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UPCOMING EVENTS

February 18–20, 2025
WPMA Expo
MGM Grand Resort
Las Vegas, NV
www.wpma.com

March 4 & 5, 2025
The Convenience U
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Celebrating #100

Hello and Happy New Year, welcome to 2025, and our 100th edition. Who knew way back in 2008, that we'd publish 100 editions and still be going strong? Quick answer, nobody did. When I took a leap of faith in myself, and my abilities, I was met with many "who does she think she is..." and, "you'll never make it" and my favorite, "you'll be bankrupt in no time."

Thankfully, the majority of those I had met along the way were forward-thinking, supportive and encouraging, and those same companies have worked with me throughout this incredible journey. Thank you, I appreciate you and I appreciate all that you do to make this industry better.

Wow, we've seen changes, haven't we? Remember when tobacco was an everyday purchase in the convenience store market...smokes, milk and bread were the staples, throw in some penny candy and a bag of chips, and we're set. Right!

Back in 2008 greener carwash chemicals to contactless payments were introduced along with the launch of WE Expect I.D. followed by the first ban of tobacco displays. Many new companies were vying to rule this new dark tobacco market. Some retailers used shower curtains to hide product in the early days, wooden lock type boxes, steel curtains and more were soon to follow.

The convenience store market in Canada was made up of 23,500 stores that employed 165,000 employees with sales of \$32 billion. Today there are 26,000+ stores employing 227,000 people and collecting over \$21 billion in taxes!

The year 2010 saw the introduction of HST, a ban on flavoured cigars, in-store promotions of tobacco were outlawed and Chip n Pin payment options were added to petroleum sales with EMV compliance to follow as unattended fueling was introduced.

2014 saw a ban on flavoured tobacco in Alberta, carwash loyalty programs were introduced. On the heels of the increased demand for Grab n Go foods came the introduction of branded foodservice partnerships followed by the signing of Bill 59 – listing of calorie counts on all labelling in an effort to curb obesity.

2019 saw the introduction of e-cigs and vapes, an increase in demand for healthier foodservice offerings, fresh foods, a single use plastic ban and a shift to mental health focus on employees.

Then there were the COVID years when the convenience store industry was deemed an "essential service."

And now, having endured a plethora of industry changes over the past 17+ years, we invite you to sit back and enjoy this, our 100th edition because, as always, your success is my business, and as always, my open-door policy to your valuable feedback remains not only intact, but stronger than ever. If there is a topic you'd like to have featured, or, if you have questions or perhaps you need an introduction, please feel free to email me at bjjohnstone@convenienceandcarwash.com or call 204-489-4215.

Brenda Jane Johnstone PUBLISHER

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Reflecting on 2024 and Looking Forward to 2025

As we start a new year, we reflect on the ones that have passed. Each year sees its share of happy moments as well as challenging or sad times. 2024 was no different.

I think it is fair to say that we've all seen our share of challenges this past year and are hoping for fewer of those in 2025. At *Convenience & Carwash Canada*, we are starting the new year with a celebration of our 100th issue of the publication. I had the pleasure of writing the Celebrating the 100th Issue of *Convenience & Carwash Canada* article in this issue and reading all of the congratulatory notes that the magazine has received is touching and greatly appreciated by our team. We do our very best each and every issue to bring the latest news and information to our readers and, as many of the messages we received note, a special acknowledgement goes to the magazine's founder and publisher Brenda Johnstone whose tireless energy and commitment to this industry is undeniable.

One of my favourite events each year is the annual conference of the Coffee Association of Canada (CAC). This year's conference was held at Angus Glen Golf Club on November 14. Taking place during what is known in Toronto as Taylor Swift week, everyone, including the Swifties in the crowd, was in a good mood and ready to talk coffee.

The Seize the Data panel presentation is always a very informative session at the conference, as well as the innovation panel, and the announcement of the winners of the CAC Awards. This year's keynote speaker, Arlene Dickinson, founder and general partner, District Ventures Group captured the attention of attendees during a fireside chat with conference host Tony Chapman.

Coffee is an important product for convenience stores and learning about the latest trends can lead you to profits and a loyal customer base. In this issue we look at coffee and how Generational Tastes Differ for Hot Beverages.

Thank you to our readers for being the reason we do what we do and thank you to everyone who provided information or agreed to interviews for articles in 2024. I look forward to what 2025 has in store. I hope it's a great year for you.

Angela Altass
MANAGING EDITOR



Robert Carter, president of the Coffee Association of Canada, moderates a Seize the Data panel at the association's recent annual conference. Panelists included Mauricio Vieira, vice president, food and beverage syndicated studies, Ipsos; Chris Brugman, director of client development at Circana; and Cheryl Hung, vice president, research, Dig Insights.

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AWARDS





RISE & DINE: BREAKFAST ON THE GO

BY MELINE BEACH

Often referred to as the most important meal of the day, breakfast fuels your body with essential nutrients to provide energy after an overnight period of fasting.

As a market that is projected to grow significantly over the next several years, breakfast also represents an opportunity for many convenience stores to cater to busy commuters who seek value and speed during their morning routine. Some c-stores realize the profit potential of breakfast programs and choose to capitalize on this expanding market segment with innovative programs designed to capture the breakfast crowd with quick, portable, and satisfying morning meals.

Consumer Preferences

Convenience is paramount for breakfast customers with busy schedules and on-the-go lifestyles. Handheld options that are easy to eat with minimal mess and bold flavours, as traditional favourites or innovative formats, are in high demand. Unique items like breakfast pizzas, topped with scrambled eggs, sausage, bacon, and cheese, offer a fresh twist on a favourite meal. For health-conscious customers, breakfast bowls featuring superfoods like chia seeds, berries, yogurt, granola, and nuts provide a lighter, nutrient-packed option. Plant-based and gluten-free alternatives appeal to consumers who seek options that align with their dietary preferences. Globally-inspired dishes, like Mexican breakfast burritos, Middle Eastern Shakshuka cups, Indian masala omelette wraps and French croissant breakfast sandwiches are some examples that cater to customers with an international palette, especially in urban areas.

Joseph Belcastro, general manager of the Classic Group of Companies, which has been serving the foodservice industry since 1962, highlights the growing appeal of grab-and-go breakfast items. “We’re seeing more interest in options like overnight

oats, yogurt parfaits, breakfast wraps, and sandwiches,” says Belcastro. “Ethnic variations of traditional breakfast items, offering unique flavours and new twists, have also gained traction over the past year.”

Some of their most innovative breakfast items and formats developed specifically for the c-store channel include peanut butter and chocolate overnight oats, energy bites, and spicy mayo breakfast hashbrown wraps.

In addition to product innovation, Belcastro adds that portability, as in convenient packaging, is also a key factor in profitability for c-store retailers. Heatable sandwiches and energy bites, which allow for on-the-go consumption, are gaining popularity.

Cost-effectiveness also plays a role in driving profitability. For under \$10, customers of Rabba Fine Foods can enjoy a variety of balanced and satisfying breakfast options that are both convenient and affordable. The family-owned enterprise has been serving breakfast since the 1960s and has established a network of 37 locations across the Greater Toronto Area.

“Our breakfast offerings include items like egg wraps, fruit salads, yogurt parfaits, and fresh bakery, such as croissants and muffins,” says Rima Rabba, head of marketing at Rabba Fine Foods. “Among these, fresh items like baked goods, granola yogurt parfaits and fruit salads are especially popular with our customers for their combination of freshness, taste, and convenience.”

Many Rabba locations also feature in-store Tim Hortons or Subway franchises, further expanding breakfast options for customers.

All-Day or Limited-Time Offering

For retailers looking to increase breakfast traffic, limited-time offerings (LTOs) can add excitement. New products or promotions, such as combo deals pairing breakfast items with coffee at discounted prices, not

only encourage cross-selling but can draw in customers looking for value.

Alternatively, all-day breakfast offers flexibility for customers with busy lifestyles and varying work schedules, including late risers, shift workers, and those simply craving breakfast foods at non-traditional hours.

“At Rabba, our peak times are weekday mornings, but we make breakfast available all day to meet the needs of busy professionals, commuters, and students,”

says Rabba. “Our menu is largely static for consistency, but we occasionally add LTOs and seasonal items to keep things exciting. Our grab-and-go options are prepared in-house using fresh ingredients from trusted suppliers.”

Marketing and Promotion

While quality and convenience are critical to the success of a breakfast program, effective marketing and promotion are equally essential for driving customer engagement and boosting sales.

“Over time, we’ve learned the importance of listening to customer feedback and adapting our offerings to meet their needs,” says Rabba, who claims that consistency in freshness, quality and accessibility, combined with a diverse range of options, are key factors to the

success of their breakfast program. “We also promote our offerings through in-store signage, digital platforms, and targeted campaigns that feature breakfast items at promotional prices, making them an attractive choice for our customers.”


Point-of-purchase advertising, including pump toppers can help promote a c-store’s breakfast program, as well as effective use of social media, mobile apps, loyalty programs and community partnerships.

Point-of-purchase advertising, such as pump toppers at gas stations, is a highly effective way to promote a c-store’s breakfast program as it directly targets customers while they fuel up, creating an immediate reminder to grab a quick meal. The integration of social media and mobile apps can help extend awareness by providing real-time updates on promotions, new menu items, and seasonal offers. Engaging customers through loyalty programs offers added incentives for repeat business. Partnering with local community organizations or events can further enhance visibility and create a sense of connection. Together, these tools create a cohesive strategy that not only drives awareness but also builds customer loyalty, boosts sales, and strengthens brand recognition.

Rabba takes a customer-centric approach to its food-service program by integrating its breakfast program into its broader community-focused initiatives to ensure it remains top of mind and aligns with the Rabba commitment to providing fresh, convenient, and high-quality food solutions.

Belcastro echoes the importance of a strong marketing and merchandising strategy for a successful breakfast program. “We help C&G operators with marketing initiatives, merchandising, and plan-o-grams to ensure consistency across the board,” he explains. “In addition to our distribution network, we partner with reliable distributors that ensure fresh products and on-time delivery. For C&G operators facing labour shortages or ingredient inconsistencies with their in-house program, we offer solutions that allow them to focus on maintaining a well-stocked and visually appealing food section.”

Going Forward

Breakfast remains a significant opportunity for C&G retailers to drive traffic and boost sales. By focusing on convenience, quality and traditional favourites or innovative menu items, retailers can meet the evolving needs of today’s on-the-go consumers. The key to success lies in understanding and exceeding customer expectations with portable breakfasts, bold flavours, and affordable pricing. Successfully marketed and promoted as an all-day breakfast program or LTO, C&G retailers are well-positioned to offer customers a quick delicious start to their day. 

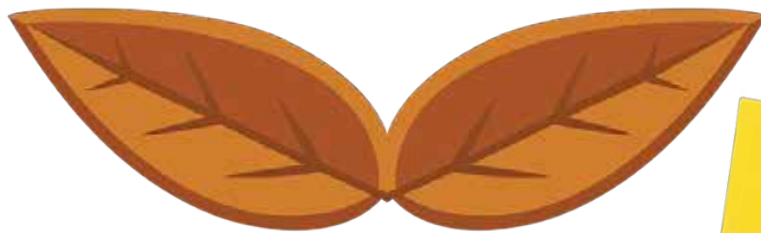
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Convenience is paramount for breakfast customers with busy schedules and on-the-go lifestyles. Handheld options that are easy to eat with minimal mess and bold flavours, as traditional favourites or innovative formats, are in high demand.

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CLEAN WASHROOMS CONVEY A MESSAGE

Washrooms convey a message to customers: “Consumers associate clean restrooms with a well-run business,” says Kris Alderson, senior marketing manager, Bradley Company.



BY ANGELA ALTASS

Sixty per cent of Americans say they'd spend more money at businesses with clean, well-maintained restrooms — highlighting the value of restroom cleanliness for customer loyalty and trust.

