Plant-based creamers and unique flavors are increasingly appealing to consumers, but not to the exclusion of best sellers such as vanilla flavored creamer, unflavored creamer and sugar. It's all about having options. | ◀

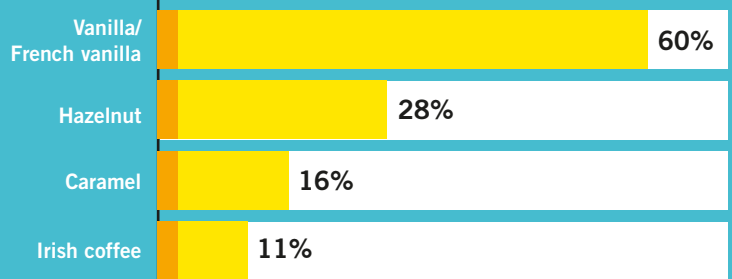
### Creamer used in your coffee



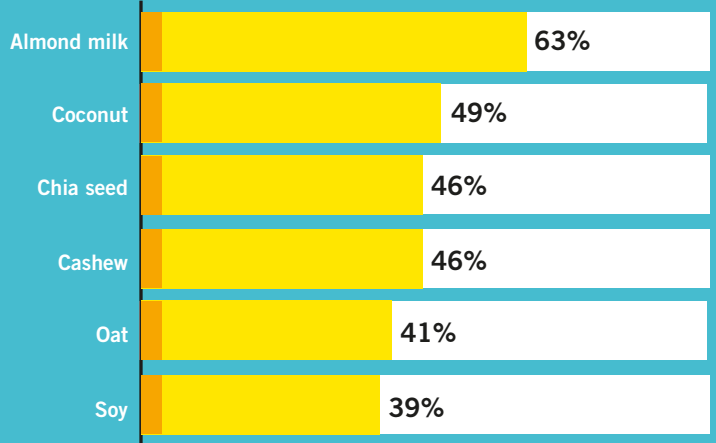
### Sweetener used in your coffee



### Flavors used in your coffee (Away from home)



### Plant-based creamers used



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PROS TO KNOW

2018

THE

2018

# PROS TO KNOW AWARDS

*By Emily Refermat, Editor*

**I**t's time to celebrate the best in the business. The following "Pros" are not just successful, but inspire others and drive the convenience services industry forward. In 2018, the Pros to Know list includes thought leaders, entrepreneurs, driven team leaders and mentors. This group of 20 individuals and 3 teams has earned the recognition of others and proven once again that people make all the difference to success.



# Individual PROS TO KNOW 2018

(Listed alphabetically by company)

## Lindel Creed

**President Of American Green Dispensing Systems, American Green**

Creed has been a key participant in the development of a dispensing system that uses biometrics to verify the dispensing of restricted products. This opens the door for use of many products that could not previously be vended out of a machine. He wants to bring back the use of vending machines over the use of micro markets due to the ability of vending machines to meet Americans with Disability Act requirements. With Creed's help, American Green has started developing smart vending machines with a touch screen and has expanded the machines use into new markets.

## Trish Schneider

**Branch Manager, Associated Services**

Schneider has kept her "can do" attitude working at Associated Services for 30 years. She is always willing to help others and has done most of the jobs (if not all) at one time or another in the industry. Schneider understands that customer service is the most important aspect of her job because consumers can "coffee" anywhere. This year Schneider developed a close partnership with a local roaster in the area. It was a great success in a large branch that covers Sonoma, Napa and Marin counties, because customers want to buy local — within their communities. She is also focused on satisfying the needs of the Millennials, which make up most of the workforce. This includes offering new products, following trends and anticipating what and how their needs will change in the future.



Trish  
Schneider

## Scott Phillips

**Director, Customer Success, Avanti Markets**

Phillips embodies the principles behind "Customer Success." He is directly responsible for working directly with members of Avanti's operators network from sharing technical expertise and best practices to onboarding new operators to teach and share insights working with the systems and growing their micro market business. He seems to be a walking encyclopedia of knowledge when it comes to the technology that supports the operations of micro markets and he loves to share his knowledge with anyone who will listen. He can often be found assisting others in all aspects of the business. He is one of the friendliest people around and always arrives with a smile on his face and a happy greeting for his customers and his colleagues.



Scott Phillips

## John Peterson

**Lead tech, AVS Companies**

The constant changes in manufacturing techniques and software updates occasionally make things function differently than they should, challenging operators. That is where John Peterson shines. He reads technical information and interprets it into logical and usable language his team can understand. He works out the "bugs" and communicates often with factory representatives. He is well-known for reading the manual of a new item, performing the processes recorded and then showing the rest of the team. Peterson has a knack for understanding how an engineer built an item, while also being able to explain it to others in everyday language. He is willing to share what he knows and learned both during his years as an operator and in the AVS distributorship.

## C T Cromer

**Founder / Chairman, Cromer Food Service**

Cromer started working in the vending industry at the age of 14 in 1954. With the help of his two brothers Erwin Cromer and Doug Cromer, they successfully operated a small vending company until it was purchased by Wometco Foodservice. During the Wometco years, the brothers would grow Wometco to become the largest vending operator in the Southeast. After 26 years of working for someone else, Cromer decided to start his own company. With a small basement operation, Cromer Food Services was founded in 1981. The plan was to operate a small company with potential two or three routes on the road. Instead, Cromer continued to experience growth based on stellar service and strong personal relationships with his customers. During the first years of his business, Cromer quickly saw that he needed some help with his internal operations if he was going to be able to stay on the road as the face of the company. He asked his brother Erwin to join the company. With this additional help the two brothers were able to open a full line commissary and begin to offer food options that were unmatched from their competition. The business saw explosive growth that eventually included two satellite offices in addition to the corporate offices in Anderson, SC. Today, Cromer Food Services operates a 40-acre complex with over 125 associates. The facility includes a full line Culinary Center, Equipment Refurb Center and Fleet Maintenance Department. The company supplies vending, market, catering and coffee services to over 500 customers on a weekly basis. These customers are supplied through 22 vending routes and 15 micro market routes.

