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ways to create a better business culture

Consumers still want
gourmet coffee page 12

Automatic MERCHANDISER

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Coffee Service Industry Resource

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president and owner
of All Star Services,
Duncan Smith, vice
president of operations, and
Devin Smith, purchasing
manager, are part of a team
that keeps the company
moving forward.

SUCCESS STORY Technology
helped All Star Services to
become one of the largest
operations in the Midwest.

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VOLUME 56, NUMBER 4



Ray Sterling, service manager for All Star Services, keeps equipment running.

SUCCESS STORY

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► **BLOG: 2014 NAMA OneShow – “Can You Hear Me Now?”**
www.vendingmarketwatch.com/11409772



► **LEGISLATIVE UPDATE: U.S. Mint calls for comments about the metallic content of coins.**
www.vendingmarketwatch.com/11431778



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Bridging the generational gap

It is possible to market to Baby Boomers and Millennials at the same time.

It may seem unlikely that Baby Boomers and Millennials share any commonalities. We hear a lot about the differences between the two generations and what they value. One of the most notable is technology. Two of the biggest changes to how the world works occurred as Millennials were growing up — the development of the Internet and the smartphone. AIM-Sights Group, an international marketing

consulting firm, compared the creation of the Internet and the smartphone to the development of the Gutenberg press. It has been that significant.

However, despite the differences, both groups represent a large buying power. The 80 million Baby Boomers control 70 percent of the U.S.'s disposable income, but the 86 million

divergence — food. While Boomers are focusing on better-for-you items, Millennials are all about gourmet and trends like gluten-free. Many times these two ideas can be the same food item, whether that's an arugula salad with homemade blue cheese dressing or a sophisticated (and high priced) sandwich on pretzel bread.

Don't be afraid that technology will alienate either group. According to the AIM Insights, this is the first time in history that it's not just the older generation teaching the younger one. The Millennials have a specific skill set that the Baby Boomers don't always have. The two groups are educating each other, giving them a cross over that no two other generations can really claim.

Selling service to Millennials

Operators also need to consider Millennials as decision makers, not just as customers. Many are moving up to management positions and gaining more responsibility.

It's been said that Baby Boomers like personal service. They prefer in-person meetings in order to gauge a provider's character. This is much like the skeptical Millennial, who is online checking reviews and skimming a company Website before making any purchasing decision. The Millennials are interested in authenticity and not being stereotyped.

Now, I'm not trying to claim that Millennials and Baby Boomers are the same. However, there are some similarities you can use when crafting your sales program to target both groups. ►



**ALL
ages are
interested
in value.**

Millennials are driving spending growth as they start to shop for themselves and their families.

Marketing to both at once

To market to both generations at once, it's important to focus on value. This is about quality and perception as much as it is about price point. The perception of a product matters, which leads us to the next

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The Daily Update has received a facelift

Although the newsletter is going through a redesign, the new VMW Today will still bring operators up-to-date news daily.



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I hope you aren't tired of reading about all the changes that have come to *Automatic Merchandiser* and *VendingMarketWatch.com* in the almost 2 years since I've been publisher. People ask me how things are going and my reply is always the same, "Busy and exciting!" I've mentioned on quite a few occasions that I love technology and I also love this industry. With that in mind, making sure that we provide our readers with the best experience available is our no. 1 priority. Our content is constantly addressing the need for industry members to embrace technology where they can and to try new things in their businesses. The theme has always been that you simply cannot do business the same way you did 10, 20 or even 30 years ago. The business continues to change.



WE have a new look, but same great content

The same goes in the world of publishing and we must practice what we preach. *Automatic Merchandiser* and *VendingMarketWatch.com* have always been the first to offer diverse ways to access content. Whether that was

in podcasting, the launch of video with VMW TV or the launch into responsive design with *VendingMarketWatch.com* so that the industry could access our content on any device easily without having to manually resize the screens.

Redesigned with you in mind

So what's left? Well, something that I had the pleasure to see launched. In 2005, Gloria Cosby, publisher at the time, had an idea to create a

daily newsletter for the vending audience. I remember sitting in Gloria's office as she cut out images and pasted together the concept of the newsletter on a piece of paper. It was such an exciting time in our publishing world to be the first daily newsletter for the industry. There have been minor tweaks along the way, but for the most part, the Daily Update hasn't changed... until now. Starting in May, I'm excited to present the redesign of the Daily Update, which includes a new name: VMW Today.

VMW Today is the same daily newsletter with the same content that you've come to expect, however, redesigned to be viewed on virtually any device. Whether you are on your desktop, your tablet or your smartphone, you can access the latest news without having to resize anything. I say virtually on any device because the minute that this goes to press, another company will announce its new phone and we'll have to work to make sure it's compatible.