Bradley's *Healthy Handwashing Survey* reports that 60 per cent of Americans said they would willingly spend more money at a business with clean, well-maintained restrooms. Another 60 per cent said that when out running errands, they take restroom breaks at businesses they know have reliably good restrooms.

“Consumers value and prioritize the cleanliness of restroom environments and will reward the business with their patronage, which is invaluable for convenience stores and carwashes,” says Alderson. “Conversely, bad restrooms have the opposite effect. More than half of respondents said an unclean or unpleasant public restroom shows poor management and causes them to lower their opinion of the overall establishment.”

While it's been five years since the pandemic, 80 per cent of respondents still report being more conscious about coming into contact with germs due to COVID, says Alderson.

“Moreover, stores are the number one type of facility that cause people the most concern about germs,

even more so than healthcare facilities,” says Alderson. “It may sound basic but increased cleaning and better stocking of supplies are among the most important upgrades to a restroom.”

Creating a unified, flowing design in restrooms can help create a clean and cohesive look, says Alderson: “Select washroom accessories that visually tie spaces together with a common motif. Look for product model portfolios of washroom faucets, dispensers, mirrors, hand dryers, etc. that are designed with similar aesthetics, including forms, colours, and finishes, to unify and harmonize washroom designs.”

Washroom maintenance will always be a top priority at Irving Oil locations, says Alex Cunningham, marketing manager Lead at Irving Oil.

“Customers are at the heart of everything we do and offering clean washrooms is a tangible way to show our thanks and respect for their loyalty to us,” says Cunningham. “A clean and well-maintained washroom is a key factor in our customers' overall satisfaction and trust in our brand and we've learned through their feedback that having a reliable place for customers to stop is very important.”

This has been the fourth year that Irving Oil has >>



offered customers a chance to win \$10,000 for submitting feedback on their experience at an Irving washroom. Prizes are awarded in Irving's three North American regions: Quebec, Atlantic Canada, and New England. Customers scan a QR code on the sign on washroom mirrors or the back of stall doors that opens a text message where they can type in the site code and provide feedback.

"Across all three of our regions, we receive over 20,000 pieces of feedback each year," says Cunningham. "The majority of our feedback is very positive, with many valued customers expressing that they appreciate and can count on clean and welcoming stops for themselves and their families. We also value suggestions from our

customers that can improve their experiences at our sites and we act on any constructive feedback as soon as it is received. We are proud to be known for having the cleanest washrooms on the road and the feedback generated from our *Really Clean Washrooms* program helps us continue to do better. Our retail partners, dealers and, most importantly, the frontline staff, make this a successful program."

Products that promote hygiene should always be a priority for business owners who are upgrading their washrooms, says Anny Ang, director of channel marketing at Moen Canada.

"Not only does selecting high-quality touchless fixtures enhance



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The Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), a non-profit environmental advocacy organization, recently released the sixth edition of Issue with Tissue Report and Sustainability Scorecard, which grades 145 different paper towel, toilet paper and facial tissue brands on their climate impact.

The report notes that some companies are now embracing forest and climate solutions. Georgia-Pacific has started selling 100 per cent recycled content toilet paper and Kimberly-Clark earned passing grades on the scorecard for the first time. “Of the big three toilet paper makers, P&G is now the lone holdout,” said Ashley Jordan, report leader and corporate campaign advocate at NRDC. “But now, for the first time, we are seeing other major manufacturers take steps to end the tree-to-toilet pipeline.”

the customer experience, it also simplifies daily tasks for staff,” says Ang. “The smartest thing a store owner can do to mitigate the need for frequent repairs is to install products that can withstand high-volume use.”

Washrooms can greatly affect a customer’s overall perception of a business, says Ang.

“Cleanliness and modernity are clear signs that a business is committed to providing a positive experience for their customers,” says Ang. “Installing high-quality products can help achieve a balance of attractive design with durability, ensuring that washrooms remain both functional and aesthetically pleasing over time. With the rise of smart products used in homes, it is only natural that consumers would look for that same level of modernity and innovation in commercial spaces. Moen is always committed to developing innovations and products

80 per cent of surveyed customers say they wouldn’t return to a restaurant with a dirty restroom, underscoring how advancements in touch-free technology and innovative hand dryers are crucial for meeting post-pandemic cleanliness expectations.

that address the ever-changing needs and preferences of those in the commercial space.”

Bradley’s *Healthy Handwashing Survey* shows that 86 per cent of adults believe it is important to have touchless fixtures in a public restroom and 70 per cent day they are more likely to return to a business that offers no-touch capabilities in its restrooms.

“Mechanics used in touch-free technology have been significantly improved in just the past few years,” notes Alderson. “While some older touchless models have sensors that deliver spotty soap and water activations, today’s designs incorporate advanced sensing technology ensuring continuous and reliable washing and less soap splashes leftover in and around the basin, delivering a

>>

better end user experience.”

Paper towels are also still popular for customers, with 70 per cent of survey respondents saying they use them as hand-held shields to avoid skin contact with flushers, faucets and doors.

Hand drying options are a key part of achieving cleanliness in restrooms, says Joshua Griffing, director of marketing and international sales, Excel Dryer.

“Since its inception, innovation has fueled the evolution of the hand dryer industry,” says Griffing. “The most recent advancements revolve around environmental impact, design appeal, efficiency and hygiene. As concerns around germs heightened, Excel Dryer developed a new state-of-the-art filtering system to eliminate viruses and bacteria. To address the environmental impact, Excel Dryer tasked engineers with developing hand dryers that work faster and use less energy. Accessibility regulations have inspired innovative designs for sleeker models, and the demand for aesthetically appealing décor has brought about some of the most creative innovations, including hand dryers with custom covers.”

Excel Dryer recently joined forces with Metrix Labs to conduct a global survey engaging more than 4,000

participants across four groups: Architects and design professionals, facility managers, restaurant owners, and consumers. It showed the number one concern post-pandemic is cleanliness and hygiene and 80 per cent of those surveyed said they would not, or might not, return to a restaurant with a dirty restroom.

“Most customers know how important hand washing is for their health but many don’t realize how crucial the drying process is,” says Griffing. “Germs spread much faster on wet hands. Research from the University of Auckland, New Zealand found dry hands result in a 99 per cent reduction in the level of bacteria transmission when compared to wet hands. To put this another way, wet hands are 1,000 times more likely to transfer bacteria, so customers’ hands are never fully clean until they are clean and dry.”

Since 80 per cent of germs are transferred by touch, hands-free drying options go a long way to reduce cross-contamination, says Griffing.

“Touch-free features in public restrooms are no longer considered a perk,” says Griffing. “They’re a necessity with customers striving to touch as few surfaces as possible. To keep customers comfortable, happy, healthy and coming back, convenience stores and carwashes should aim for restrooms with the fewest touchpoints and the least paper waste. Paper towels on the floor and clogging up toilets give the appearance of a dirty restroom.” ■

Touch-free technology is no longer a luxury—it’s a necessity. Wet hands are 1,000 times more likely to spread bacteria, making advanced drying solutions a critical step in achieving true cleanliness and keeping customers coming back.





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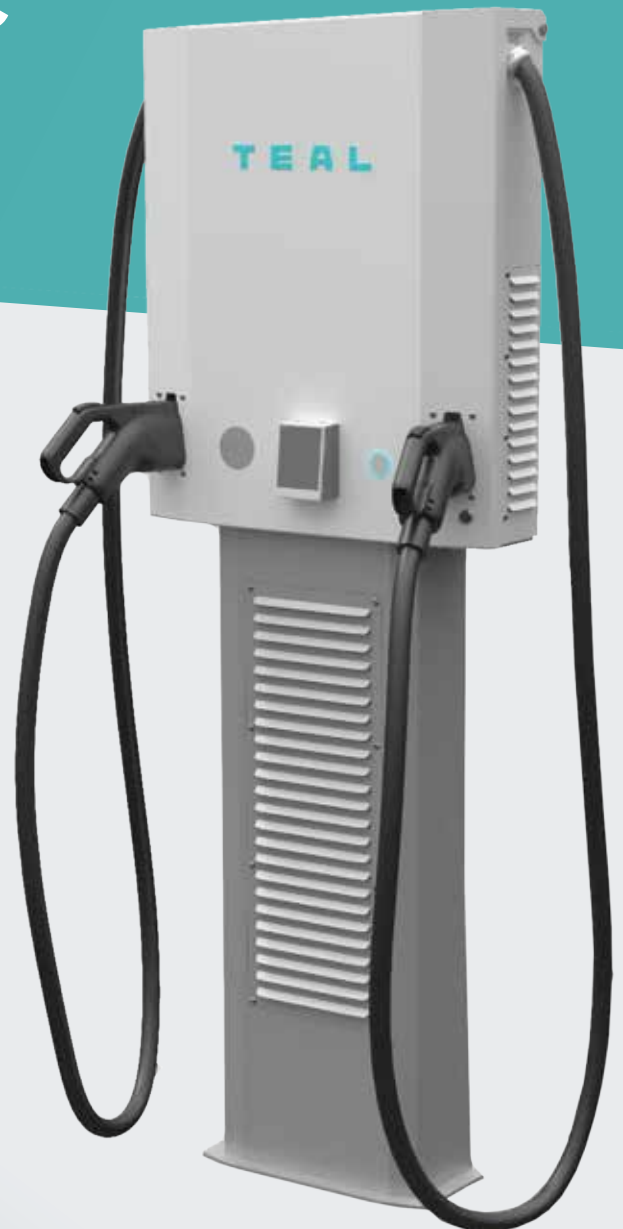
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GENERATIONAL TASTES DIFFER FOR HOT BEVERAGES

BY ANGELA ALTASS

The hot beverage category still has brewed coffee leading the way but staying on top of generational preferences can be a key to success as specialty coffees, teas and even cold brews and iced coffees attract more attention year over year.

There is a generational difference in how people prefer to consume coffee, said Judi Saliba, senior sales executive, TFI Food Equipment Solutions.

“Boomers primarily consume hot brewed coffee and while millennials and teens are also consumers of that category, there is a trend for hot speciality coffee and iced coffee,” said Saliba. “According to the Coffee Association of Canada (CAC), the category is consumed in different dayparts by cohort: 60 per cent of hot brewed coffee is consumed by boomers before lunch with nine out of 10 servings consumed at home while 55 per cent of millennials consume coffee as a daytime snack out of home.”

To be relevant, operators must offer the best quality coffee, along with an experience that is consistent and fast, said Saliba, noting that Franke ‘A’ line equipment offers a broad range of coffee

and espresso-based beverages, including iced coffee.

At a recent CAC conference in Markham, Ontario, Mauricio Vieira, vice president, food and beverage syndicated studies, Ipsos, noted that Gen X and Boomers still account for three-quarters of total coffee consumption. Hot brewed coffee remains popular with boomers while millennials like speciality hot coffees. Chris Brugman, director of client development at Circana, noted that younger Canadians (some millennials but mainly Gen Z consumers) tend to prefer cold coffees.

“We have a challenging balancing act,” said Vieira. “How do we play with innovation for tomorrow while balancing our core market of today? Over the past 10 years coffee has grown in consumption per capita and most of it has been driven by speciality and cold coffee but brewed coffee still makes for 75 per cent of coffee occasions.”

Convenience stores should focus on offering a well-rounded hot beverage menu, including freshly brewed coffee, espresso-based drinks like lattes and cappuccinos, and seasonal or limited-time >>



BEST COFFEE ON THE GO



Bunn Premia

offers, such as flavoured coffee, lattes, cappuccinos, or hot chocolate, said Amy Brown, marketing manager, commercial foodservice, SEB Professional.

“Customization is key; offering multiple milk options, creamers and syrups will enhance customer satisfaction and drive repeat visits,” said Brown.

Brown advised investing in versatile, easy to use equipment that supports a variety of drink options while reducing the need for intensive staff training. SEB Professional’s newest product for convenience stores is the Schaefer Coffee Soul C, which can handle multiple drinks with consistency and automates the daily cleaning process for up to 300 days without user intervention.