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<sup>1</sup>Danone Coffee Bar Research, November 2017

<sup>2</sup>NPD Supply Track 12 months ending November 2017

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# Individual PROS TO KNOW 2018

Continued

## Andy Bream

**Vice President, Federal Machine Corp.**

Shortly after assuming the vice president of sales role at Federal Machine Corp., a division of The Wittern Group, and meeting with numerous small vend operators and distributors around the country, Bream saw a tremendous opportunity to help small vend operators grow their businesses. He has initiated several programs with his credit background designed to increase sales and profits for this market segment. When Federal assists small vendors and business owners to grow and diversify their businesses with a proven business model it also helps Federal Machine Corp increase their sales and profit. Bream started his tenure at The Wittern Group in 2000 as a credit analyst for Wittern Financial Services and was promoted to credit manager in 2005 and became director of financial services in 2010. In 2015 he was named as vice president of sales for Federal Machine Corp. Through his history in the finance world, he saw several customers apply the techniques and tactics of Federal Machine to their businesses and get results. Being a Champion of Small Business growth is a daily venture for Bream and his team.



Andy Bream

## Mike Laurer

**Director OCS & Water, Five Star Food Service**

Laurer has been in the Refreshment Services industry for over 35 years. His experience includes managing both vending and micro market operations, but his passion and expertise lies in office coffee service (OCS) and water. He believes the key to success is staying ahead of the curve on industry trends while delivering the best possible customer service experience. He understands that each customer is unique and requires clear and consistent communication to uncover their true needs and wants. He is also a believer in the concept “If you take care of your employees your employees will take care of your customers.” Laurer is a past president and current board member of Tennessee’s Vending Association. He received his NCE designation from NAMA in 2008.



Mike Laurer

## Steve Orlando

**Co-Founder, Fixturelite**

As the co-founder of Fixturelite, and a former micro market, vending and office coffee service (OCS) operator for the greater part of ten years in the Phoenix, AZ market, Orlando is a leader in the design, shelving, lighting and fixture category. He is concerned about the industry’s approach toward workplace refreshment areas — breakrooms. He feels there is a trend toward “cookie-cutter” micro markets, as companies like Amazon enter the space. He is also concerned about the quality of materials that are being used, as market shelving and fixture suppliers chase their share of the market. As a result he has committed to providing usefully information regarding the micro market industry and design trends. He reaches out to operators in the Micro Market Design Newsletter and at industry trade shows. His willingness to provide free demos of the Fixturelite design tool shows a commitment to market design and operator success.



Steve Orlando

# More ways to Delight



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# Individual PROS TO KNOW 2018

Continued

## Colleen Calahan

**Director of Operations, Gimme Vending**

As director of operations for Gimme, Calahan fosters operational success and growth for customers in the unattended retail industry managing a portfolio of customer accounts from the moment of signing to full deployment and beyond. Unattended retail has changed so much in the two years since she joined Gimme, with the biggest challenge for the industry being outside competition. Redesigning of convenience stores (think QuikTrip) and the rise of convenience solutions like DoorDash, UberEats and AmazonGo mean the industry can no longer focus solely on how convenient micro markets and vending machines are, but how to better serve people that can easily order anything at the touch of a button. This goes for Millennials and the younger generation in university and the workforce as well. It's at once health-conscious and pickier. Calahan works so operators can know what to sell and where to sell it, so they can compete in today's workplaces and schools. Just this year, she not only helped developed a number of projects, but also delivered her first public speech, ever, at SEVA, this past July. Through these initiatives, she has shown that she is dedicated to bringing awesome tech to a historically undeserved industry.

## Cory Hewett

**Co-Founder and CEO, Gimme Vending**

Vending companies are being rolled up by larger players, suppliers are being acquired by larger providers, and Amazon just announced it will open 3,000 new unattended "Go" stores by 2021. Hewett knows it's a tough market out there. He also sees potential. He has helped customers understand what's working and what's not with their technology. For each customer he generates customized and in-depth value reports about 1) how much time their drivers are spending in the field; 2) their actual versus calculated amount of product spoilage and waste; 3) frequency of stock-outs/SKU-outs; and 4) the effect of stock/SKU-outs on same store sales. He also works with each customer's web designers, providing graphics and content, to refresh the operator's online presence and technology pages. Finally, Hewett has spent the year working on a brand-new tool for micro market management, so the industry can invest more in merchandising and per-account customization, while making it easier to attract and train new employees.



Cory Hewett

## Jennifer Toomey

**Director of OCS and Markets, Refreshment Solutions**

Toomey has made a huge impact in a very short amount of time. She is the director of OCS and markets for Refreshment Solutions in Norco, LA, and is focusing heavily on merchandising and preventing shrinkage in micro markets, which she sees as a substantial challenge to profitability. Toomey believes market distribution is another huge problem. Most of the industry schedules vending dynamically, and schedules markets statically due to the fresh food. Toomey is looking for ways to decrease distribution costs in addition to upgrading existing markets and replacing the 30 percent of products that don't sell. She has been in the industry for 8 years, and is leading a crusade to update markets for Refreshment Solutions.

## John Ward

**Owner, Serenity Market**

Ward's Rockford, IL-based micro market company began as a vending provider and transitioned into something greater. Ward and his company promote employee retention at area companies using micro markets. Serenity Market's micro market concept is one of the few benefits a company can offer employees at no cost to the employer. To maintain engagement with his micro markets, Ward has also made advancements with company-sponsored promotions and Serenity Market promos. Serenity matches deposits into customer accounts at grand openings and offers monthly product discount days. Ward is ever looking to advance his knowledge and expand the micro market concept.



John Ward

## Charles Weaving

**Data & Technology Manager, Southern Refreshment Services**

Bringing innovation to the vending industry, Weaving plays an important role in making vending machines "smart" and tackling the challenge of modernizing vending's way of business. After earning an MBA at Mercer University, Weaving began to change vending as operations manager for Gimme Vending. As the first full-time employee for Gimme, he took Gimme from forty test units to over 1,500 fully-functioning deployed field units in less than a year through rigorous work with engineering, deployment, development and support. In placing utmost emphasis on customer needs while creating efficient deployment methods and employing



Charles Weaving

superb customer service, Weaving brought Bluetooth/wireless DEX technology to the forefront of machine inventory, accountability and sales. By providing a more effective and efficient solution for day-to-day operations, Weaving expects to see a resurgence of creativity and new ideas for vending altogether. As data and technology manager of Southern Refreshment Services, Weaving combines his business skills, knowledge of back-end vending operations, and his technological expertise to reduce waste, increase efficiency, monitor accountability and solve problems for one of the nation's leading vending, micro market and coffee providers.

### **Katy Melstrom**

**Vice President of Marketing, Three Square Market**

Melstrom has worked with Three Square Market for just under 6 years, during which she has seen the company grow, change, adapt and become a huge part of the executive decisions made. Three Square Market made the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) policy company-wide this past year. Melstrom has been looking forward and considering the implications it could have for customers during the next few years regarding advertising and marketing. How do we maintain quality relationships with clients without putting their information at risk? A part of GDPR is slimming down what data is actually needed versus what is just extra, from number of contacts to what is asked for those contacts to provide. Because Melstrom is always pushing herself to be better and more knowledgeable, her actions at Three Square Market move beyond just marketing to all things, including the next trends and current industry standards.