Focused on today's news

So why VMW Today? Quite simply, we are still the only daily newsletter serving the industry. Every weekday, the editorial team gathers the latest news. They don't wait to run items that have been out for a few weeks; they are focused on getting you industry news that happened in the last 24 hours and delivering it today. Again, we must practice what we preach and continue to evolve instead of relying on the same things done for years without any change. If you were subscribed to the Daily Update, don't worry, you don't need to re-subscribe to VMW Today. However, if you never received the Daily Update, you can subscribe to VMW Today at www.vending-marketwatch.com/reg/newsletter/display. ◀

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Micro Market Dollar Sales In 2013 Reach \$233.8 Million

In its 2013 Micro Market Channel Census, Bachtelle and Associates reported that total 2013 micro market location dollar sales reached \$233.8 million, an increase of 154.9 percent over the prior year. This information is based upon micro market and kiosk operating data provided by seven micro market kiosk suppliers active within the channel during 2013.



Micro market integration nearly doubled in 2013 to 5,123, an increase of 95 percent from 2012.

Micro markets double

The census found that the number of total micro markets nearly doubled in 2013 to 5,123, increasing by 2,511, or 95 percent, over the 2012 base of 2,642. Active micro market kiosks increased in 2013 from 2,724 to 5,426, a 2013 growth rate of 99.2 percent. The report showed 248 kiosk removals from micro market sites which reflects a 4.4 percent removal rate of all active 2013 kiosks.

Channel sales over installations

In 2013, projected total micro market channel sales increased at a faster rate than micro market installations. Total micro market product sales in 2013 were up \$143.1 million over 2012 channel sales. The average sales tax rate equaled 4.3 percent of micro market sales. View the rest of the report at www.vendingmarketwatch.com/11393773.

strategic partnership with USConnect. With the introduction of Crane Cashless, USConnect companies will benefit from increased cost savings while continuing to leverage enhanced functionality, including integrated alerts, complete cashless reconciliation, remote DEX and cashless ROI analysis.



VendScreen

VendScreen Pilot Yields 85 Percent Vend Lift, 9 Month ROI

► VendScreen Inc. has announced the results of a nine-month pilot conducted with an international snack foods manufacturer and a large Northeast vending operator. It reports that the total machine vends increased an average of 85 percent, and sales of the manufacturer-branded products doubled. The additional revenue generated during the first nine months of manufacturer-specific product sales canceled out the device hardware investment costs.



Breakroom Provisions Debuts Micro Market Anti-Theft Feature

► Breakroom Provisions Co. (BP) debuted integrated image capture with its anti-theft "widget" at the NAMA OneShow. The anti-theft widget with image capture is part of ECR Software Corp.'s mobile-ready, HTML 5 office suite for vending and micro markets. ECRS develops award-winning retail automa-

tion solutions, and is the technology partner for BP.



White Castle Joins Single-Cup Movement

► White Castle announced it would start offering its restaurant blend, medium roast coffee in single-serve coffee cups. The cups are available at retail and compatible with brewers that accept K-Cups®.

Nayax Acquires InOne, Plans U.S. Launch

► Nayax announced the acquisition of InOne, a leading U.S. provider of cashless payment systems, remote data collection, management software and replacement control boards. Nayax now plans to offer its full range of products for cashless payments and telemetry to U.S. operators.

Crane, USConnect Announce Partnership

► Crane Merchandising Systems has announced its

Cantaloupe Purchases CompuVend

► Cantaloupe Systems has announced its acquisition of CompuVend Systems, a provider of management and control software to the vending, office coffee, distribution and foodservice industries. Post-acquisition, CompuVend VendPro customers can continue to use VendPro, or have the option to upgrade to Seed Office™, the cloud and mobile VMS from Cantaloupe Systems.

The Pepi Companies, USAT Partner

▶ USA Technologies, Inc. (USAT) announced a new, exclusive agreement with The Pepi Companies located in Dothan, Ala. The agreement, designed to span all aspects of Pepi's business, leverages Pepi's existing cashless-enabled vending network and USAT's new Integrated Payment Services.



Fresh Healthy Vending Adds AirVend

▶ Fresh Healthy Vending International, Inc. recently announced a partnership with AirVend. Fresh Healthy Vending is now mounting the AV5 cashless touchscreen devices on its healthy vending combo machines. Franchisees can now update planograms or gather real-time information on product stock, as well as give consumers the option to contact them with comments or issues through a digital contact form, as well as pay with a digital coupon or QR code.



Corporate Coffee Buys Classic Coffee

▶ Corporate Coffee Systems LLC (CCS) announced the acquisition of Classic Coffee Systems Ltd., of Valley Stream, N.Y., from co-owners John Malizio and Charles Chiarello. Financial terms of the acquisition were not disclosed.