“Consumers now expect specialty coffee shop experiences in non-traditional locations like convenience stores,” said Brown. “There’s been a significant shift toward plant-based milk, flavoured syrups, and ethically sourced coffee. Automation and self-service technology have played a crucial role in enabling operators to meet these demands efficiently.”

Convenience stores should have classic hot beverages:

“Customization is key; offering multiple milk options, creamers and syrups will enhance customer satisfaction and drive repeat visits,” said Brown.



Franke A1000 Flex

hot chocolate, lattes, drip coffee and flavoured cappuccinos, said Aron Bjornson, vice president, marketing and national foodservice accounts, Canterbury Coffee.

“Coffee consumption is growing steadily, with overall demand increasing by three per cent over the past year,” said Bjornson. “Hot specialty coffee is driving this trend, experiencing 7.6 per cent growth in the same period. This growth presents a significant opportunity for foodservice operators to attract customers by offering unique and indulgent coffee beverages.”



To drive excitement and growth rotate limited time offer (LTO) items, said Bjornson.

“We recommend starting with simple add-ons and extras, such as seasonal syrups, to boost both the appeal and perceived value of your beverages,” said Bjornson. “For example, we were blown away by the popularity of Torani Blue Raspberry Syrup as an LTO this summer and Torani Pumpkin Spice is a sure winner in early September.”

While nearly half of Canadian coffee drinkers add some form of sweetener to their coffee, sugar-free syrups are increasing in popularity, said Bjornson.

“This trend spans all food channels and is easy for convenience stores to take advantage of,” said Bjornson. “Check out #watertok and #guiltfreecoffee on TikTok and you’ll see some creative angles people are taking for their drink recipes. You can easily modify these ideas for your coffee and beverage stations. We recommend building your offerings beyond the cream and sugar basics and layer in flavoured syrups and other toppings.”

Focus on clean and well stocked coffee stations, said Bjornson.

“Coffee has natural oils that give it the body and flavour we love,” he noted. “These oils will build up on servers and in machines and cause an off-putting flavour to your coffee. Canterbury has created learning

modules and online training (available at <https://www.canterburycoffee.com/training/>) to assist c-store owners to set up standard operating procedures.”

Tea is a hot beverage that continues to grow and is appealing to all the attributes that younger consumers are looking for, said Shabram Weber, president, Tea and Herbal Association of Canada (THAC).

“In a recent survey by THAC, we found that consumers were reaching for tea to feel better,” said Weber. “In a time where mental health challenges and anxiety are at an all-time high, tea is the perfect antidote.”

Convenience stores would do well to stock up on a variety of teas as consumers are looking for choice and different types of flavours, said Weber.

“Our survey found that six in 10 Canadians consume hot tea,” said Weber. “If prepared drinks are something a store offers, then adding a variety of teas to that selection would help boost sales.”

Hot coffee remains popular with consumers with new bean-to-cup units producing a fresh cup of coffee every time, said Chris Midbo, sales, marketing and

“Coffee has natural oils that give it the body and flavour we love,” Bjornson noted. “These oils will build up on servers and in machines and cause an off-putting flavour to your coffee.”

>>



Follett Ice and Water Dispensers

new business development, Western Refrigeration.

“Some of the bean to cup units can also produce an ice coffee product,” noted Midbo. “We have a countertop unit that allows a site to add the ice component to coffee and it is very popular right now across the country. Customers still have their warm coffee in the morning but cold coffee is a great alternative, even in the non-summer months. Coffee drinkers enjoy that cold option as a later day alternative.”

There has been a continued increase in popularity for espresso-based drinks as well as a new surge of popularity for nitrogenated beverages, such as nitro cold-brew coffee, said Jay Beckett, marketing graphic designer, Bunn-O-Matic Corporation of Canada.

“Coffee and tea remain as strong as ever,” said Beckett. “People seem to be gravitating towards a fresh individually brewed cup of coffee that can be adjusted and customized to fit individual tastes. Bunn’s bean-to-cup and bean-to-batch brewers

are ideal for this. Our advice to convenience stores is to stay-up-to-date on the latest technology and the latest buying trends among consumers.”

Premia is a new high-performance bean-to-batch brewer from Bunn that automatically grinds, brews and manages freshness for optimal coffee availability during peak times while reducing waste during slower dayparts, said Beckett.

During a recent Coffee Association of Canada webinar, Frank Dennis, president and CEO of Swiss Water noted that consumer research indicates a greater acceptance of decaffeinated coffee, primarily driven by improvements in quality in this category.

“Decaf coffee has the benefit of enabling someone to meet their friends in the afternoon and still have a coffee without being awake all night long,” said Dennis. “There are some who come to the decaf category because of health needs but more often people are simply trying to modulate the amount of caffeine they have throughout the day.” ☐

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STOCK SMARTS: STRATEGIES FOR OPTIMIZING INVENTORY AND DRIVING SALES



BY ELIE Y. KATZ

Inventory management is the backbone of retail success. It ensures that shelves stay stocked with the right products at the right time while avoiding the pitfalls of excess inventory or stock shortages. When executed effectively, inventory management empowers retailers to optimize operations, increase profitability, and enhance the customer experience. However, poor management can result in wasted resources, unsatisfied customers, and diminished profits. To thrive, retailers must leverage cutting-edge inventory software, refine warehouse operations, harness demand forecasting, and build dependable supplier relationships while controlling costs.

Invest in Advanced Inventory Management Tools

Modern inventory software, often integrated into point-of-sale (POS) systems, is a game-changer for retailers of all sizes. POS systems track stock levels in real-time, analyze sales trends, and generate automated alerts when products need reordering. For example, a retailer can use software to identify best-selling products and adjust restocking schedules, ensuring popular items remain available. This prevents lost sales and minimizes the risk of overstocking slow-moving goods that tie up valuable capital. Advanced software can also identify seasonal trends, allowing retailers to prepare for peak demand, such as holidays or back-to-school shopping.



Some POS systems even incorporate features like mobile inventory tracking, enabling staff to check stock availability or update records directly from the sales floor. This level of flexibility allows businesses to respond to customer inquiries more efficiently and enhances the overall shopping experience.

Enhance Warehouse Organization

Efficient warehouse operations are the foundation of smooth inventory management. Retailers can streamline their processes using a stock-keeping unit (SKU) system. Each SKU acts as a unique identifier for a product, helping differentiate items and track their movements within the warehouse. For instance, a clothing retailer might assign SKUs to each size and colour variation of a shirt, ensuring easy identification and accurate stock tracking.

Labeling is equally important. Clear, visible labels

and well-organized shelving allow employees to locate items quickly, reducing errors and speeding up order fulfillment. Signs indicating product categories or storage zones further simplify navigation. For example, a grocery store might use signage to separate perishable goods from non-perishables, minimizing confusion during restocking or order picking. These practices save time, lower labor costs, and improve overall efficiency.

Additionally, implementing barcode scanning technology can significantly reduce manual errors. A simple scan instantly updates inventory records, ensuring that stock levels are always accurate. This level of precision is es-

essential for meeting customer expectations and avoiding the embarrassment of promising products that are out of stock.

“Modern inventory software, often integrated into point-of-sale (POS) systems, is a game-changer for retailers of all sizes. POS systems track stock levels in real-time, analyze sales trends, and generate automated alerts when products need reordering.”

Forecast Demand with Precision

Demand forecasting is a vital aspect of inventory management that allows retailers to anticipate customer needs and prepare accordingly. Businesses can identify patterns and adjust inventory levels by analyzing past sales data to match expected

demand. For instance, a toy retailer might stock up on trending items before the holiday season, ensuring that shelves are ready for the influx of eager shoppers.

However, forecasting isn't a one-and-done activity. Retailers must continuously review and refine their predictions based on changing customer preferences, competitor activity, and economic conditions. Regular updates to demand forecasts help prevent overstocking, leading to waste or stockouts, which frustrate customers and harm brand loyalty.

Build Strong Supplier Partnerships

Suppliers are an essential part of the inventory equation. Reliable suppliers ensure that products arrive on time and meet quality standards, allowing retailers to maintain smooth operations. Retailers should evaluate suppliers based on delivery reliability, product quality, and pricing. For example, a retailer sourcing fresh produce might prioritize suppliers known for consistent quality and punctual deliveries to maintain customer satisfaction.

Establishing strong relationships with key suppliers can also lead to cost savings. Retailers who place larger, consistent orders may negotiate better terms, such as volume discounts or faster shipping. Contingency plans are also essential—having backup suppliers ensures continuity in case of disruptions like product shortages or delayed shipments.

Control Costs with Smart Inventory Practices

Inventory comes with carrying costs that can quietly eat into profits. These costs include storage fees, depreciation, labor expenses, and the opportunity cost of tied-up >>



capital. Retailers must monitor these costs closely to maintain profitability.

One practical approach is to adopt just-in-time (JIT) inventory management. This method minimizes storage needs by ordering products only as they are needed. For example, a small electronics retailer might use JIT to keep high-value items in stock without overloading their shelves, freeing up space and reducing financial risk.

Deadstock – unsold items in storage for extended periods – should also be addressed. Retailers can liquidate these products through clearance sales, bundles, or discounts to recover costs and make room for better-performing inventory.

Embrace Technological Advancements for Long-Term Success

While inventory management can be challenging, modern technology offers solutions that simplify the process and enhance accuracy. Barcode scanners, real-time tracking systems, and cloud-based platforms enable retailers to manage inventory more precisely and efficiently.

For example, ABC analysis – a method that categorizes inventory into high-, medium-, and low-value items – can help retailers prioritize their management efforts. High-value items may require tighter control and faster turnover, while low-value items can be ordered in bulk to save costs. This data-driven approach ensures that resources are allocated where they matter most.

Point-of-sale systems equipped with robust inventory tools are another indispensable resource. These systems provide valuable insights into customer behavior and purchasing trends, empowering retailers to make informed decisions about stock levels, promotions, and product offerings.

The Path to Profitability

Strategic inventory management is more than just a backroom operation – it’s a cornerstone of

retail profitability. By investing in advanced tools, optimizing processes, and staying agile in the face of change, retailers can turn inventory from a cost center into a growth driver. Every well-stocked shelf accurately fulfilled orders, and satisfied customers reflect the power of effective inventory practices.

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operates thousands of point-of-sale terminals across the USA and Canada, offering NRS Pay credit card processing to small and mid-size independent retailers. For more information, visit NRSPlus online or call (888) 541-1073.

Elie Y. Katz is the president and CEO of National Retail Solutions (NRS).

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STAY ONE STEP AHEAD: HOW CYBER INSURANCE PROTECTS YOUR BUSINESS

In today's hyper-connected world, cyber threats are no longer a distant possibility – they're a growing reality for businesses of every size.



ALERT

BY LINDA BUCKTON AND GINA SEITZ

Ransomware, phishing scams, and data breaches can strike without warning, leaving companies scrambling to recover. Cyber insurance has emerged as a powerful safety net, offering financial protection and peace of mind. But it's more than just a backup plan – it's a vital component of a proactive risk management strategy.

Why Cyber Insurance Matters

Imagine this: A cyberattack compromises your customer database, exposing sensitive information. Beyond the immediate costs of recovery, you face legal penalties, customer trust plummets, and your brand's reputation takes a hit. For small and medium-sized businesses, the financial fallout from such an incident can be devastating.

This is where cyber insurance steps in. A well-structured policy can cover expenses related to data recovery, legal fees, and even crisis communication efforts to rebuild public trust. More importantly, it provides a

critical cushion, ensuring your business can navigate the aftermath of an attack without facing insolvency.

However, cyber insurance works best when paired with robust cybersecurity practices. Insurers assess your business's risk profile when determining coverage and premiums. The stronger your defenses, the better your terms may be.