### **Rick Leib**

**Chief Information Security Officer,  
Three Square Market**

Three Square Market knows digital security is of the utmost importance to customers and everyone involved in micro markets. The company feels lucky to have added an expert like Rick Leib as chief information security officer in 2016. Leib has improved the company's security both externally and internally. As a CISSP, his vast knowledge on industry standards and confidence in implementing them inspires a secure feeling. With Leib driving the ship, Three Square Market can be confident in its direction on digital security and ensure users there is an industry expert in their corner who is doing what's necessary to keep their information safe.



**Rick Leib**

### **Bob Tullio**

**Consultant, TullioB2B**

Since selling his business in January of 2017, Tullio has been an active industry consultant, focusing on content creation, strategic planning and business development. Using his training and experience as a journalist, he has written over 20 columns for VendingMarketWatch.com, providing operators with an inside look at how he helped to build a successful business from the ground up. Tullio has established himself as an industry thought leader with a genuine interest in helping operators succeed and suppliers to connect with operators. While much of his writing is focused on fundamental business development, his approach to selling strategies is timeless — constantly being updated to include digital marketing and changing buyer attitudes.



**Bob Tullio**

### **Bill Bartholic**

**Regional Sales Director – Northeast,  
USA Technologies**

Bartholic has become respected nationally by traveling throughout North America to work closely with operators. He is dedicated to ensuring operators understand the need to invest in technology and payment solutions for customers, otherwise they will get left behind. He attends trade shows and engages with business owners, participating in speaking engagements focused on technology and the future of payments. He helps to express the need to operators to innovate their business. He does this by leveraging his past experience as an operator prior to joining USA Technologies. Bartholic understands the unique industry challenges. He also understands the power of technology and how it can positively impact these businesses. He is not only an industry advocate, but an expert in this space.



**Bill Bartholic**

### **Mike Lawlor**

**CRO, USA Technologies**

Lawlor has proven that he not only is a leader within the USA Technologies organization, but within the industry. He serves on the NAMA board of directors and is heavily involved in ensuring that USAT is not just a supporter but an advocate for the industry alongside NAMA. He has presented on cashless payments and technology related topics at trade events and shared his experience through industry panels.



**Mike Lawlor**



# Individual PROS TO KNOW 2018 Continued

## Neil Swindale

President, VendCentral

Swindale has been in the vending industry for over 20 years in a variety of positions. He has called on vending operators in the West as a rep for Coca-Cola, PepsiCo and Nestle waters, as well as running his own full service vending company, Pacific Refreshments, for 5 years. He currently is the president and founder of VendCentral, a marketing agency 100 percent focused on helping vending, office coffee service (OCS) and micro market companies be successful online navigating the ever-changing digital sales and marketing landscape. VendCentral was founded ten years ago and has built over 350 industry related websites, and is currently working with over 50 big independent breakroom refreshment companies on a monthly basis with digital marketing strategies.



Neil Swindale

## Mia McDonough

Senior Account Executive, Vistar of Georgia

McDonough's dedication to her customers and Vistar is relentless. She sells in a consultative manner. If it isn't good for a particular customer, she doesn't sell it to them. This past year, McDonough has seen consolidations become a real challenge, not only for operators but also for suppliers. Both are trying to offer products that appeal to the changing demographic, including healthier items that are more affordable. McDonough believes that we are all here for a purpose, that it is our responsibility to give back to the world and to do what we can to help people. She has devoted much of her private time working closely with the Old Fourth Ward community on multiple projects. She worked collaboratively with the City of Atlanta to obtain grants for beautification projects, the O4W Street Topper project, Children at Play signs as well as initiating Neighborhood Watch. Helping people is important to McDonough whether those people are in her community or colleagues in the industry.



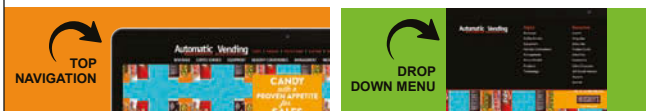
Mia McDonough

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Automatic Merchandiser is proud to announce our newly designed website [VendingMarketWatch.com](http://VendingMarketWatch.com). Same great content, with a fresh new look!



## Mike Ferguson

President & Founder, VMAC Solutions (Vending, Markets and Coffee)

Ferguson is using his 30+ years of vending, markets and office coffee service (OCS) experience to help others. He is reaching out to operators in need of an independent agent to assist in selling their business as well as growth business decisions in regard to today's top challenges, including technology such as vending management systems (VMS), warehouse picking automation and micro markets consultation. Ferguson has done it all from starting an OCS and vending company, selling it, to working for the largest vending operator in the U.S.



Mike Ferguson





# Team PROS TO KNOW 2018



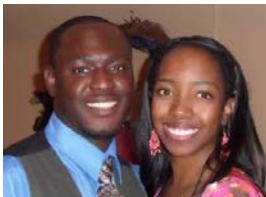
## 365 Retail Markets Customer Team

**Team Leader:** Jonathan Leung, Manager, Customer Service

Providing 24-7 global support is one of the top priorities for the 365 Customer Team. They were instrumental in fully implementing two innovative customer service platforms, the Zendesk — a powerful customer support platform that tracks, prioritizes and resolves support requests, and 365 Help Center — an all-new knowledge base and support portal, designed to put the information needed right at operator’s fingertips, whenever and wherever they

need it. Not only does the 365 Customer Service team put the customer first, they are passionate about what they do and truly care about the success of operators. Their patience, attentiveness and knowledge are a huge part of why 365 has become a global leader in the micro market, foodservice and vending industry. They deal with the challenge of ever-changing technology and live customer service demands. They have had over 200 percent growth in the department to ensure they always have someone live and available to customers.

## Let’s Improve! Healthy Vending, LLC



**Team Leader:** Kofi Sasu, Owner/Operator

**Team Members:** Kofi Sasu & Shari-Ann Sasu

The Let’s Improve! Healthy Vending, LLC (LIHV) team doesn’t give up. A bespoke business that places the healthy products a location wants, it consistently tries to educate consumers about new healthy brands via vlogs. The team holds taste samplings, virtual giveaways on social media and places advertisements on touchscreen devices. LIHV also believes in helping other operators with location tips. “We’re not in competition with anyone that’s trying to bring healthy vending to a community,” the team says. They were also a recent Dan Mathews NAMA Scholarship recipient.