Maxwell House Debuts New Logo, New Varieties

▶ Maxwell House announces the first step in reinventing itself by debuting new packaging graphics, a new logo and several new product varieties, all supported by the new campaign, "Say Good Morning to a Good Day." In addition to its new campaign, Maxwell House is introducing new coffee options with the intent of reaching both existing customers as well as Millennials.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JUNE 4-6

2014 Green Coffee Association Convention
Norfolk Waterside Marriott Hotel
Norfolk, Va.
Phone: 212-766-5854
www.greencoffeeassociation.org

JUNE 5-6

NAMA Supervisor Development Program
Tropicana Las Vegas Hotel
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People in the News

Vending Operator Jeff Snyder Runs For Indiana State Senate

Jeff Snyder of Snyder Food Service in Fort Wayne, Ind., is a candidate for Indiana's Senate District 15. His involvement with the Indiana Vending Council led to his interest in running.



Snyder

NAMA Names Dan Marchetti Vending Operator Of The Year

Dan Marchetti, president of Rendezvous Music & Vending in Eureka, Calif., was named NAMA's Vending Operator of the Year as part of the association's 2014 Industry Awards.



Marchetti

Mars President To Retire, Grant Reid To Lead Organization

Paul S. Michaels, president of Mars, Inc. since 2004, will retire on Dec. 31, 2014. The company announced that Grant F. Reid, current global president of Mars Chocolate, has been named by the Mars board of directors to take over the office of the president on Jan. 2, 2015.



Michaels



Reid

The Coca-Cola Co. Elects Kathy N. Waller EVP, CEO

The board of directors of The Coca-Cola Co. elected Kathy N. Waller as executive vice president and chief financial officer, effective immediately. As announced in February, Waller is replacing Gary Fayard who is retiring after 20 years with the company.



Waller

Jon Ford Runs For Indiana Senate District 38

Jon Ford of All State Manufacturing in Terre Haute, Ind., is running for Indiana's Senate District 38. A member of the Indiana Vending Council, Ford believes his strong record will serve him well in the state Senate.



Ford

Women's Foodservice Forum Names Hattie Hill President, CEO

Women's Foodservice Forum (WFF) announced that its board of directors has selected Hattie Hill as the organization's next president and chief executive officer effective June 1.



Hill

Consumers still want gourmet coffee

By Emily Refermat, Editor

In 2014, espresso and specialty coffee beans are preferred by more than a third of U.S. coffee drinkers.

The latest research from the National Coffee Association (NCA) shows that coffee drinker preferences are continuing a shift towards gourmet coffee. In 2013, the NCA's National Coffee Drinking Trends (NCDT) market research study found that 31 percent of American adults consumed gourmet coffee beverages daily. That rose to 34 percent in 2014's report. Meanwhile, the daily non-gourmet coffee consumption dropped to 35 percent from last year's 39 percent.

Gourmet coffee beverages consist of espresso-based beverages and regular coffee made with gourmet coffee beans. The actual daily consumption of espresso-based beverages increased in 2014, accounting for the increase in gourmet coffee beverage consumption revealed in the NCDT.

Consumers aged 25 to 39 are the strongest consumers of gourmet coffee beverages with 42 percent saying they consume it daily.

34%
of American adults consume
gourmet coffee daily

18%
consume espresso-based
beverages daily

61%
consume coffee daily

42%
of 25 to 39 year-olds consume
gourmet coffee daily

**Daily consumption of
gourmet coffee beverages:**

48 percent
of Hispanic-Americans

42 percent
of Asian-Americans

32 percent
of Caucasian-Americans

23 percent
of African-Americans

Daily consumption of gourmet coffee beverages is also strongest among Hispanic-Americans (48 percent), followed by Asian-Americans (42 percent).