Building a Resilient Defense

While cyber insurance can mitigate financial loss, it's not a substitute for prevention. A strong cyber risk management plan helps protect your business and signals to insurers that you're a low-risk client.

1. Assess Your Risks

Start by identifying what's at stake. What data do you collect, and how is it stored? Are your software and hardware inventories up to date? These insights help you pinpoint vulnerabilities and inform your defense strategy.

While cyber insurance can mitigate financial loss, it's not a substitute for prevention.



CYBER INSURANCE IS MORE THAN A SAFETY NET – IT'S A STRATEGIC INVESTMENT THAT COMPLEMENTS YOUR DEFENSES AND ENSURES FINANCIAL RESILIENCE IN THE FACE OF DIGITAL THREATS.

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2. Fortify Your Defenses

Simple but effective measures can drastically reduce your risk of attack:

- Use firewalls and anti-virus tools to create layers of defense.
- Encrypt sensitive data and secure networks with strong passwords.
- Train employees to spot phishing scams and avoid unsafe practices.
- Regularly back up your systems and update software to patch weaknesses.

3. Develop a Response Plan

Even the best defenses can be breached. Having an incident response plan can minimize the fallout. Outline clear steps for containing attacks, notifying stakeholders, and recovering operations. Practice this plan to ensure it runs smoothly in real-world scenarios.

5. Monitor and Evolve

Cyber threats are always evolving, so staying ahead is crucial. Regularly audit your systems, monitor for unusual activity, and update your security measures. Consider consulting with cybersecurity experts to keep your defenses sharp.

Making the Most of Cyber Insurance

When applying for cyber insurance, insurers will ask about your risk management practices. Demonstrating that you've implemented strong safeguards can help secure better coverage and premiums. For example, showing proof of employee training programs, robust encryption protocols, and a history of regular security audits can work in your favor.

Cyber insurance also complements your broader risk management plan. Think of it as a partnership: Your cybersecurity measures reduce the likelihood of an attack, while your policy ensures you're financially prepared for the unexpected.

The Big Picture

In an era of increasing digital threats, cyber insurance isn't just a safety net – it's a strategic investment in your business's resilience. By combining robust defenses with a tailored insurance policy, you can mitigate risks, recover faster, and maintain the trust of your customers and stakeholders.

The digital world is full of opportunities – but it also comes with risks. With cyber insurance and smart cybersecurity practices, your business can stay ahead of the curve, prepared for whatever comes next. **📌**

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EMBRACING GREEN SOLUTIONS

BY MELINE BEACH

Sustainability has shifted from a passing trend to a core expectation across all industries, including convenience stores, carwashes, and retail petroleum.

Customers expect more environmentally-friendly practices from businesses, particularly regarding energy use, waste reduction, and packaging. Companies like Rabba Fine Foods, Classic Group of Companies, and Bubbles Car Wash are implementing green initiatives that are catching the attention not only of their customers and vendors but of environmental awards programs as well.

Sustainability in Infrastructure

Infrastructure is critical category for sustainability in the C&G industry. From the buildings themselves to the systems that power them, sustainable infrastructure plays a major role in reducing environmental impacts.

One of the standout examples of sustainability in infrastructure is Rabba Fine Foods, a family-owned business with 37 locations across the Greater Toronto Area. In

2024, Rabba received the Canadian Grocer Impact Award for the fourth consecutive year in recognition of its sustainability efforts, including the installation of solar panels at its distribution centre. This initiative has helped Rabba significantly reduce its carbon footprint by generating renewable energy onsite.

In addition to generating energy to offset power consumption, Rabba enhanced energy efficiency with further improvements, using LED lighting at all locations and upgraded to energy-efficient refrigeration equipment and HVAC systems, significantly reducing electricity consumption.

Sustainability in C-Store Foodservice

Foodservice is an essential part of the c-store sector, with sustainability a key driver of success. Today's customers are prioritizing sustainability in their decisions, from how their meals are prepared and >>

packaged to how its waste is disposed. To meet expectations, c-stores are turning to energy-efficient technologies, sustainable packaging and waste-reduction strategies.

Classic Group of Companies, a provider of foodservice solutions for the convenience store industry, is making notable strides in adopting sustainable packaging alternatives. The company is committed to sourcing eco-friendly packaging for all of its products using compostable materials to reduce waste and improve the overall environmental footprint of its offerings.

“All of our packaging is compostable and we source more eco-friendly options whenever possible,” says Joseph Belcastro, general manager of the Classic Group of Companies. “It is a growing initiative and we’re constantly explore new innovations to meet the growing demand for sustainable solutions.”

Rabba is also committed to minimizing single-use plastics. “We’re always on the lookout for anything that makes us more efficient and minimizes our environmental impact,” says Rick Rabba, president, Rabba Fine Foods. “Our dedication to sustainability extends to partnering with organizations that help reduce food waste and support community initiatives.”

Rabba’s commitment to the environment is part of the company’s broader sustainability strategy, which also includes food donations to reduce food waste and community outreach initiatives aimed at fostering environmental responsibility.

Sustainability in Carwashes

Carwashes are increasingly being called upon to integrate sustainable practices, particularly in areas like energy consumption, water conservation, and waste management, given the environmental impact of their operations.

Bubbles Car Wash is a prime example of how the carwash industry is embracing sustainability with its innovative water recycling system to minimize water waste. While carwashes use fresh water for washing vehicles, Bubbles has implemented a system that efficiently recycles water for cleaning the tracks. This water-saving technology operates like a sprinkler system, reusing water and reducing overall consumption. Additionally, Bubbles Car Wash is committed to monitoring its water systems rigorously to prevent leaks and ensure that water is used as efficiently as possible. The company has also made strides in reducing paper consumption by adopting digital invoicing and tracking systems, cutting paper use by 80 per cent.

“Sustainability is a growing priority for us, and we’ve implemented several eco-friendly practices over the years,” says Natasha Toffoli, president of Bubbles Car Wash. “By continually investing in technology and



sustainability measures, we’re doing our part to reduce our environmental impact while maintaining the highest standards of service.”

Sustainability in Retail Petroleum

Gas stations, due to their high-traffic nature, have a distinct opportunity to lessen their environmental footprint by implementing sustainable maintenance practices. Transitioning to biodegradable cleaning agents and less harmful products can substantially reduce the release of toxic chemicals into the environment. This approach extends to car maintenance, cleaning, and de-icing, helping to minimize contamination of water and soil.

Gas stations also have the opportunity to minimize their environmental impact by adopting bulk windshield washer fluid containers, like EcoTank’s refill stations. Based in Orangeville, Ont., EcoTank provides a sustainable alternative to single-use plastic jugs by offering an innovative, eco-friendly solution for windshield washer fluid refills.

With over 1100 installations across 19 countries, EcoTank has established partnerships with Couche-Tard, Pioneer, Ultramar, Parkland, and 7-Eleven – to name a few. This initiative helps divert hundreds of jugs from landfills each year and prevents thousands of kilograms of virgin plastic from being used in the production of these containers. Not only does it reduce plastic waste, but it also offers drivers a convenient and cost-effective solution for refilling their windshield washer fluid directly at the pump and paying for only what they need.



Sustainability as a Key to Future Success

Companies such as Rabba Fine Foods, Bubbles Car Wash, Classic Group of Companies, that are implementing innovative sustainability initiatives across foodservice, carwash operations, and packaging, are not only helping to reduce their environmental footprint but are also meeting the expectations of the next generation of customers, who demand environmentally responsible products and services.

Companies that focus on sustainable practices will be better equipped to succeed in a marketplace that is becoming more environmentally conscious. By implementing energy-efficient systems, using eco-friendly packaging, and adopting water-saving technologies, businesses can not only help protect the environment but also lower operational costs and enhance their brand image. **CL**

Sustainability is the key to future success—eco-friendly practices reduce environmental impact, lower costs, and meet the demands of environmentally conscious customers.

Meline Beach is a Toronto-based communications practitioner and frequent contributor to Convenience and Carwash Canada. In addition to freelance writing, Meline provides communications and public relations support to businesses across Canada. She can be reached at www.mlbcomms.ca.

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CARWASH OPERATORS HAVE CHOICES.

The carwash chemical field is a competitive business and, the wide array of choice available can be a daunting task. Following is information from some of the biggest names in carwash chemicals and some you might not know of. Take a minute to read through each and if you really want to get the inside scoop from each, visit their websites and educate yourself. Advancements in the chemistry of car washing changes at a rapid rate and we want to help keep you current and providing your customers with the very best wash you can offer.

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Our Vision

Large operators often get the spotlight, but small and mid-sized carwashes are just as vital in keeping America's roads filled with clean, well-cared-for cars. Operators of every size need delivery condition and a product range that fits their unique demands.

Our Mission

That's why we founded Car Wash Alliance – we believe every operator, whether small, mid-sized, or large, deserves a product portfolio that fits, personalized business support, and, most importantly, fair and transparent pricing. We're here to make sure you get exactly that.



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improving existing products and developing new ones beyond detergents and protectants.

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Ver-tech Labs is more than a provider of high-performance cleaning chemistry—we're a true partner to the carwash industry. With decades of expertise, we help operators achieve exceptional results by offering tailored solutions, expert guidance, and hands-on support.

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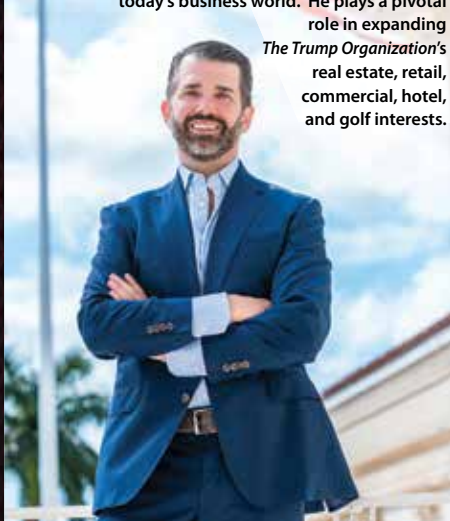
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KEYNOTE: Donald Trump Jr

Donald J. Trump Jr. is an innovator and leader in today's business world. He plays a pivotal role in expanding *The Trump Organization's* real estate, retail, commercial, hotel, and golf interests.



LADIES' LUNCHEON: Riley Gaines

Riley competed and tied with trans-identifying male swimmer, Lia Thomas, at their NCAA championships. Since directly experiencing the injustice of allowing men in women's sports, Riley has been outspoken on why this issue is blatantly unfair and harmful to females in so many ways.

Riley Gaines is a graduate from the University of Kentucky where she was a 12x NCAA All-American swimmer.



THURSDAY: Alex Epstein

Founder and President of the Center for Industrial Progress (CIP), and bestselling author of *The Moral Case for Fossil Fuels*. Alex Epstein challenges conventional views on climate change and advocates for expanding fossil fuel use.



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Photo courtesy of Sonny's The CarWash Factory

BALANCING THE BASICS: HIGH PH AND LOW PH PRESOAKS IN SOFT, HARD, AND RECLAIM WATER SYSTEMS

BY HEATHER LEE

Water is the foundation of every carwash operation. Its quality determines the effectiveness of presoaks and the long-term performance of equipment, operational costs, and customer satisfaction.

Whether soft, hard, or reclaimed, understanding water's impact on cleaning processes is critical for carwash owners and operators seeking efficiency and sustainability.

Gaining insights into the relationship between water quality and presoaks can help you optimize cleaning processes across diverse water systems at your car wash.

Understanding Presoaks: High pH vs. Low pH

Presoaks are the unsung heroes of the carwash process, setting the stage for a thorough clean.

- **High pH Presoaks:** Designed to break down organic materials like grease, oils, and bug splatter, high pH presoaks are alkaline solutions best suited for tackling tough, sticky contaminants.
- **Low pH Presoaks:** Acidic by nature, low pH presoaks excel at removing inorganic deposits, such as mineral buildup and rust, and often act as neutralizers for high pH chemicals. They also enhance vehicle shine by breaking down surface films.