## Nayax

**Team Leader:** Lotan Granot, Technical Product Manager

**Team Members (left to right):** Eitan Klein, Efrat Kallai Tamler, Lotan Granot (Team Leader), Ravit Bitran, Tom Yaish, Shai Belz, Erel Lindzen, Tal Goldstein (not in photo)

Nayax’s goal is to increase operator revenue and customer convenience by accepting all dominant cashless payments by any method, in any country. The team working to achieve this is the payments team, responsible for the development and integration of payment systems, as well as liaising with banks and payment institutions to ensure that Nayax’s products meet the standards and highly secured regulations to be certified and approved for transactions. To achieve the company’s goals, the payments team has already implemented more than 13 different domestic and international alternative payment methods (APM) since the beginning of 2018. By building a roadmap, it closely watches the market to engage with any upcoming payment method. In addition, the team keeps the traditional credit and debit card industry in mind and is continuing to integrate with new acquirers, with APMs the top priority. Nayax’s payments team has also designed an API for QR payments, which it offers to the industry. The payments team is a critical aspect of Nayax’s operations. | ◀

Payments

Prekitting

# Forecast 2019

**From payment innovation to controlling costs, industry insiders see continued investment in technology as the most impactful factor on operator businesses in the coming year.**

*By Emily Refermat, Editor*

**F**or years the convenience services industry has been on the apex of a technological revolution. Early adopters saw the need to innovate and invest in technology. Now, there is a growing acknowledgement from operators at every level that they need to invest in order to stay competitive.

“My ‘What Must Be Done For 2019’ list includes upgrading remote monitoring devices from 3G to 4G,” said Sandy Thornton, co-owner and key accounts manager at VendEdge based in Roswell, GA. This is in addition to a 2019 wish list which includes adding an online ordering platform for office coffee service (OCS), utilizing artificial intelligence to drive up same location sales and getting handsfree glasses for route drivers. “This is after already conquering remote monitoring of vending, cashless for vending, dynamic scheduling for

# cast

Cashless

Micro markets

Dynamic scheduling

# 19

vending and markets, pre-kitting for vending and markets, and pick to light order fulfillment,” explained Thornton. She admits it can be overwhelming, but that it’s a necessary part of succeeding in today’s business environment.

The need for technology is part of the reason why 2018 had so much consolidation of operations, a trend that will not be stopping in 2019 either.

“I think we have been witnessing, over the past couple years and even as we look ahead in the coming years, a pivotal time for many vending operators,” said Elyssa Steiner, director of marketing for USA Technologies. “They are determining what to do with their business: 1) sell to another operator/company, OR, 2) invest in technology to grow their business, which sometimes also means growing their facilities and investing in new buildings, etc.”

Technology is being used to allow operators to do things better, faster and smarter, explains Steiner. “Look at the concept of Google glasses for example when it comes to picking. This was a way to create efficiencies for warehouse pickers, and then for drivers when stocking machines,” she said. Another concept she highlights is machine learning tools sometimes called artificial intelligence, which can help operators better maximize revenues, merchandise to consumer trends and ultimately sell more product.

It can be difficult and expensive, especially as technology continues to change, software and hardware needs to be updated and the continued support of connected technology drives up costs. There are a few



## Technology Changes How Today's Decision Makers Choose Convenience Services

Operators now have more to consider when they sell their services to a company. Decision makers have instant access to all service providers in their area thanks to search engines. They can read online reviews and compare services more easily. Carl Moser, sales manager at Cardinal Canteen Food Service points to the fact that selling a location used to be more about personal relationships. Today the young decision makers want numbers and digital communication.

"It takes education of the younger generation on the benefit of service while still adapting to how they want sales information," said Moser. "Because without the service there is nothing that sets your operation apart. It's different than it was 10 to 15 years ago."

main areas of focus, which include cashless, micro markets, prekitting and future innovations, in both payment acceptance and any technology that can produce better efficiency.

### Cashless acceptance

The percentage of vending machines in the industry that accept credit/debit cards or mobile payments is now well over 50 percent. Consumers are demanding it and many operators report a sales lift of both cash and credit once cashless payment is accepted. There are some challenges with cashless such as the elimination of the 2G, and some 3G networks, requiring updates to cashless devices that can not use 4G or LTE. Another

is the cost of the device itself, keeping it connected via cellular signal and the fees from the processors when a consumer uses a card. It requires operators to somehow build those costs into the product prices and/or increase the number of items sold. With the Federal Reserve reporting that cashless payment use has been growing steadily since 2000, investing in cashless payment acceptance is a future-proof solution.

### Micro markets grow

Micro markets not only allow the cashless acceptance operators currently struggle with adding to 100 percent of vending machines, but are a technology solution in them-

selves. It's a solution that has plenty of interest from customers too. "We are finding new micro market business," said Carl Moser, sales manager at Cardinal Canteen Food Service in Chesapeake, VA, "but we are also swapping over businesses to micro markets." It's been positive, with as much as 4 times the sales at a location that has been swapped over, Moser says. The future however is in going smaller. Moser sees many locations that have lower head counts, but who want micro markets. "It's tougher to make the small micro market concept work," said Moser.

Joe Hessling, CEO of 365 Retail Markets thinks Moser and the other operators experimenting with smaller markets will continue to do so in 2019. "We anticipate significant growth in smaller markets, 150 person and below," he said. "Tablet and mobile should add at least 3,000 locations as opposed to 2018, where we think it was closer to 1,500 opened."

These smaller micro market locations would be in addition to the 6,000 more traditional markets, with more than 150 employees, that Hessling guesses operators will open in 2019, a number he says is flat compared to 2018. These are not just estimates for 365 Retail Markets, but across the U.S. industry, according to Hessling. He also expects a lot of micro market growth outside the U.S.

### Prekitting and using data

Technology on the inside of the operation is going to be big in 2019, in part because operators are looking at it to help with a tight labor market and increasing costs of goods.

"Labor costs are going up for us," said Moser speaking about hiring employees. Josh Rosenberg, president and CEO of Accent Food Services in Pflugerville, TX, sees a similar trend. "The distribution industry is driving up the cost of labor for warehouse associates," he

said. Wages have been pushed up by 20 percent in some instances.

One helpful aspect of the tight labor market is that the businesses operators serve are struggling with the same issue, making convenience services more in demand. “On the positive side employers are leveraging our services as a must have to compete for top talent, sustain culture/high engagement and support workplace productivity,” added Rosenberg.