**Americans drink more coffee
than they drink soda**

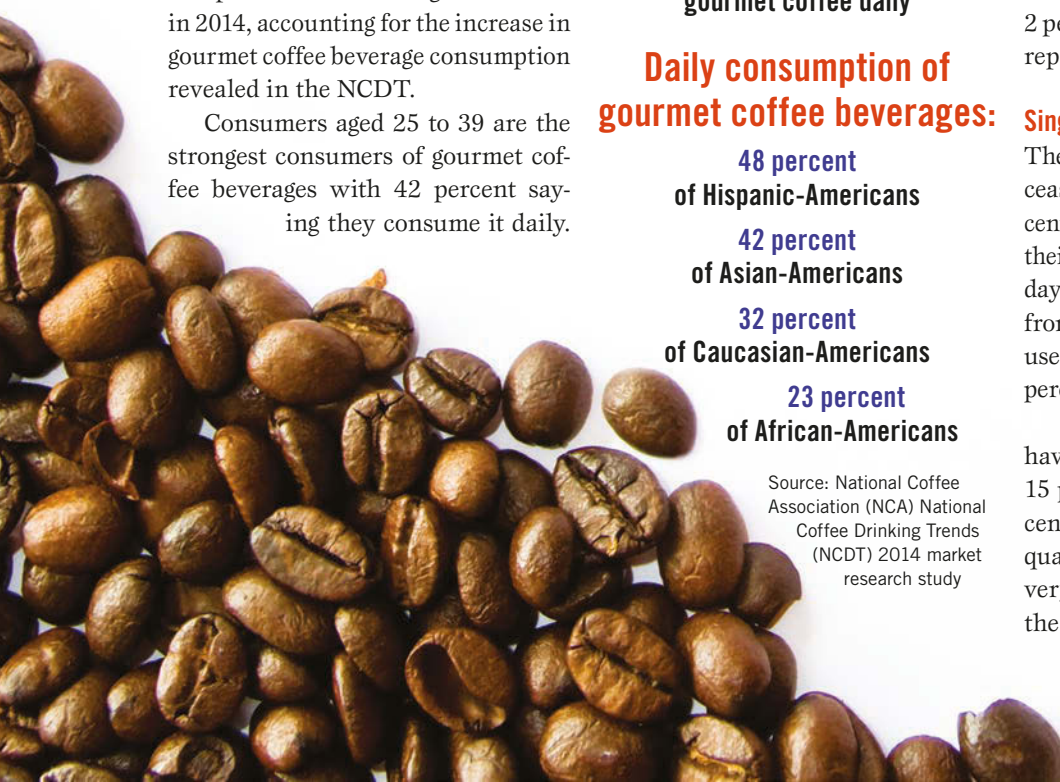
U.S. consumers continue to drink more coffee than soft drinks, with a gap that has widened over the last several years, reports the NCA. Daily consumption of coffee came in at 61 percent of American adults, compared with soft drinks' 41 percent. While the widening gap stems from a decline in daily consumption of soft drinks, daily consumption of coffee remains strong but steady with a drop of only 2 percent, a move within the NCDT's reported margin of error.

Single-cup still increasing

The trend of single-cup coffee has not ceased. The NCDT found that the percentage of coffee drinkers who prepared their coffee with a single-cup brewer the day before grew 9 percent to 29 percent from 20 percent in 2013. Those who used a drip coffee maker declined 5 percent to 53 percent from 58 percent.

The percent of Americans who have a single-cup brewer at home is 15 percent this year, up from 12 percent in 2013 and 10 percent in 2012. A quarter of respondents reported being very or somewhat likely to buy one in the next six months. ◀

Source: National Coffee Association (NCA) National Coffee Drinking Trends (NCDT) 2014 market research study



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¹Automatic Merchandiser, Operator Reader Poll, New Product of the Year - Hot Beverage Category, 2013

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Count on it: Four ways to create a better business culture

By Ben White, Contributing Editor

Operators need to count their money, product, problems and progress to create a better business culture, which can be achieved by integrating control boards, VMS systems and other technologies.

The world of automated food and beverage services (vending, OCS, micro markets and beyond) appears to be getting more complicated every year. Cashless, telemetry, Affordable Care Act (ACA) compliance and a host of hardware and software changes can send an operator's head reeling. Our industry progresses with technological improvements, to be sure — but how can we make the technology we already possess actually produce better results? Is the technology we currently own making better procedures, happier customers and more loyal employees? Can technology actually produce a smooth daily delivery cycle as product flows from the warehouse to the field? The answers, I believe, can be found in the simple act of counting. That which we count, we measure. That which can be measured can improve. Improvement fosters accomplishment, and accomplishment makes room for growth. Creating a “culture of counting” at your business will build better operating procedures which will better adapt your organization to whatever lies ahead for our industry.

No. 1: Count your money

Vending equipment has been collecting accurate cash information for over 20 years. Since the dawn of the Digital Exchange

(more commonly known as DEX) in the early 1990s, control boards have been tirelessly counting the coins and bills accepted for our food and beverages — right down to the nickel. One of the first questions I ask potential clients is, “Are you confident that the money collected from your machines made it all the way to your bank account?” I ask this because most operators aren't 100 percent sure, and in my opinion, industry technology isn't helping much if it's not helping the operator secure their income.

Every operator knows that counting money can be a chore, but it's crit-

ical to success and requires diligent consistency. Here are a few questions that good processing room systems and technology should be able to answer every day:

- How many machines were short more than \$2 yesterday?
- Were the shortages caused by machine failure, human data entry error or are they short without explanation?
- How many “mystery” shortages are we seeing each day, and from which routes?
- If faulty equipment is to blame for a shortage, was it repaired?



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- Do our cashless receipts match the electronic deposits we received?

Counting money accurately is everyone's business. Route drivers, technicians and processing staff all need to take accurate currency counting seriously. Cash accountability should be a daily priority for at least one manager. The more we count — the more we keep!

No. 2: Count your product Admittedly, counting product is a bit more complicated than counting receipts. Creating sustainable inventory systems has been the bane of many a manager. The daily cycle of distribution (warehouse, truck, location, machine, warehouse) sees product moving about at almost lightning speed. It can be managed, however, and I suggest tackling product accountability by focusing at the point-of-sale level.