While both types are essential, their effectiveness is closely tied to the water quality used during application.

Soft Water: The Ideal Cleaning Partner

Soft water, free of calcium and magnesium, is often considered the gold standard for car wash operations.

- **Advantages:** Soft water enhances the effectiveness of presoaks, resulting in better cleaning performance and foam production. It also prevents mineral buildup on vehicles and equipment, reducing the need for maintenance.

RECLAIM WATER REDUCES USAGE BUT CAN IMPACT PRESOAK PERFORMANCE. REGULAR FILTRATION AND TESTING ARE ESSENTIAL TO MAINTAIN ITS EFFECTIVENESS WHILE SUPPORTING SUSTAINABILITY.

Photo courtesy of Sonny's The CarWash Factory



- **Challenges:** Over-softened water can lead to excessive sudsing, which increases rinse times and water usage.
- **Best Practices:** Regularly monitor water softness, aiming for 0–3 grains per gallon (GPG). This ensures presoaks perform optimally without unnecessary chemical or water waste.

Alicia Pape, a chemist at Sonny's CarWash Chemistry, explains, "Soft water allows presoaks to work to their full potential, maximizing their cleaning power and creating the rich foam customers expect."

Hard Water: Navigating the Challenges

Hard water, characterized by high concentrations of minerals like calcium and magnesium, presents unique challenges in car washes.

- **Impact on Presoaks:** Hard water interferes with high- and low-pH presoaks, reducing their cleaning and foaming capabilities. This often requires higher chemical dosages to achieve the desired effect.
- **Equipment Concerns:** Mineral deposits can clog nozzles, damage reverse osmosis membranes, and reduce equipment lifespan, leading to higher maintenance costs.
- **Solutions:** Installing water softeners to remove excess minerals is the first step. Descaling treatments for pipes and nozzles can further mitigate buildup.

"Operators can easily underestimate costs of hard water on their business," says the SVP of Chemistry Sales & Service at Sonny's, Jeff Carey. "Investing in a proper water treatment system can save thousands in chemical and equipment costs over time."

Reclaim Water: A Sustainable Solution

A reclaim system recycles and reconditions used car wash water for re-use, offering a sustainable solution that reduces water consumption and aligns with environmental goals.

- **Benefits:** Reclaim water reduces freshwater and sewer usage, lowering operational costs and appealing to eco-conscious customers.
- **Challenges:** Reclaim water often contains residues like oils, detergents, and particulates, which can impact presoak effectiveness, cause spotting on cars, and lead to odors if untreated.
- **Best Practices:** Advanced filtration systems are crucial for removing contaminants. Ozone or UV treatments can neutralize bacteria and odors, while regular testing ensures water meets quality standards.

Reclaim water requires tailored chemical formulations to counteract variability. When managed correctly, it supports sustainability without compromising performance.

Matching Presoaks to Water Types

To optimize presoak performance, operators must consider how different water types interact with cleaning solutions.

- **High pH Presoaks:** Soft water enhances its effectiveness by allowing all of its components to work effectively and improving solubility, while hard water reduces cleaning power, requiring chemical adjustments. Reclaim water's quality can vary, demanding tailored formulations.
- **Low pH Presoaks:** These perform well in soft water but may neutralize in hard water, decreasing efficiency. Reclaim water often necessitates adjustments to maintain the desired acidity.

Regular testing of pH, hardness, and total dissolved solids (TDS) is essential for adapting presoak formulations to local water conditions.

Integrating Water Systems: Sustainability Meets Efficiency

Combining water systems can strike a balance between sustainability and operational efficiency.

- **Soft and Reclaim Water:** Use reclaim water for presoaks and soft water for final rinses. This approach minimizes freshwater use while delivering a spotless finish.
- **Hard and Reclaim Water:** Blend reclaim water with softened water or >>



treat reclaim water to reduce hardness. Adjust the presoak dilution ratio or change the product used to account for remaining minerals.

Practical Tips for Carwash Operators

1. Regular Water Testing
2. Monitor water quality monthly to adjust presoak effectively.
3. Invest in Quality Filtration
4. Advanced filtration and softening systems ensure consistent water quality, reducing downtime and maintenance costs.
5. Collaborate with Chemical Experts
6. Work with suppliers to customize presoak use to align with your water type and operational goals.
7. Adopt Preventative Maintenance
8. Regularly descale equipment and inspect for buildup to extend its lifespan and maintain performance.

Water quality is more than a technical detail—it's a pivotal factor in carwash success, an active ingredient that can elevate or undermine your operation. By understanding the nuances of soft, hard,

and reclaim water, operators can optimize presoak performance, enhance customer satisfaction, and embrace sustainable practices. By mastering water dynamics, you can strike the perfect balance between operational efficiency and environmental responsibility, ensuring your business shines in every sense of the word.

Heather Lee is a vice president of marketing at Sonny's The Car Wash Factory, the global leader in conveyerized carwash equipment manufacturing and end-to-end solution provider for carwash operators. Established in 1949, Sonny's simplifies car washing by offering innovative chemistry, advanced water treatment solutions, and high-performance backroom equipment, helping businesses deliver exceptional results and drive customer satisfaction. Visit sonnydirect.com to learn more.

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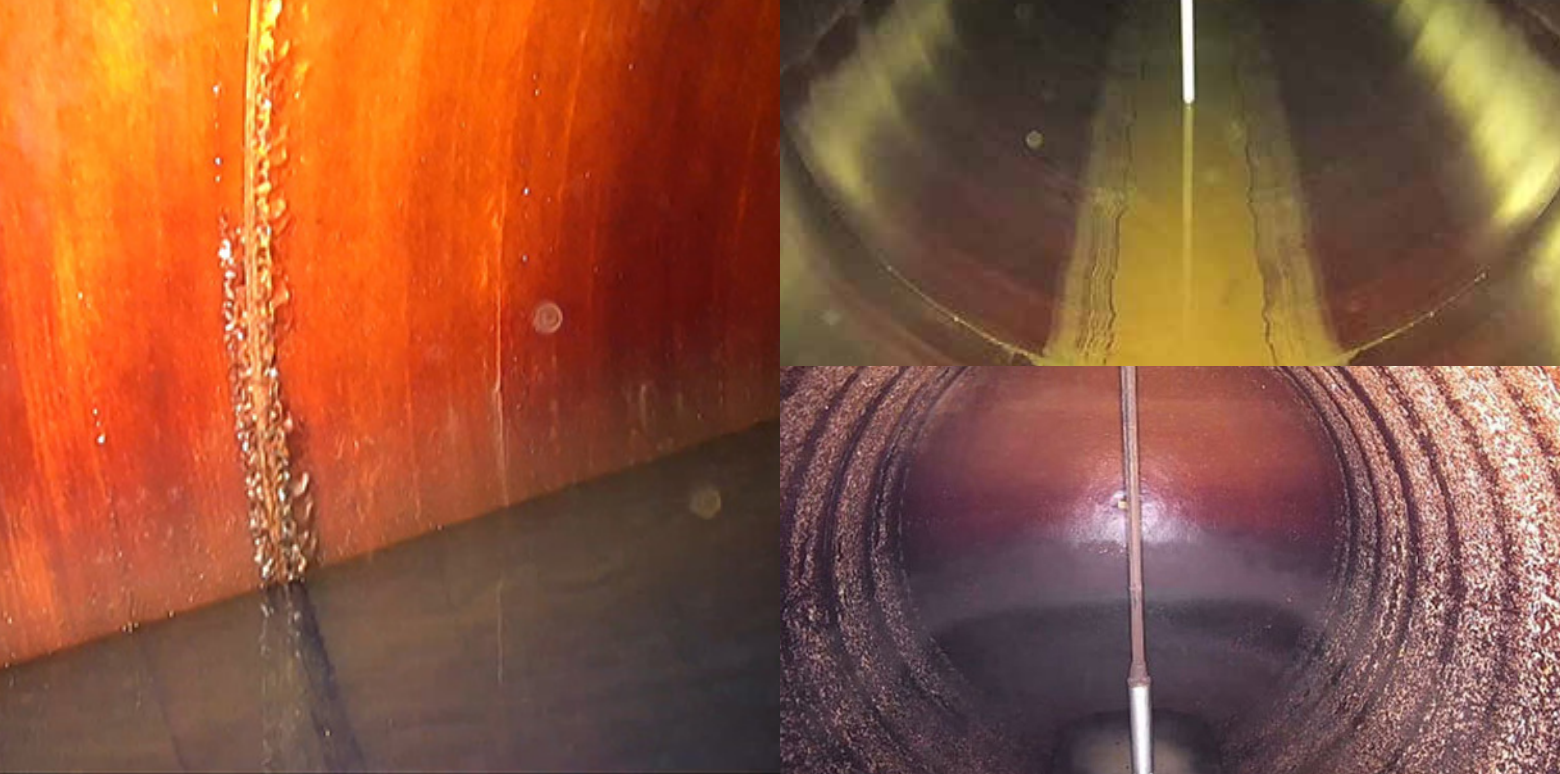
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SEEING THE INVISIBLE: REVOLUTIONIZING UST MANAGEMENT WITH TANKCAM TECHNOLOGY

BY STEVE COUILLARD



Gas station owners across Canada know that underground storage tanks (USTs) are the lifeline of their business. They also know the stakes are high when it comes to managing them.

A hidden leak or structural issue can escalate into catastrophic financial and environmental consequences. This is where the revolutionary TankCam inspection service comes in. It offers the ability to see inside your USTs without removing fuel, breaking concrete, or risking human entry. In an industry where even minor oversights can lead to disaster, TankCam transforms how owners manage, maintain, and future-proof their tanks.

A Game-Changer in UST Inspections

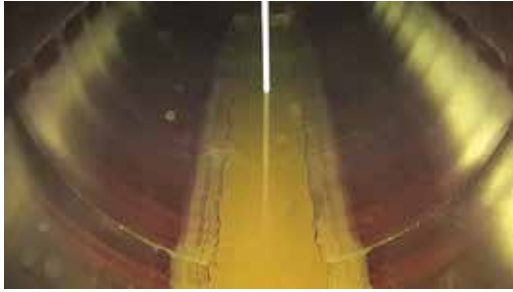
Traditional UST inspections rely on external evaluations or guesswork to identify problems. While these methods have their place, they fall short of providing a clear, visual understanding of what's happening inside the tank. TankCam changes the game by using advanced remote video technology to deliver high-definition visuals of your tank's interior. This approach enables operators to identify potential problems like corrosion, cracking, blistering, or residual debris – all of which can compromise fuel quality and tank integrity.

Imagine discovering minor cracks in your tanks – cracks that, if left unchecked, could result in a leak contaminating the surrounding soil. With TankCam, this risk becomes a reality you can address. Many operators who believed their tanks were in good condition identified small but critical issues during a TankCam inspection, enabling them to act before problems worsened. Even a five-year-old tank isn't immune to these hidden flaws – we've seen it!

The Power of Clarity

The most compelling aspect of TankCam technology is its ability to deliver crystal-clear information. The system captures every corner of a UST, providing operators with a full visual record. This clarity empowers owners to make informed decisions – whether that means scheduling a repair, cleaning the tank, or monitoring specific areas over time.

TankCam inspections also generate detailed reports that include high-resolution images and videos. These records are



TankCam provides a clear picture of aging tanks, offering operators actionable insights to prioritize maintenance and avoid unnecessary expenditures.

invaluable not only for immediate action but also for creating a maintenance history that can be referenced for compliance audits, equipment upgrades, or insurance claims.

A Cost-Efficient Alternative

TankCam's effectiveness doesn't come with the hefty price tag of traditional methods. Uncovering tank tops or draining them for internal inspection is costly, disruptive, and time-consuming. TankCam eliminates these steps, operating through standard riser openings without the need for excavation or fuel removal. This saves operators thousands of dollars in labour and downtime while eliminating the need for man-entry.