### Inflation/cost of goods

The latest consumer price index reported a significant increase in gasoline prices ended October 2018, which drove up much of the “all items” index which increased 2.5 percent. There is worry we will see this type of cost increase in 2019, possibly even higher than a typical 2.5/3 percent increase that often comes with inflation. With

**“We anticipate significant growth in smaller markets, 150 person and below.”**

Joe Hessling, CEO of 365 Retail Markets

tariffs on goods from China and instability in some of the largest oil producing countries looming, costs might rise closer to 5 percent or more, an increase that would be difficult for operators to pass on to end users.

Technology will be how many deal with these looming cost increases. Moser has a goal of really optimizing his business practices in the warehouse and during location service. “We put a lot of money into forecasting and prekitting, including someone internal we hired to look at the data and make suggestions,” he said,

“because data doesn’t mean anything if you don’t go through it.”

Rosenberg also feels utilizing technology will be important. “For the industry to sustain our bottom lines, the cost of technology, cashless processing fees and operational efficiencies will be required to offset the [challenges],” said Rosenberg. “This will mean strong operators with operating discipline, leverage of technology and diverse channel participation will force additional operator consolidation and/or see an unbalanced growth within the operator community.”

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- Dedication to customer success
- Always looking for solutions



Hessling sees a similar evolution. “The focus from the operators seems to be less on the revenue side,” said Hessling. “While they still demand revenue growth when investing in new technologies, they are now trying to keep up with the demands of having their entire business connected to a few technology providers and then spending their time on running their businesses as efficiently as possible with minimal downtime and hassle caused by their technology providers.”

### Payment innovations

Investing in existing technologies that will benefit operators is important, but to stay strong, the industry will also have to look at what is coming.

“With the rate at which technology keeps moving, we as an entire industry are going to need to continuously look at innovating the services and goods



we deliver to consumers,” Steiner said. “This industry is no longer about food and beverage. It is really about bringing convenience to consumers wherever they are.” She mentioned the distribution industry giant Ama-

### Future vending machines may take bitcoin.

zon who is investing in thousands of AmazonGo stores. “...Competition is growing in unattended. We are not vending operators anymore, we are unattended retailers,” she said.



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One evolution Steiner sees on the horizon is how payments are made and what types are accepted. For an example she goes back to Amazon and how consumers can use at-home devices such as Alexa to make orders and pay. Steiner wonders if operators can start doing new and innovative things with payments as well that will be meaningful to the consumer. “How do we as unattended retailers continue to evolve with the consumers demand for payment flexibility. Does that mean we start accepting new payments like Venmo at machines, Crypto-currencies, etc.? The ideas are endless, but if we stay open and curious about these trends we can ultimately get ahead of them and evolve with the consumer rather than be late to the party,” she said.

Hessling adds, “Technology will continue to push towards mobile and

## “Does [evolving] mean we start accepting new payments like Venmo at machines, Crypto-currencies, etc.?”

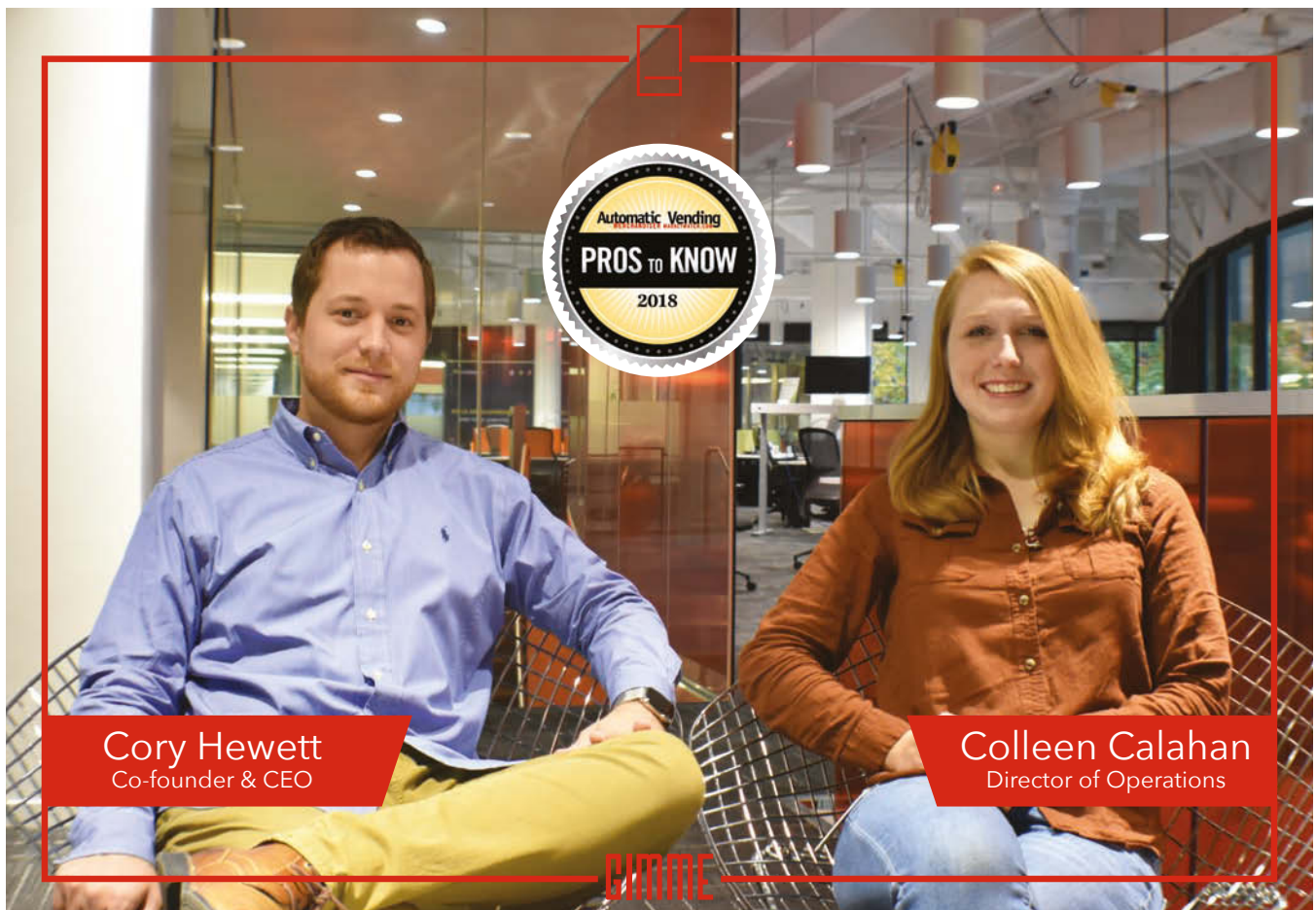
Elyssa Steiner, director of marketing for USA Technologies

cashless with the focus on connecting all devices on a common platform in the workplace.” The future will be about payments and everything being connected seamlessly.