Once again, control boards do an excellent job of collecting sales data. It is the route driver's job to treat the collection of that data as importantly as he or she treats the collection of cash. Verified beginning or ending machine inventories are what make or break prekit based delivery cycles. A culture of verifying item-level inventories should be embedded into every single person who visits a machine. This includes technicians and customer service personnel. Machine level spiral and column counts can be verified on most handheld based vending management systems (VMS) in under 30 seconds. Taking this time at every machine and making column counting part of each and every vend visit will send ripples of efficiency throughout the organization. My work with operators around North America has shown there to be significantly improved sales to sellout ratios on routes dedicated to counting every machine every day, as well as fewer daily "fires" for the

route drivers involved. If automated retail delivery can be boiled down to Fill It, Clean It, Count It — then verifying machine inventories are essential to success.

No. 3: Count your problems How many snack machines were serviced yesterday with five or more empty columns? How many micro markets were serviced and left with more than three empty products? How many soda machines yesterday recorded more than 10 units of spoilage? These types of daily delivery cycle questions can be answered by current VMS and need to be analyzed by operations teams on a daily basis. Problems that are tracked have a good chance of getting fixed. Problems that aren't have no incentive to change. Obviously, not every "problem" can be watched all the time. It may be best to pick 1 or 2 metrics (high sold out machines, low volume machines, under filled machines, etc.) and simply begin tracking them for a week. Most operators are amazed at what they learn when they take the time to count or track a nagging operational problem.

No. 4: Count your progress Where does the operating team want to be 6 months, 3 months or even a month from today? Tracked metrics, such as "machines short more than \$2" should begin to show improvement within 20 to 30 business days. Weekly or monthly management meetings that include a review of operating metrics usually generate positive discussion and drive productivity. A culture of counting makes an excellent springboard for better communications throughout an organization. Tracking progress with tangible, measurable metrics can be used as an excellent motivating tool and give members of the operating team focus and meaning.

Creating a culture of regular counting can certainly be met with resistance. When change comes to a company, it often shows up dressed as "more work" which can strain thinly staffed operations. In addition to change, the more we count, the more we begin to hold those who are counting accountable.

Operators must work with their employees to agree on how quickly a culture of counting can be incorporated. Starting slowly is better than not starting at all. Once regular counting procedures become entrenched, more can always be added. Success breeds success, so celebrate progress whenever possible. Has a route driver inventoried every soda machine on his/her route for a week? Congratulate them with a gift card. Have cash accountability issues gone down by 25 percent over the last month? Buy pizza for the office and let them know why. Technology works best when the humans who use it have incentive to make it work better. Technology in the hands of those who think it's useless has very little chance of long term success.

Advancements in automation are certain to continue shaping the future. Becoming a data-driven company places operators in a great position to accommodate whatever comes next. Regular, consistent counting procedures are key to gathering data worth using. Clean It, Fill It, Count It and you won't go wrong! | ◀



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ben White was the general manager at Monumental Vending in Beltsville, Md. He recently started Vending Insights, Inc. to

help operators incorporate technology and advance large projects. Contact White via email at ben@vendinginsights.com.

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Investing for the future

By Adrienne Zimmer, Assistant Editor

All Star Services' investment in technology, such as telemetry, cashless and an updated VMS, revitalized this Michigan-based company to become one of the largest vending, office coffee and foodservice operations in the Midwest.



Investing in vending technology can be expensive and intimidating. There is never a guarantee that the investment will bring better margins, but in 2008, All Star Services took a technological leap of faith and hasn't looked back. Technology has allowed this 19-route operation to combine its four-location operation inventories,

Jeff and Suzanne Smith, center, are proud to be a part of a family run business. The Smiths' three children Duncan and Devin, right, and Caroline, along with her husband Jon, left, also work in the family business.

reduce costs by cutting down on the number of routes and witness better sales from cashless installation. Jeff Smith, president and owner of All Star Services, and Duncan Smith, vice president of operations, believe that the company's investment in technology has allowed them to become more efficient and focus on the consumer experience at the point-of-sale.

Sales and acquisitions

Jeff never dreamed as a kid that he would end up as the president of a vending operation. From 1977 to 1987 he worked for the Coca-Cola Co., holding a variety of positions and relocating with his wife, Suzanne, seven times over a ten-year period. During that time, Jeff's father-in-law owned Coca-Cola Bottling which operated a vending division called All Star Vending Services in Port Huron, Mich. In 1985, Suzanne's father sold the Coca-Cola franchise to focus solely on vending. Jeff and Suzanne moved back to the Midwest in 1987 to work at the family vending business. Over time, the Smiths bought out family and gained 100 percent of All Star Services' vending, office coffee and foodservice business.

Over the next 27 years, the company made six acquisitions in order to gain territory and additional business. Because of the growth in 2001, All Star Services added a third location in the Metro Detroit market. And later, after several other acquisitions, in 2006 added a fourth location in Saginaw. To date, All Star Services operates throughout Southeast and Mid-Michigan in 23 counties with four service locations.