One Canadian retailer discovered during a TankCam inspection that their aging fiberglass UST had developed hairline cracks near the bottom. Addressing the

issue promptly cost a fraction of what a full tank replacement would have been. The ability to spot issues early translates into substantial savings and operational continuity.

Keeping Aging Infrastructure in Check

Across Canada, many gas stations are running on infrastructure that dates back decades. Fiberglass USTs, popular since the 1980s and 90s, are now reaching the upper limits of their life expectancy. Cracks, blisters, and deformations in these tanks often develop slowly and go unnoticed—until a leak occurs. TankCam is uniquely suited to assess these aging tanks, offering a clear picture of their condition and providing operators with actionable insights.

By leveraging TankCam inspections, operators can evaluate the state of their tanks with precision, prioritize maintenance, and allocate resources efficiently. This approach ensures long-term reliability while avoiding unnecessary expenditures on infrastructure still within its usable life.

By leveraging TankCam inspections, operators can precisely evaluate tank conditions, prioritize maintenance, and allocate resources efficiently. This ensures long-term reliability and avoids unnecessary costs. With aging assets, TankCam helps identify which tanks need upgrades first, eliminating guesswork and enabling smart decisions.

Practical Applications for Everyday Operations

TankCam's versatility extends beyond leak detection. It is equally effective for verifying tank conditions after cleaning, pinpointing the source of failed tightness tests, locating unused riser openings, or ensuring overfill protection compliance. These additional applications make TankCam an invaluable tool for operators seeking to optimize their UST management practices.

During one inspection in Quebec, TankCam identified debris left in the tank after a cleaning job. The ability to catch such oversights ensures that tanks are not only compliant but also operating at peak efficiency.

Conclusion:

Embrace the Future of UST Management

The TankCam inspection service offers a powerful combination of precision, cost-efficiency, and actionable insights. It empowers gas station owners to address potential issues before they escalate, ensuring their tanks remain safe, compliant, and operational. For an industry that thrives on reliability, embracing TankCam is not just a smart decision – it's a necessary step toward a sustainable and profitable future.

As a gas station owner, ask yourself: Can you afford not to see what's happening inside your tanks? With TankCam, you no longer take that risk. It's time to trade uncertainty for clarity and turn potential problems into manageable solutions. Reach out to learn how TankCam can redefine the way you manage your USTs and safeguard your business for years to come. **■**

Steve Couillard is the sales and marketing coordinator at Englobe and can be reached at FMSales@EnglobeCorp.com

THROUGH THE YEARS WITH OPW FUELING-NOZZLE INNOVATIONS

BY STEVE STEWART

Editor's Note: With this issue we welcome Steve Stewart as the new voice of our "Forecourt Insight" column. Don't worry, Ed Kammerer is OK and is just handing the reins over to Steve, who has been a respected figure in the retail-fueling market in Canada for more than 30 years, the last 14 of which have been spent with OPW. Steve has a background in marketing and is currently the senior Canadian & Caribbean sales manager for OPW Retail Fueling with responsibility for the OPW sales team in Canada, new and existing sales for OPW, the Canadian distributor and end-user network, regulatory compliance and contractor training. In other words, Steve has his finger firmly on the pulse of the retail-fueling market in Canada and we look forward to reading his contributions to the magazine in the coming months and years.
Welcome aboard, Steve!



Steve Stewart

The next time you find yourself with a few idle moments as you stand at a fueling island while filling up your vehicle, maybe spare a thought for Daniel Bernoulli and the contribution he made to making those consistently safe, quick, cost-effective and reliable refueling moments possible. Who, you might now be wondering, is Daniel Bernoulli? And no, he was not the goalie on Montreal's 1953 Stanley Cup championship team.

Daniel Bernoulli was a Swiss mathematician and physicist who lived from 1700-1782. In his long and illustrious career, he was most recognized for his work in applying mathematical theorems to mechanical operations, especially in the realm of fluid mechanics. One of his most well-known and lasting contributions to science is what came to be known as the "Bernoulli Principle." This fluid-dynamics principle ties the speed and elevation of a fluid to



That all changed in 1950 when OPW developed and applied for a patent for its Model 210 nozzle, the world's first to feature automatic-shutoff technology.



OPW's Model 11B, which marked its 40th anniversary in 2024, the industry's first "no-pressure/no-flow" nozzle.



its pressure, stating that "if the speed of a fluid increases, then either its static pressure must decrease to compensate or its potential energy must decrease."

In layman's terms, the Bernoulli Principle is this: "As the speed of a fluid increases, its pressure decreases."

Notable Nozzle Milestones

Which brings us back to that fueling island. For the first 50 years or so of the internal-combustion-engine age, the nozzles used to refuel vehicles needed to be observed at all times during the refueling process. Failure to do so would raise the probability that a full fuel tank would overflow and gasoline or diesel would splash onto the station attendant, the vehicle and the ground, all of which would create a wide array of potential risks and hazards for people, the retail-fueling business and the environment.

That all changed in 1950 when OPW developed and applied for a patent for its Model 210 nozzle, the world's first to feature automatic-shutoff technology. The secret sauce in the Model 210's automatic-shutoff design and performance capabilities was the Bernoulli Principle. The Model 210 nozzle used the fuel's change of speed as it flowed through the nozzle to create a pressure vacuum that caused a diaphragm to activate, in the process causing the nozzle to shut off and stop the flow of fuel when the tank was full.

The Bernoulli Principle and that landmark invention – which celebrates its 75th anniversary this year – remains the operational foundation for every automatic-shutoff nozzle that has been developed since then by any manufacturer anywhere in the world.

With automatic shutoff the new standard in nozzle design and functionality, OPW continued to lead the way in the development of next-generation nozzle technologies. First up was the Model 1A "Fil-O-Matic" nozzle in 1960, the first to be outfitted with a nozzle spout spring, and that was followed in 1971 by the Model 11A, which was a more streamlined and ergonomically friendly version of the Model 1A.

By the 1980s, however, vehicle fueling was changing, driven by the growing appeal of self-service retail-fueling operations that had the driver now performing the job of pump jockeys – iconic for so many years for their sprint from the counter to the car, with the driver commanding, "Fill 'er up!" Putting the refueling process in the hands of untrained, or distracted, drivers brought with it inherent risks, setting the stage for OPW's next landmark nozzle innovation.

>>

They called it the Model 11B, which marked its 40th anniversary in 2024, the industry's first "no-pressure/no-flow" nozzle, one that featured a "B-Cap" that would not allow the nozzle to operate un-



til the dispenser had been pressurized and would cease operation once the dispenser became depressurized. In other words, the B-Cap design created a nearly fail-safe refueling operation no matter the experience level or attentiveness of the driver. This landmark technology was also helpful and necessary as fuel retailers switched to "pre-pay" at the pump and dispenser manufacturers rolled out "CRINDs" (Card Reader In Dispenser) that allowed drivers to "pay at the pump" with their credit cards.

The list of additional features possessed by the 11B nozzles is long and impressive:

- Aircraft-grade aluminum spout
- Upgraded seat ring for improved shut-off performance
- Flow-Lock allows nozzle to shut off if it falls out of the vehicle
- Two-piece NEWGARD hand insulator and splash guard
- Accu-Stop to-the-penny Flow Control Technology
- Durable Duratuff level guard that won't scratch vehicles
- One-finger hold-open clip
- UL-approved O-rings, seals and diaphragms.
- UL 2586 certification for compatibility with all alcohol-fuel blends and bio-diesel blends regardless of the percentage of mixture

From there, the nozzle innovations kept coming from OPW with almost metronomic regularity:

- **1990s:** Improved ring-and-spring spout design that is compliant with SAE J285 and ISO 9158/9159 global fill-pipe standards.
- **2000s:** Extreme Cold nozzle versions that are designed beyond the ULc standard for use with winter-fuel formulations and in temperatures as low as -54°C (-65°F), making them ideal for

Canadian winters.

- **2010s:** Nozzles that are compatible with all levels of ethanol and biofuel blends, the number and consumption rate of which have continued to grow.
- **2020s:** Clean-nozzle technology that prevents the spillage of any residual fuel in the nozzle onto the forecourt surface, the vehicle or the driver's hands, shoes or clothes. This includes the industry's first diesel-capture technology that secures excess diesel fuel in a diesel-capture chamber at the conclusion of a fueling event with the captured diesel reintroduced into the fuel stream when the next fueling cycle begins.

Which brings us to OPW's latest nozzle innovation, an upgrade to the venerable Model 11B. Scheduled for release in Canada later this year, the remodeled 11B will be easier to open and feature a more comfortable lever and ergonomic barrel cover for a more user-friendly refueling experience. But don't worry, the new 11B will remain the same tried-and-true workhorse nozzle it has always been, one that for 40 years has set the standard in cutting-edge nozzle performance, reliability and safety.

Conclusion

We're all familiar with the saying, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." OPW acknowledges that sentiment, but adds a qualifier: "If it ain't broke, don't fix it – just make it better." Such has been its approach to fuel-nozzle design and development over the years. As the company marks 75 years since the creation of the first automatic-shutoff nozzle – thank you very much, Daniel Bernoulli – rest assured it remains committed to remaining a leader in developing industry-standard nozzle technologies, a commitment echoed in the upcoming release of its updated Model 11B nozzle. **■**

Steve Stewart is the senior Canadian & Caribbean sales manager for OPW, based in Cincinnati, OH, USA. He can be reached at steewart@opwglobal.com. OPW is fueled by excellence as it develops fueling solutions and innovations worldwide. OPW delivers product excellence and the most comprehensive line of fueling equipment and services to retail and commercial fueling operations around the globe. For more information on OPW, go to opwglobal.com.

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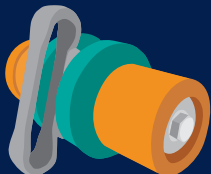
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POWERING UP AT THE CARWASH: EMBRACING EV CHARGING FOR A GREENER FUTURE



BY CAITIE ROMANO

With electric vehicles (EVs) becoming increasingly commonly sighted on Canadian roads, demand for reliable and convenient charging solutions is growing. This is a chance for carwash operators to not only increase their service offerings, but also to help build a sustainable future.

Carwash businesses can now take advantage of a growing market and, at the same time, bring in a whole new customer base while responding to a pressing consumer need by integrating EV charging stations into their facilities.

The Rise of EVs and The Charging Conundrum

In recent years, high environmental awareness and government incentives have led to a significant increase in the adoption of EVs across Canada. But growth has been rapid and has outpaced the development of charging infrastructure. The truth is many EV owners are disappointed with the lack of charging stations available. Other reports suggest that consumers are growing increasingly disheartened by unreliable systems and the seeming indifference of the operators of these units. The problem lies in the quality and number of charging stations. Chargers are often out of service, poorly maintained, or inconveniently located. Not only does this frustrate current EV owners, but it is a barrier to prospective buyers who are put off by the concern of charging accessibility.

Innovative Solutions: EV Charging at Carwash

Enter the carwash industry, a sector that, uniquely, can help resolve these concerns. Carwash facilities are prime locations for EV charging stations for several reasons:

1. **Convenient Downtime Usage:** When cleaning vehicles, owners can also charge their cars, so they make the most of their time.
2. **Strategic Locations:** For local and traveling EV users, carwashes are in areas with high traffic and are therefore an accessible place to be.
3. **Infrastructure Synergy:** Many carwashes already have the necessary electrical infrastructure, which simplifies and decreases the cost of charging unit installation.



The advantages of such recognition are leading to new possibilities for charger installations that are designed for carwash settings. These systems are robust, user friendly and easily integrated into existing operations. The BTC POWER, 180kW All-in-One is a one-piece system that creates a smaller footprint therefore is easier to install, and results in a lower total cost of ownership.