### The right path

While 2019 will have challenges, it will also come with plenty of opportunities. “2019 has me as excited as ever for industry!” said Jeff Whitacre, president and CEO of USConnect. “The economy has heated up and for

the first time in a decade same store account sales are rising as employers are adding employees and employees are spending more money. In addition to this, operators continue to transform their businesses by adding cashless acceptance to their vending machines and deploying micro markets where applicable. This combination has me expecting 2019 to be a record sales year for my operating company and all of the operating companies within USConnect.” | ◀



**Cory Hewett**  
Co-founder & CEO

**Colleen Calahan**  
Director of Operations

CVIIME



## PRODUCT ROUNDUP



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### Hillshire Farm Individually Wrapped Sausage Rolls

TYSON FOODS

With over 90 percent consumer awareness, Hillshire Farm is a brand your consumers know and trust. Provide them with the individually wrapped Hillshire Farm Sausage Rolls. These are available in 3 bold flavors wrapped in premium breads and individually wrapped for easy merchandising for hot or cold sale. This handheld, protein-packed snack or meal comes in branded film designed for microwave or oven heating.

[VendingMarketWatch.com/12431253](http://VendingMarketWatch.com/12431253)





## La Colombe Draft Latte

LA COLOMBE COFFEE ROASTERS®

La Colombe Draft Latte is a first-of-its-kind, ready-to-drink (RTD) coffee beverage that delivers the full taste and texture of a true cold latte, complete with a frothy layer of silky foam. Draft Latte is made with real ingredients like nutrient-rich and lactose-free milk and cold-pressed espresso in a 9-ounce can. It's naturally sweet with no sugar added.



VendingMarketWatch.com/12431244

## Inventure Foods TGI Fridays Sriracha Ranch Potato Skins

INVENTURE FOODS, INC.

Inventure Foods expands the TGI Fridays® snack line with Sriracha Ranch Potato Skins. Featuring the wildly popular flavor, Sriracha, with cool ranch, this snack is sure to be a fan favorite. Each spicy bite makes these snacks make even harder to put down. The Potato Skins will be available in 3-ounce bags with a suggested retail price of \$1.99 per package. Sriracha Ranch Potato Skins joins the existing line of Potato Skins that includes favorites such as Cheddar & Bacon, Bacon Ranch and Sour Cream & Onion.



VendingMarketWatch.com/12435809

## Van Wyk Confections Sweet & Salty Pretzel TWISTS

VAN WYK CONFECTIONS

Van Wyk Confections has announced the nationwide launch of the Sweet & Salty Pretzel TWISTS™ Straight Pack. A perfect item for Vending and Micro Markets. Crunchy, salty Bavarian pretzels dipped in premium milk chocolate and covered in crunchy toffee. The 1.41 oz. TWIST is available in a straight pack of 4/20 count cases. It's suggested retail value is from \$1.29 to \$1.79.



VendingMarketWatch.com/12434984

Our most sincere thanks and gratitude go out to all of our customers and partners. We simply could not have achieved PROS TO KNOW, 3x in a row without your trust and support along the way. From everyone at Fixturelite, Thank you!

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## PRODUCT ROUNDUP



### Crane's simplifi software

#### CRANE MERCHANDISING SYSTEMS

Crane Merchandising Systems offers simplifi, its next generation Cloud platform for enterprise and connectivity software designed for operators to manage their business on the go. simplifi is developed as a native Cloud platform with solutions delivered as Software as a Service (SaaS), eliminating the need for upfront investment in servers, licensing, and IT staff. The mobile-friendly platform allows users to access their data and perform key actions from any device, anywhere. The simplifi platform includes a consolidated and redesigned mobile application that allows field personnel to perform critical route and service tasks efficiently and accurately. With this app, available for Apple and Android as well as tablets and mobile devices, operators and users have ultimate flexibility and can get up and running quickly. simplifi MOBILE also works with Streamware's VendMAX program, and includes newly added support for Office Coffee/Delivery Services.

Crane Cashless customers will see a change to the on-line portal previously known as Streamware Connect into simplifi CONNECT. Users will immediately benefit from the new design of the portal through the free simplifi CONNECT service. For those customers looking to add remote management capabilities to their devices and screens, a new value add service will be launched called simplifi CONNECT PLUS.

[VendingMarketWatch.com/12435750](http://VendingMarketWatch.com/12435750)

### Ferrero Tic Tac Gum Cool Tropical

#### FERRERO U.S.A., INC.

Ferrero introduces a new Cool Tropical Tic Tac Gum flavor. Cool Tropical shows impressive test results with 71 percent purchase intent according to TURF Aug 2017, CPT Research Jan 2018, Flavor Zone Refresh Feb 2018. Cool Tropical, compared to tested flavors also is over indexing with Millennials. Tropical is the fastest growing flavor zone, reports IRI National Consumer Panel, Total US, 52 w.e. 12.31.17 and is ranked second for flavor in the fruity gum segment, according to IRI MULO+C, 52 w.e. 03.11.18.

[VendingMarketWatch.com/12434350](http://VendingMarketWatch.com/12434350)



### Silk Plant-Based Creamer Singles

#### DANONE NORTH AMERICA

Danone North America has launched Silk® Dairy-Free Vanilla Creamer Singles, the first-ever plant-based coffee creamer in a single-serving format. The New Silk Dairy-Free Creamer Singles are Non-GMO Project Verified, Vegan Certified, Kosher, Gluten-Free, Soy-Free, Carrageenan-Free, Cholesterol-Free and contain no artificial colors or flavors. The creamer singles have a slightly nutty, smooth vanilla flavor and are available in 9mL cups in a 192 count display box.

[VendingMarketWatch.com/12429866](http://VendingMarketWatch.com/12429866)



### Wandering Bear Multi-serve Cold Brew Boxes For OCS

#### WANDERING BEAR

New York-based Wandering Bear is an organic, Fair Trade certified cold brew iced coffee, with no preservatives or sugar. The ready-to-drink brew is bold, yet uniquely smooth with a bright, chocolatey finish. Wandering Bear is available for OCS in multi-serve "on tap" sizes, that can be purchased in-store, online or as a recurring subscription for home or office delivery. Pricing is 36 oz. (6 serving) for \$11.99 or 96 oz. (16 serving) for \$27.99.