Sales and acquisitions are a large part of the company's business strategy, and Jeff noted that if there were to be an opportunity for additional acquisitions, the company would be interested in discussions. However, Jeff's largest concern with acquisitions nowadays is the other compa-

Think global, act local

Giving back to the community is an integral part of All Star Services. Over the last several years the company has been involved in making annual contributions and doing fundraising for the Girl Scouts of America, the Boy Scouts of America, the United Way and most recently, the March of Dimes. The company encourages employee participation in local and regional community service. Additionally, the company sponsors local youth hockey teams and contributes food donations to the Mid-City Nutrition Food Bank in Port Huron, Mich. To lead by example, Jeff Smith serves on the City of Port Huron Planning Commission and the St. Joseph Mercy Hospital Board where he holds the position of chairman.

ny's technology. When considering a sale, Jeff gauges the investment needed to bring the other company's machines onto All Star Services' system. Although technology is now a large part of what makes All Star Services so successful, that wasn't always the case.

From family level to DEX

From 1987 to 2006, All Star Services was running on product family level with data entry from route cards. The company knew it was selling a certain amount of chips and candy, but it did not know specifically how much of each brand it was selling.

Route drivers were overstocking machines, each truck was a rolling warehouse and it would take days for inventory information to reach the office. Business was maintaining, but the company hadn't realized the amount of inefficiencies until 2006, when Jeff's son, Duncan began working for All Star Services.

Third generation, new perspective

When Duncan, vice president of operations, began officially working for the company, he recalls little to no technological integration in the office or on the routes. "We knew what we were buying, but we didn't know where we were selling it," he said. When Duncan — and his other siblings, Devin and Caroline, shortly after — began working for the company, Jeff admits that the addition jumpstarted the business's technology investment. "With my children coming in to the company it was time for us to look towards the future and how we were going to integrate technology," recalled Jeff. "The younger people today bring the energy and technology into the business that was so greatly needed. Before my kids became active in the company, we weren't moving as rapidly into the technological side. They forced us to look beyond today and towards tomorrow."

In 2008, a year and a half after Duncan's arrival, the company invested in its first vending management software (VMS) with Crane Streamware. They put the route drivers on handhelds with full DEX on machines. The company was now able to track item level sales by machine.

“Before my kids became active in the company, we weren't moving as rapidly into the technological side. They forced us to look beyond today and towards tomorrow.”



Prekitting is an integral part of All Star Services' operation and part of the daily routine for Ashley Stoia, left, Morgan Jacobs and Gena Main.

Route drivers began to see how the new use of technology would aid them in the short and long haul. "When you make change, you'll always discover resistance along the way. But we were able to get through that over time," said Jeff. "Overall you have to step back and look at the entire system and what is working." The company found that the employee whom they thought would be most resistant to the technology turned out to be the most receptive.

Prekitting

Once All Star Services began using DEX, it wasn't long before the company sought other ways in which to use technology in the office and the warehouse. Soon after its VMS integration, All Star Services began using Cantaloupe Systems' Seed device for scheduling and routing and Lightspeed Automation in 2009 for prekitting. "I saw integrating technology a must, and Cantaloupe helped us get there," said Duncan. The staff was able to efficiently use Cantaloupe's Seed device to gain daily online reports of sales data, power losses and machine issues. This new information allowed All Star Services to begin prekitting, as the company knew exactly which items consumers were purchasing.

Retail-oriented loyalty promotions enhance offerings

The team at All Star Services found that they had higher success when they could offer promotions to consumers.

"The more you promote, the more interest you create for the customer," said Duncan Smith, vice president of operations. All Star Services found that adopting technology would be a large part of how they could offer these promotions. "Telemetry and cashless, coupled with the USConnect loyalty rewards program, has allowed us to offer promotions to the customer that are similar to retail," he continued.

All Star Services is an original member of USConnect. USCon-

nect's mission of providing quality fresh foods, healthy choices in the workplace, eco-friendly equipment and an integrated network managed through industry-leading technology was exactly in line with its business model. With USConnect, the company began using trending events as promotional platforms.

In micro markets, for example, directly after the New Year, All Star Services offered discounts on bundled 'healthy' items such as Baked Lays and bottled water. And when Major League Baseball (MLB) Opening Day started in March, they ran a promotion on corn dogs, peanuts and Cracker Jacks.

"I saw prekitting with lights as a necessity from the start," explained Duncan. "It takes about one third the time, maybe even less than that to pick from lights versus picking from paper. I wouldn't be able to pick all of our routes without lights."

Due to prekitting, volume went up on a per-route level and drivers were servicing fewer machines per day. The company was also able to use smaller trucks, translating into less fueling costs. Automating the processes allowed the inventory from All Star Services' four locations to be combined to a centralized warehouse.