Addressing Consumer Disenchantment

To take advantage of this opportunity, carwash operators need to concentrate on the quality of the charging experience. This consists of selecting reliable equipment from reputable manufacturers and maintaining them. Operators will be able to build trust with EV owners who have become doubtful of sub-standard charging stations by showing a commitment to offering excellent service. Customer service from a trained staff who can assist with charging inquiries and basic troubleshooting is necessary, while clear signage and instructions can go a long way towards improving the user experience, cutting down on confusion and even frustration.

With EV adoption outpacing charging infrastructure, carwash operators who invest in chargers now can fill the gap and stay ahead.

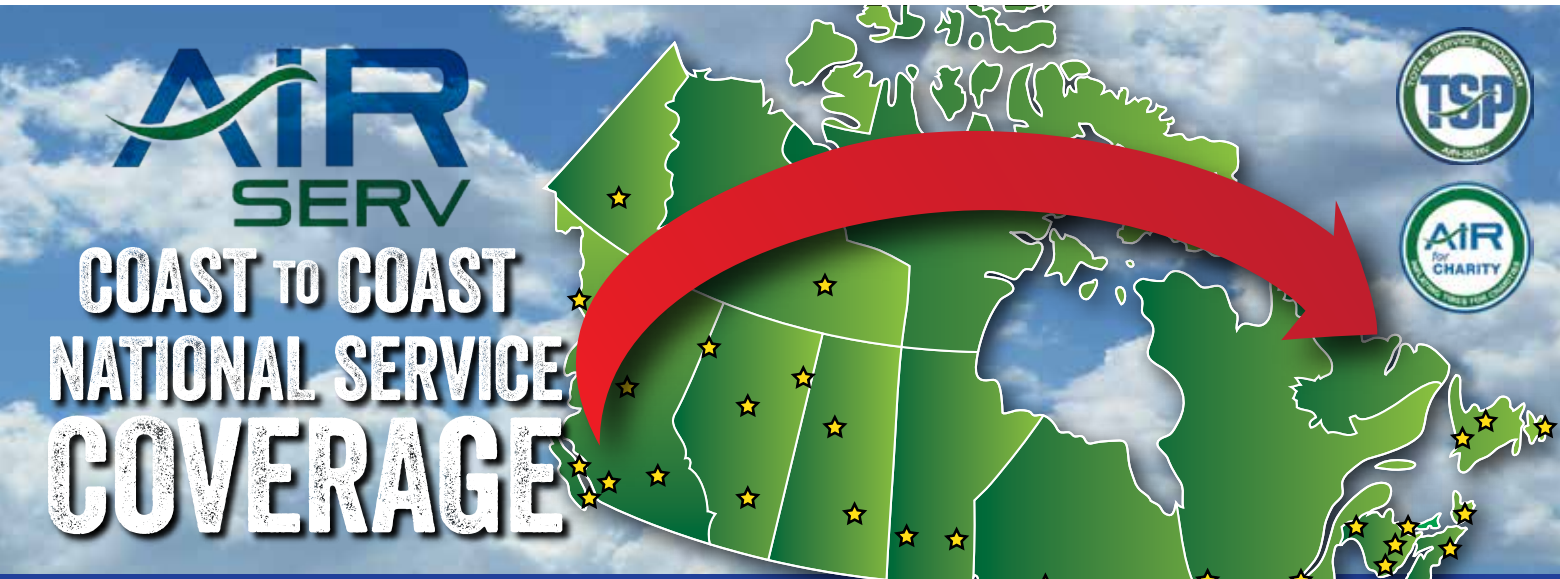
Meeting the Growing Demand

While the benefits and technology are clear, there are not nearly enough charger installations going on to match the increase in EVs on the road. For initiative-taking businesses, this is a huge opportunity for a gap. Carwash operators who invest in EV charging infrastructure now will be ahead of the curve. And government programs and incentives may also help offset costs of installation. They are intended to expand the national charging network and can make the financial investment more palatable.

Benefits Beyond Charging

Incorporating EV charging stations offers additional advantages:

- **Attracting a new customer segment:** Businesses that support sustainable practices are often what EV owners are looking for. These environmentally conscious consumers are also drawn in by offering charging services.
- **Extended On-Site Time:** It helps customers spend extra time at the facility, increasing the chance they will buy more services or products.
- **Brand Enhancement:** Positioning as an ecofriendly forward-thinking business will add to brand image and customer loyalty. >>



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Conclusion: A Call to Action for Carwash Operators

It is not just a business opportunity; it is a step to support the future of transportation in Canada: integrating EV charging stations into carwash facilities. Charging infrastructure is currently a shortcoming and carwash operators have an opportunity to help alleviate consumer frustration and enhance the rate of electric vehicle adoption by addressing the current shortcomings. With increasing EVs out there, the demand for reliable charging will increase. The trend of carwash businesses recognizing and acting on this trend is what can differentiate businesses in

the market, contribute to environmental sustainability, and grow their own business. The electric revolution has arrived, and it is time for the carwash industry to power up and embrace it – to serve their business and the customer. **■**

Caitie Romano is BTC POWER's marketing & communications manager. She is a results-driven marketing & communications professional with a proven track record of turning strategic marketing visions into measurable business success. Caitie holds a Master's Degree in Strategic Communications and a Bachelor's degree in Web Design and Development/Emphasis in Design.



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Waleco would like to congratulate Brenda and the entire team at Convenience and Carwash Canada on the publishing of your 100th issues. Thank you for the dedication over the years, and in turn creating amazing and relevant content for our industry. Enjoy celebrating this amazing milestone!

We look forward to the next 100 issues!

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You can tell how much I enjoy a magazine based on how many articles I rip out and save. Come in my office and you'll see plenty of articles from Convenience & Carwash Canada. It serves as my scouting system for great ideas and insights from operators that are often under the radar in our industry. Jeff Lenard, NACS vice president of media and strategic communications.

CELEBRATING THE 100TH ISSUE OF CONVENIENCE & CARWASH CANADA

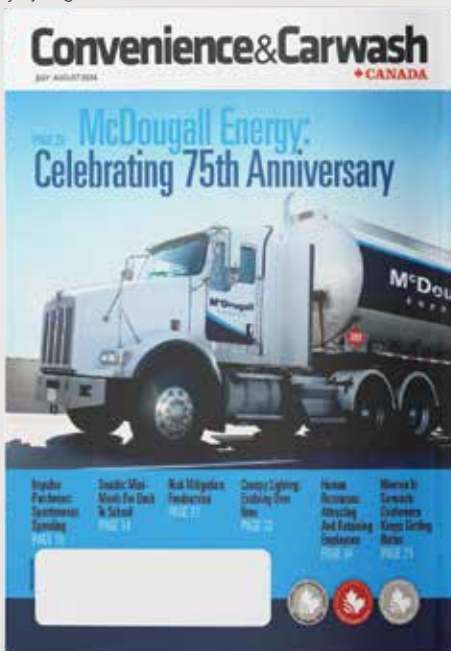
BY ANGELA ALTASS

This is *Convenience & Carwash Canada's* 100th issue and we are taking some time to reflect on our journey.

The first issue of *Convenience & Carwash Canada* was published in September 2008 with headlines that talked about such topics as better-for-you products, employee turnover, increasing tobacco profitability, loyalty, POS systems, and technology.

While these topics have remained relevant in the industry, certain aspects of them have changed over the years. Innovation and POS systems, for example, remain important topics of discussion although there have been many advancements since 2008. >>

July August 2024



Our current design shown above adopts a cleaner and more modern look, replacing the retro style of the original. The layout is more organized, featuring a structured hierarchy of text with bold headlines and clear page references, making it easier for readers to navigate the content. Overall, the new design demonstrates a mature and industry-forward identity, with improved readability, refined layout, and modern colour palette, aligning current contemporary design standards.

“I would say there’s been a huge leap in accessibility and ease of use since then,” says Karisa Marra, head of sales for Square Canada. “Legacy POS systems were either very difficult to navigate, as in it took a tech savvy person to operate them, or they required technical assistance to make changes and updates. Having the ability to make changes to your POS without support means a business owner can be more agile and make changes quickly and often. I would say cost is the other difference. Legacy POS systems were expensive and usually a big upfront investment for business owners.”

An article in the 2008 edition talked about linking loyalty to point of sale system. Having a loyalty program interfaced with a POS system is pretty common nowadays and Marra notes that small business owners continue to look for creative ways to bring customers back through loyalty programs.

Lee Barter, vice president, Infonet Technology, mentions the following as examples of how POS systems have changed since 2008:

- Contactless payment
- Windows, Android and iOS-based systems
- Cloud based offerings
- Multiple platforms: tablet, phone, smart terminal, large platform touch screen
- Better and more dynamic reporting, analytics and product management using BI and AI
- Smart shelf labelling
- Order processing
- Self-checkout

September October 2008



Tobacco remains one of the hottest topics in the convenience store industry, notes Stéphane Bouchard, national sales and marketing director, Century Tobacco Company (CTC).

“It’s still one of the highest investments for retailers as it demands significant stock investment and is highly regulated,” says Bouchard. “As manufacturers, we have a crucial role in helping retailers increase their margins and navigate the challenges that come with tobacco sales. Despite the changing landscape, tobacco continues to be a vital category for convenience stores, both as a significant revenue source and a product that requires careful management and regulatory compliance.”

The ongoing importance of tobacco as a product category is undeniable and it remains a key focus for the industry, says Bouchard.

The industry has certainly transformed since 2008, and so has the magazine,” notes Bouchard. “Convenience stores have shifted toward new approaches to generate growth, with retailers seeking more dynamic services and offerings. We now see a focus on foodservice options, carwash programs, and broader service offerings that cater to the evolving needs of consumers. These changes are well reflected in the magazine’s articles, which have done a great job in highlighting the efforts of various service providers making a difference. The key shift is that convenience stores are no longer just about stocking products but are evolving into multi-faceted service hubs.”

Over the years, *Convenience & Carwash Canada* has continuously brought attention to the most relevant and innovative players in the industry, which has been invaluable in showcasing the evolving landscape, says Bouchard.

For the carwash industry, there have been many changes since *Convenience & Carwash Canada* started publishing, says Ian Burton, North American director of sales, Istobal Vehicle Wash & Care.

“Touch carwashes have had a resurgence in the industry, payment methods have changed from cash to credit cards and are now moving towards mobile payment devices,” says Burton. “The customer is expecting more of a show at each site and site operators are looking for equipment that has the ability to provide site

information remotely on their mobile device or laptop computer. CCC articles have dealt with industry issues. We will continue to see more changes in the industry and I am sure Brenda and *Convenience & Carwash Canada* will be on top of the information flow.”

The increasing involvement of women in the carwash industry and convenience retailing is noted by Tim Hogarth, president and CEO, The Pioneer Group when asked about changes within the industry since 2008. In acknowledgement of the growing involvement of women in leadership roles in the carwash industry, *Convenience & Carwash Canada* publisher Brenda Johnstone started a Women in Carwash™ conference in 2019.

Convenience & Carwash Canada would like to acknowledge the many people, stores, and organizations we have encountered along the way and thank those

who have sent some warm and wonderful congratulatory wishes to us as we celebrate this milestone.

Congratulations on the incredible milestone of the 100th issue of *Convenience & Carwash Canada*! It’s amazing to reflect on the journey and growth of the magazine and much of this success is due to Brenda Johnstone’s vision and determination. Her accomplishments are a true testament to her entrepreneurial spirit and deep knowledge of the industry. Brenda has not only thrived in an environment that has undergone so many changes but has also navigated the

complexities of the publishing world. I had the privilege of meeting Brenda years ago at an NACDA convention, and since then, I have come to admire her not only for her industry insight but also as an important collaborator to key stakeholders in the convenience world. She is indeed an inspiring individual.

Steven Bouchard, national sales and marketing director, Century Tobacco Company (CTC)

Waleco would like to congratulate Brenda and the entire team at *Convenience & Carwash Canada* on the publishing of your 100th issue. Thank you for the dedication over the years and in turn

>>

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creating amazing and relevant content for our industry. We look forward to the next 100 issues!