[VendingMarketWatch.com/12434417](http://VendingMarketWatch.com/12434417)





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**Product entry deadline:**  
JANUARY 15, 2019

If you launched a NEW vending, OCS or micro market product in 2018 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](mailto:editor@VendingMarketWatch.com) no later than January 15, 2019.

Please note that all products considered for the award MUST be launched in 2018.

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# New Orleans Hosts Industry's Biggest Coffee, Tea And Water Show

**D**on't underestimate coffee service. That was the message from New Orleans during the 2018 CTW. This year NAMA again co-hosted the event with the International Bottled Water Association, bringing more than 800 attendees to the Hyatt Regency New Orleans from Nov. 12 to 14. It was three days of fact-packed education, industry networking and a tabletop trade show. It buzzed with excitement as operators tasted and learned about coffee and tea options that can enhance their business. Bean-to-cup stole the show, but cold brew was a close second. The big talk was about trends, from tea to non-traditional flavors and foods that will be in high demand by younger consumers at work.



Danone North America was spotlighting its award-winning Silk dairy-free vanilla creamer and popular Stok cold brew.



Cold brew coffee was a big trend at CTW from single-cup pods, such as the Java House® Authentic Cold Brew meant to be used in a Keurig® brewer, to ready-to-drink varieties from relative new comer Wandering Bear.



NAMA CEO Carla Balakgie welcomed more than 800 attendees to CTW in New Orleans.

CTW 2018 was a record breaker in terms of number of exhibitors and attracted more than 800 attendees being co-located with the International Bottled Water Association conference.



Kraft Heinz brought some new snacks for attendees to munch while sipping coffee and tea, including P3 Portable Protein Packs and new Planters Crunchers coated peanuts.

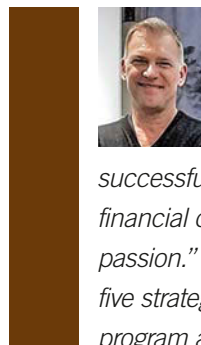


Vistar had some new faces in the industry including Stag coffee and Waterloo sparkling water.



NAMA elevated the new product area by allowing attendees to vote for products they were excited about.

Boylan Beverages nitro cold brew Oatmeal Latte was among the New product award winners at CTW.



*Klarc Snowden, entrepreneur; coffee service innovator, director of national accounts & strategic partnerships at De Jong DUKE said "There are five strategic elements of a successful bean-to-cup venture: Technical proficiency, financial creativity, bold pricing, differentiation, and passion." He went into detail about how he used these five strategies to build his successful bean-to-cup program and how others could as well.*



**Idaho-based Oasis Northwest was started by a one-time route driver who saw the potential of what micro markets could offer the industry and his community.**

*By Emily Reformat, Editor*

# BETTER SERVING

**A**aron Lawton fell in love with vending 16 years ago. It lets him be part of the life blood of the community as he visits businesses throughout his service area in Boise, ID. When he saw a micro market for the first time, he saw a way to answer all the requests consumers had with vending. He jumped all in, including pushing the micro market model further in 2018 with a hybrid cafe/micro market concept.



**Aaron Lawton**

### **A career through serendipity**

Lawton came to the vending industry by accident. He had purchased a few residential rental properties with plans to expand. He applied to be a

route driver as a side job that allowed him evenings that he could dedicate to property management. It wasn't long before two things became clear.

"I found out I hated the residential rental business," Lawton said. "But I loved being a route driver."

The ability to go into his community and interact with people at various jobs drew him in. "I love visiting different businesses," he said, "going from a hospital to a blue-collar break room to a lawyer's office in one day. What other job lets you do that?"

Lawton sold off his properties and turned his attention to making a career in vending.

"I went to the



# THE COMMUNITY



management of the vending division I was a driver for and said I wanted to lead the division. I wanted to sell vending and expand the operation,” Lawton said.

Over the next 12 years, Lawton grew the vending division of the foodservice company from one route to more than five. It became so successful that the foodservice company would later be able to sell it to Canteen. After more than a decade at the company, Lawton wanted to expand into a new, emerging technology that he had seen firsthand at a mentor’s Salt Lake City, UT operation — micro markets. However, his company then declined several large vending contracts, and opted not to invest in the micro market concept.

“Vending made up only 1 percent of the revenue for this foodservice company,” explained Lawton. “Our small division wasn’t their primary focus.”

Lawton believed in the micro market concept so strongly that he decided to leave his position and go out on his own. He told the foodservice company and even offered to buy their entire vending division, although the sale didn’t come to fruition.

### Launching a new business

Lawton founded Oasis Northwest in December of 2013. “I built the business with micro markets as the primary focus,” he said. He jumped into the solution immediately, deciding on a provider he had researched while working for the foodservice company. It had a reasonable cost of entry and wasn’t competing with independents the way some other suppliers were. He added micro markets quickly under the new system and it was exactly what his area needed.

He was adding a market every few weeks with eight by 2014 when his company experienced some growing pains. Lawton educated himself on some of the other sup-



pliers with a good idea of what he now needed in a micro market system that would grow with his company. He invested in Three Square Market, eventually converting older

Customers can checkout with the Baristas or at the self-checkout kiosk.

locations to Three Square, so all 22 of his micro markets would be on the same system.



The micro market hybrid has an open-air cooler and is staffed for 8 hours each day.

## Operation Profile: Oasis Northwest

**Founder:** Aaron Lawton

**Location:** Boise, ID

**Year founded:** 2013

**No. of micro markets:** 22

**No. of employees:** 3

**Micro market supplier:** Three Square Market

“Operationally, Three Square works better for the way we operate,” Lawton explained. He has the warehouse set up in accordance with how

**“They were building a medical school and the company we partnered with to create our micro market food suggested the potential of a hybrid instead of just a market.”**

Aaron Lawton, founder of Oasis Northwest

Three Square prekitting is organized, including each item being alphabetical within a category.

“Some software exports with a random flow to how orders are printed. With Three Square, it’s alphabetical, so for example, ‘Almond Joy’ is first in the list,” he said. This helps Lawton set up his warehouse space efficiently. He prekits the micro market orders with assistance from his other two employees, Art Gonzalez, a full-time driver and technician who followed Lawton from the foodservice company, and one full-time person who splits time between deliveries and warehouse work.

Lawton also appreciates how Three Square makes bookkeeping easier with online access. He can perform tasks such as inventory adjustments from home. “It’s nice to see the people I care about even if I’m behind a laptop,” Lawton joked about the flexibility the online system gives him.