Duncan credits the company's technological integrations with the patience and vision of the employees and management team. "We wouldn't be able to make changes without the support of our entire staff," he said. "Technology is a huge time and financial investment and everyone works hard to make sure it's an investment that's right for us."

With investment comes return

All Star Services is still investing in technology. In February 2014, the company made the transition to Cantaloupe Seed Office and Seed Mobile.

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"I sought out Cantaloupe because I wanted a one-stop-shop," Duncan said. "Much like how I want our customers to think of us as their one-stop-shop, we needed something similar for our telemetry, inventory and routing."

With the Seed Mobile system, the drivers now use an iPhone, iPad or iPod Touch for handhelds and physical DEXing at the machine is no longer part of the vending process. As all inventory changes are automatically updated in the Seed Office cloud, the staff can see real time, instant inventory adjustments, which makes scheduling of machines and routes significantly easier. "All of our drivers see the benefits of having real-time data," said Duncan. "They can make inventory changes today and get correct product tomorrow, where in the past we wouldn't know of inventory adjustments until the following day. It's easier for the office staff as well for



Brady Owens uses an iPad with LightSpeed Mobile.

merchandising and scheduling. We all see the importance of real-time inventory adjustments."

Adding telemetry and prekitting has allowed the company to save money in the form of cutting back routes. "If we were operating under the same system we were when I came in, we would have twenty-seven routes," said Duncan. "Now, we are only going to machines that need to be serviced."

Returns have been high from all of the investments the company has

made in technology. "The company has seen sales increases from better merchandising, sales increases from less out of stock products, reduced costs from not having as many routes, less overhead from having fewer vehicles on the road and reduction

in costs from not wasting drivers' time," said Duncan. "As a company we have seen increased productivity and quality of work from our drivers because they are more efficient and are being paid better."

When All Star Services switched systems, it was able to eliminate 30 percent of its routes. "Our drivers are doing 50 percent more dollar volume and going to an equal amount of machines, if not less per day," said Duncan.

Vending technology



Cashless as another option

All Star Services didn't just invest in operations, but also in ways that benefited the consumer. After Duncan and his siblings joined the business, they made it known that consumers have multiple methods of payment and that the company needed to begin looking at all of the possible ways they could appeal to that consumer. One solution was to offer cashless. "The younger generation doesn't carry cash and we needed to offer all methods of payment that cater to them," said Duncan.

The company has seen as much as 30 percent sales increase in locations just by adding card readers. "On average we have had 12 to 15 percent sales increase after installing cashless," said Duncan. About 50 percent of the company's machines are cashless, but its goal is to have 100 percent cashless within the next few years.

Profile All Star Services

Founded: 1963

Owners: Jeff and Suzanne Smith

Headquarters:
Port Huron, Mich.

Number of employees: 59

Number of routes:
16 vending, 3 OCS

Number of micro market locations: 15

Software provider: Cantaloupe

Micro markets boost sales

The ability to offer a wider selection of products to consumers drew All Star Services into micro markets in 2011. "The vending business was stagnant," said Duncan. "Micro markets give us the opportunity to sell more SKUs, more goods and really become more

retail oriented." Micro markets have drastically increased sales, twenty to twenty five percent, in locations that were previously traditional vending.

Fresh food sales have grown from 8 or 9 percent of total sales to over double that. Duncan credits the company's integration of technology and promotions with the success of its micro markets.

The future

Although there are many uncertainties in the vending industry, the Smiths are optimistic about the future of All Star Services. "The industry veterans within the company are a bit more conservative, while us younger folks are more willing to take risks," said Duncan. "We make a good balance." As one of those risks, technology has helped All Star Services increase its profits, cut down on costs and look forward to the next innovation. | ◀

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A rich blend of reduced fat milk, cream, brownie and fudge flavors will instantly satisfy the choco-holic in any customer. The new ready-to-drink beverage offers an opportunity to bring consumers the authentic and distinctive taste of Cold Stone Creamery in a convenient bottle. The product comes in 12 count, 12 ounce bottles and has a seven month shelf life.

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Starbucks introduces its **Interactive Cup® Digital Brewer** featuring touch-screen ordering and a 3-bean hopper for greater coffee variety. It's a sleek new way to ensure everyone is getting an exciting and rewarding coffee experience. The machine features brew by the cup or carafe, plumbed and filtered water line and a large capacity waste bin.

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365 Retail Markets released its new **Gen3c Kiosk** that comes equipped with the most recent software update which includes bilingual capabilities, an enhanced user portal, email / SMS receipt options, new reporting and an updated



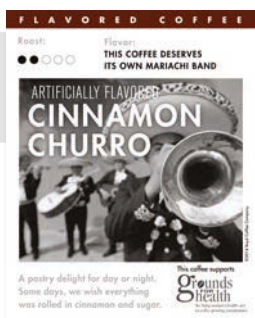
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Cinnamon Churro Flavored Coffee brings the popular Mexican pastry's fresh-baked flavor to a delicious, rich and sweet coffee drink. Cinnamon Churro Flavored Coffee will be available for a limited time only. The ground coffee is available in cases of 46 2.75-ounce packets.

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Veri's Orange Organic Soda is made with sparkling water, organic cane sugar, organic orange juice from concentrate, organic lemon juice from concentrate, organic carrot juice from concentrate and organic stevia leaf extract. It comes in a case of three 4-packs per tray with clear shrink wrap.

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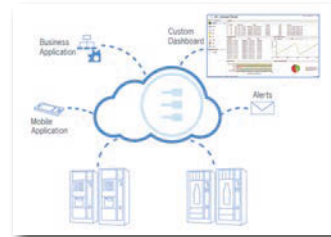
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NAMA pulls off another successful OneShow

NAMA's Vice President of Events LyNae Schleyer announced a total attendance of 4,304 at the 2014 NAMA OneShow that took place in Chicago, Ill., from April 9 to 11. Schleyer reported that 1,426 total operators representing 574 companies participated this year, slightly less than 2013's number. **Learn more about the 2014 OneShow online at www.vendingmarketwatch.com/11434044.**

Fitting together a select number of well-priced products to return the best profits is at the core of a vending or micro market business. It requires time, attention and data. With more products than ever before, the task has some operators struggling. That's why Michael Kasavana, Ph.D., NAMA Endowed Professor, School of Hospitality Business at Michigan State University, introduced a redesigned menu engineering model borrowed from the foodservice sector, and tailored it to the vending and micro market industry. Kasavana presented the model, called Product Intelligence, to attendees of the NAMA OneShow session, "Product Engineering: Pricing Drives Success" on



April 9. "Menu engineering, as a pricing model, is the no. 1 selling pricing model for restaurants. Through product intelligence, it can be part of the vending and micro market business," Kasavana told operators. **For the full story, visit www.vendingmarketwatch.com/11430864.**



Now that operators have made the leap into micro markets, many are curious to learn better ways to maximize profitability within those markets. In the OneShow session entitled "Maximizing Profitability In A Micro Market," Avanti's Jim Brinton and 365 Retail Markets' Joe Hessling offered operators nearly a dozen straightforward ways to succeed in a micro market. **To read the full story, visit www.vendingmarketwatch.com/11431411.**

BONUS CONTENT on VendingMarketWatch.com



Burdette Beckmann management team members Mike Wein, (left), Lyndon Breaux, Paul Van Vleck, Doug Schnurr, Robert Taylor, Dave Jorgensen, Greg White, Tom Ferraro, Lisa Mattias, Eric King, Robert Mattias, John Platt, Ashley Grater, Tom Jackson, Kevin Boland and Sean Geaney, gather in Chicago, Ill., for NAMA's OneShow.



Dave Wilcox (far left) and Paul Schindelar (far right) of Mondelez International present Mike Edwards with the 2013 Route Driver of the Year award. Edwards of Greensboro Vending located in Greensboro, N.C., was selected out of over 100 nominees to win the award. He was accompanied by his wife, Jennifer. **Read more about Edwards at www.vendingmarketwatch.com/11317885.**



VIDEO: 2014 NAMA OneShow Attendee Reflections

www.vendingmarketwatch.com/11416049

BLOG: Multifaceted Operators Need Multi-Purpose Equipment

www.vendingmarketwatch.com/11434062



Pete Tullio, left, and Carla Balakgie, of NAMA, present Randy Smith of LightSpeed Automation with the NAMA Allied Member of the Year — Vending Award. For more information visit www.vendingmarketwatch.com/11390623.



"Forget what you're supposed to offer and dream about the type of service you could be offering." Those words were said by Donnie Pemberton, president of The Pepi Companies during the NAMA OneShow session "Not UR Daddy's Vending: The Evolution Of Today's Convenient Refreshment Company." Donnie, and his father, Vic Pemberton, current CEO, have been providing solutions to customers for over 30 years. They represent two generations, but are unified in their approach to the future — focusing on customers, employees and the company. For the full story, www.vendingmarketwatch.com/11430963.



Sylvia Rowe, chair of NAMA's Nutrition Advisory Council, was among several industry leaders to announce NAMA's new FitPick program. For the full story, visit www.vendingmarketwatch.com/11429694.



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- ✓ Whole Grain
- ✓ Fiber
- ✓ Real Fruit and Rolled Oats
- ✓ B Vitamins
- ✓ Iron

Win over more breakfast eaters with two delicious belVita biscuits. **Original belVita Breakfast Biscuits** provide nutritious sustained energy, while **belVita Soft Baked** satisfies the 40% of people who prefer soft breakfast items². Carry both to make sure everyone has a delicious way to achieve a #MorningWin.

Great for Grab-'N-Go

- Convenient individual packaging
- Promote with high-margin items to boost profit potential
- Perfect pairing with coffee, yogurt and fruit



belVita Soft Baked

Original belVita Breakfast Biscuits

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