From an end-user standpoint, Three Square offers consumers chip-enabled card payments and acceptance of Google and Apple Pay. Three Square also offers Lawton all the displays, coolers and accessories for the micro market, not just the kiosk and back-end software. “We have so far used our point-of-sale operator [Three Square] for everything,” Lawton said. It’s easier. We can go to the lending company and ask for just one check.”

### Regular service and fresh food

Lawton creates the service schedule for his micro markets based on how much fresh food goes to each. Because the food is made locally it has a shorter shelf life and needs to be refreshed more often. “Our average micro market’s minimum service is twice a week,” said Lawton. “However, many of the micro markets get serviced up to 6 times a week.” Contributing factors that can affect the level of service for Lawton include the number of employees at the location and the hours employees work. “A 24-hour warehouse or call center usually needs more than an 8 to 5 location might,” said Lawton.

He has also tried non-food locations as a way to meet the demands of smaller locations (those fewer than 100 employees); however, it hasn’t been a tremendous success yet. “Eventually I think we and the industry will get there,” Lawton said. He believes that market saturation will make it necessary or operators will recycle down, as many operators did with vending machines, putting older micro market displays in smaller locations during upgrades and renovations to larger ones.

Lawton does offer some vending machines in public venues and smaller accounts. He also provides coffee services to 25 locations, mostly drip brewers, but he has a few bean-to-cup machines placed in micro markets. “We have several Cafection

machines in markets,” said Lawton. “They make a great cup of coffee.” The most recent have a receipt printer the customer can carry over to the kiosk and scan. If it’s an older model, Lawton does a coffee day where he can educate customers on using the touchscreen to search for the coffee type and size, plus hand out samples of free coffee, boosting interest in the market machine.

### One driver, multiple services

No matter what type of service is provided to a location Lawton wants there to be only one point of contact. Water, coffee, vending, micro market — it’s all on one vehicle. “I’ve always felt it was important to have one driver per account — they are a representative of the company,” said Lawton. He knows there are different philosophies regarding service, but he believes if a customer has a single point of contact than they become part of the culture. “The company trusts them, relies on the driver to provide service to them,” Lawton explained.

### Realizing the hybrid concept

Lawton knew micro markets were going to be the future of vending, but he wasn’t about to stop there. As an employee of a foodservice company for years he saw terrific food being provided to employees at worksites. He had tried to incorporate this into vending machines, but it never worked. “The perception was — it’s just vending,” said Lawton. “No matter what we did it never worked.” Micro markets helped but they still don’t offer some of the advantages of an onsite foodservice facility. Then opportunity came knocking.

“They were building a medical school and the company we partnered with to create our micro market food suggested the potential of a hybrid instead of just a market.”



Oasis Northwest stocks its markets with fresh food made locally.

**“I’ve always felt it was important to have one driver per account – they are a representative of the company.”**

Aaron Lawton, founder of Oasis Northwest

### Combatting Theft

Like all micro market operators, Aaron Lawton, founder of Oasis Northwest, has to deal with theft. While each location is different, his average shrinkage rate hovers at 2 percent. The best locations have management who stress to employees how much they stand to lose by stealing. “They will tell them ‘You will lose your job if you steal a Snickers bar,’” Lawton said. “It’s really about building a culture that appreciates the market and therefore stays honest.” Lawton has had the clients hang signs about the micro market being a privilege. If theft is too high, they will go back to vending. That stops the increase in shrinkage.

Lawton saw its success at once. This large facility would have lots of people, staff and employees, onsite all day, looking for convenient food items. It could also be partially staffed in order to draw customers into the space. The hybrid was born.

The hybrid location features an open-air cooler that highlights the locally made food. However, it is staffed for 8 hours a day by a barista. She has a cash drawer tied to the micro market kiosk. “If they want, they can check out with her, their food and latte, all with their market account,” said Lawton. “Or it’s possible to skip the line and use the self-checkout instead.”

At the end of the day, the barista shuts down the espresso side and the cash drawer. It then operates like a traditional micro market allowing access to nourishment at all hours.



“The pilot has been so good that we are analyzing the numbers to see where else we can place one,” Lawton added.

### Poised for growth

Now that Lawton has a micro market system that can grow with his busi-

Market service schedules are adjusted based on the amount of fresh food.

ness, it’s time to address some physical growing pains.

“We are at capacity,” said Lawton. “We are bursting at the seams in our warehouse so are looking to move to a 3,000-square-foot facility,” he said.

Oasis Northwest is also at capacity for its food truck. “We are at the limit and looking at what’s next,” Lawton said. He is considering a vehicle with refrigerated compartments rather than a fully refrigerated truck as it better suits his one driver for all services model. Lawton continues to love the industry and is excited about what micro markets bring to the table. He plans to continue serving his business partners, bringing a great attitude to work each day and exciting solutions to the break room for Boise residents. | ◀

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Here's our fearless leaders and co-founders, **@CoryD-irect** and **@evanjarecki**, accepting the award for 2018's Best **#B2B #Startup in #Atlanta!**



Awesome acceptance speech guys!



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**roni moore**  
*@roninama*

Retweeted Compass Group USA Leading and feeding. Here's to the convenience services companies doing just that. **@NAMAvending @CarlaBalakgie @ericdell**



**Uselectit Vending**  
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If you are not ready to spend additional time into managing your inventory, you may want to think twice before entering into **#micromarkets**. Read more on the blog: **#vending**

**in VIEW**



**Howard Chapman**

Bigger than anything we've ever done...Check out this fresh water from one of our projects with Neverthirst this year! Thank you to all of our customers supporting ROAR!



**fOLLOWING**



**Fox Vending, Micro Markets & Coffee Service**

*@FoxVending*

We are grateful for the partnership we've formed with the Yoke team. A friendship was forged from the moment we migrated over to them for our markets and the best is yet to come for sure. They have perfected the art of customer service and it was time well spent this week...thanks Michael!



**Howard Goldstein**

Director Canteen Vending Farmingdale NY Northwell Health's newest Market. The first of many. For info on how to put one in your office call me @ 800-310-9334



**Judson Kleinman**

Founder and CEO Corporate Essentials, LLC <https://lnkd.in/eX43qsq> Personally, I drink coffee because I like the taste and how it makes me feel. The added health benefit of living longer because I drink more coffee is certainly a plus. What are your thoughts, will you think about drinking more coffee for the health benefit? **#health#coffee**



**The Hershey Company**

*@HersheyCompany*

Last week, we hosted approximately 30 women from across the country who work in the dairy industry at Hershey's Chocolate World. The women represent a wide range of professions in dairy, including female business owners, industry veterans, up-and-coming producers and many other roles. They were in the region to attend the bi-annual Dairy Girl Network Summit.

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