Ryan Vassos, vice president and general manager, Waleco Inc.

I have known Brenda Johnstone even before she had started *Convenience & Carwash Canada*. She had extensive experience in the industry at that time. She took that experience and started her own company

and now has parlayed *Convenience & Carwash Canada* to be not only one of the leading industry magazines in Canada but also across North America. That risk and determination is big. All suppliers and customers go to her magazine to find out how to be successful in Canada.

Istobal USA has always been a big supporter of the magazine. She has

always stepped outside the box and had articles that were important to our business model, which is in bay automatics. The 100th issue is a huge accomplishment for the company and its owner. Congratulations from Istobal USA.

Ian Burton, North American director of sales, Istobal

Convenience & Carwash Canada contributes by giving additional insight into the convenience and carwash industries in Canada. We are a very diverse nation with a weather climate that is unique across a huge geographic landscape. Having Canadian-based publications writing about Canadian-based issues is a blessing. It is great to see Canadian businesses thrive. Things are not exactly the same in Canada as they are in the U.S. so having Canadian-based periodicals is a positive factor for all Canadian industries. The *Women in Carwash* conference that was introduced by Brenda Johnstone is a wonderful and beneficial event. We have sent two representatives each year and will continue to do so. We salute the 100th issue of *Convenience & Carwash Canada*. Keep it going.

Frank Merrill, executive vice president and chief marketing officer, AIR-serv Canada Inc. >>



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Reaching a 100th edition milestone is no small feat and a tremendous achievement. Brenda Johnstone and her team are the magic ingredients behind this remarkable achievement and this publication is a testament to the enduring value it has provided to the convenience and carwash industry in both Canada and the U.S.A.

Tim Hogarth, president and CEO, The Pioneer Group.

Congratulations to *Convenience & Carwash Canada* magazine on their 100th edition and especially to Brenda for entering a tough market and having total success. The coverage this magazine has given over the years to advancing technologies has been amazing and extremely important to the market. Hard to believe it has been over 17 years and I have been there for them all and cannot thank Brenda enough for all her contributions and dedication to our industry.

Dave Bowen, president, Roctan 2000 Ltd.

Quite an accomplishment – 100 editions and 17 years of *Convenience & Carwash Canada* magazine! Gas King has been proud to be included and featured in some of these 100 information-packed issues. KINGratulations to Brenda and her team from everyone at Gas King.

Brent Morris, president, Gas King Oil Co. Ltd.

The 100th issue is a major milestone especially these days when printed matter is no longer as prevalent as it was 10 years ago.

John Allen, president and CEO, P.D. McLaren Ltd.

Congratulations to Brenda and her team on reaching your 100th issue! It's been fun to watch you launch and evolve the publication over the years. Here's to the next 100 issues.

Darren Wight, executive vice president of client success, DeanHouston.

Congratulations to *Convenience & Carwash Canada* on the remarkable achievement of publishing your 100th edition! WPMA has greatly enjoyed our longstanding partnership, working together through our advertising trade to support each other's growth and success. Here's to the strong friendship we share, promoting camaraderie and innovation in our fields. We look forward to many more years of collaboration and mutual support!

Emily Perry, accounts payable executive assistant, Western Petroleum Marketers Association (WPMA).

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BUBBLES CAR WASH BUILDING A LEGACY OF EXCELLENCE



BY MELINE BEACH

Bubbles Car Wash has been a cornerstone of the carwash industry for nearly half a century. Starting with a single location in Alberta in 1977, the business has grown to 10 carwash and detailing centres across the province and into British Columbia. Based on a commitment to exceptional service and innovation, Bubbles is driven by a vision to elevate the carwash experience.

“My father had a visionary idea to create a customer-focused experience, transforming the lobby into a welcoming space with comfortable lounge furniture and a cappuccino bar. This marked the beginning of an era in carwash hospitality, where customers could feel truly valued.” – Natasha Toffoli, President, Bubbles Car Wash and Detail Centres

“My father bought his first carwash 47 years ago, during an era when carwashes were very basic and utilitarian,” says Natasha Toffoli, president of Bubbles Car Wash and Detail Centres. At the time, carwashes were basic and functional and often paired with full-service gas stations. The carwash tunnel would be open to the lobby area, creating a loud, drafty and uncomfortable experience. “My father had a visionary idea to create a customer-focused experience, transforming the lobby into a welcoming space with comfortable lounge furniture and a cappuccino bar. This marked the beginning of an era in carwash hospitality, where customers could feel truly valued.”

Today, the second generation of leadership has taken the helm. Natasha joined the carwash industry when she

was just 14 years old, gaining experience in every aspect of the family business over the years. The transition in leadership was natural but not without its challenges. “Despite occasional clashes, our shared goal of growing the business made the process rewarding,” says Toffoli. “Watching my father trust me to build upon the foundation he created has been a proud journey for both of us, ultimately allowing him to step back and feel confident in the business’ direction.”

Growth and Expansion

Expanding to multiple locations was a deliberate and thoughtful process. Growth meant ensuring that each location not only met the company’s operational standards but also upheld the brand’s reputation for exceptional guest experiences.

“Recruiting and training the right team members was one of the biggest hurdles as we needed individuals who shared our vision and could execute it effectively,” says Toffoli. “To maintain quality and consistency across all locations, we built a strong administrative team that fosters strong communications and a culture of accountability to ensure that every store operates as an extension of our family business, delivering the same level of care and service.”

Toffoli works alongside her administrative team,

consisting of a general service manager, general operations manager, and general manager, who regularly travel between markets to oversee operations, provide training, and address any gaps. Operational consistency while scaling the brand's reputation for premium service is an essential factor in standing out in the carwash market.

One of the company's key competitive advantages is its continued focus on providing a full-service experience with a no-appointment policy, which aligns with today's consumer demand for convenience. Despite industry trends moving away from full-service models due to rising costs and the challenges of managing people, Bubbles Car

Wash has remained steadfast in its commitment to providing a premium experience. Modern lobbies equipped with amenities like fireplaces, Wi-Fi, and Nespresso machines, combined with a highly trained and customer-focused staff, ensure that customers receive exceptional value.

"What truly sets us apart is how we treat our team members and customers, like family, which has resulted in low turnover and a dedicated team


that understands the importance of our guest-first approach," says Toffoli. "We invest heavily in training our staff to be friendly, professional, and customer-focused. This combination of people-centred service and luxurious amenities makes the experience worth every penny,

"What truly sets us apart is how we treat our team members and customers, like family, which has resulted in low turnover and a dedicated team that understands the importance of our guest-first approach." – Natasha Toffoli, President, Bubbles Car Wash and Detail Centres

leaving our customers not just satisfied but eager to return."

Commitment to Community and Looking Ahead

The success of Bubbles Car Wash is deeply rooted in community support. Over the years, the company has built lasting relationships with customers and engaged in numerous charitable initiatives, from food bank drives and school supply campaigns to winter coat collections and clean water projects in developing countries. Their philosophy of giving back is based on mutual support and their commitment to community builds brand loyalty.

Looking ahead, Bubbles' goal is to continue expanding its service offering to meet evolving customer needs, combined with ambitious plans for growth, including the opening of two new locations within the next three to five years. In terms of advice to others, Toffoli emphasizes the importance of customer experience above all else. "Treat your employees well, invest in their growth, and focus on creating an environment where both your team and customers feel valued. Building a strong foundation of trust and service is the key to long-term success." 

Meline Beach is a Toronto-based communications practitioner and frequent contributor to Convenience and Carwash Canada. In addition to freelance writing, Meline provides communications and public relations support to businesses across Canada. She can be reached at www.mlbcomms.ca.



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ADDRESSING SUBSTANCE DEPENDENCE IN THE WORKPLACE



BY RENEE BOYDA

What many employers do not know, is that a drug or alcohol dependence is considered a disability according to the Human Rights Act.

As with other disabilities, the employee has a right to be accommodated by their employer. Failing to accommodate an employee with substance dependence can lead to significant legal implications.

Employer Responsibilities

Employers have several responsibilities when addressing substance dependence in the workplace:

1. Employers have a duty to accommodate to the point of undue hardship. An accommodation is an adjustment to rules, practices or policies that may have a negative impact based on prohibited grounds for discrimination in the Canadian Human Rights Act. It is sometimes necessary to treat someone differently to prevent discrimination.
2. Ensure the safety of its employees. Employers must not allow impaired staff to perform tasks that could endanger themselves or others. Remove an employee from the workplace whose health needs require immediate attention, if the employee is suspected of being impaired and has caused an accident, a near miss, or if their behaviour is putting their own safety or the safety of others at risk. Seek advice from an HR professional if you are put into this situation. There may be other steps that need to be taken or agencies to contact.

3. Develop a policy on substance use in the workplace. The policy should outline objectives, prevention measures, support and resources as well as consequences for non-compliance.
4. Provide support. Employers can offer support through Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) and make referrals to local resources.

Employee Responsibilities

Employees are responsible for communicating their accommodation needs, providing sufficient information about their condition to their employer to develop an appropriate accommodation plan, and cooperating in the accommodation process. If the employee is unwilling to participate in the accommodation process, refuses to take responsibility for their workplace behaviour or rejects a reasonable accommodation measure then accommodation may not be possible and disciplinary action may result. Seeking advice from an HR professional would be best in this situation.

Employee Disclosure

When an employee discloses an addiction to the employer, it's crucial to handle the situation with sensitivity. Acknowledge the disclosure and listen without judgment. It takes a lot of courage for someone to admit they have substance dependence. Assure the employee that their disclosure will be handled confidentially and shared only with those that need to know for support purposes.

Refer to your substance abuse policies and provide support options. Gather medical information, using the least intrusive means possible while respecting the employee's right to privacy.

Employer's Duty to Inquire

Although it is generally the responsibility of the employee to come forward with accommodation requests, the fear of stigma may prevent the employee from coming forward. If the employee has not disclosed their accommodation needs, but the employer has observed substantial changes in an employee's attendance, performance or behaviour, then the duty to inquire is triggered. The duty to inquire is a legal obligation of the employer to initiate discussion with the employee about the need for accommodation of a disability. In workplaces where there are safety-sensitive positions and there is drug and alcohol testing, the duty to inquire is also triggered in situations where there is a positive test result.

When approaching an employee about a substance abuse issue, be prepared by following these steps:

1. Gather evidence of alarming behaviour and document specific instances.
2. Arrange a private meeting with the employee, ensuring confidentiality and take a compassionate, supportive approach to the discussion.
3. Provide the employee with a list of support options and encourage them to seek help.

4. Keep an open mind. There may be other reasons for behaviour that you have not considered.

Creating an Accommodation Plan

Creating the accommodation plan for substance dependence requires an individualized assessment. Here's what should be included in the accommodation plan:

1. Determine the employee specific accommodation needs through consultation with the employee, their union or representative and relevant medical professionals. Some examples are: granting a leave of absence to attend treatment; work schedule changes to allow the employee to attend medical

appointments, attend treatment or meeting with a sponsor; or reassignment to a non-safety sensitive position.

2. Create a written accommodation plan signed by all parties detailing agreed upon solutions like work schedule adjustments, job restrictions and necessary treatment time. The accommodation plan must be flexible and evolved based on updated medical information and the employee's needs.
3. Designate the person the employee reports to with any questions or concerns.
4. Develop a return-to-work agreement outlining expectations for attendance, performance, and compliance with workplace policies.

5. Regularly review and adjust the plan as needed, considering potential relapses or additional disabilities. It is important for the employer to understand that an employee who is dealing with substance dependence may have other mental or physical disabilities that require accommodation.

Drug and Alcohol Testing

Some federally regulated workplaces have safety-sensitive positions and require drug or alcohol testing as a precautionary measure. Drug and alcohol testing is considered a medical examination and a significant invasion of privacy. Conducting drug and alcohol testing on an employee who is not deemed to be in a safety-sensitive position is rarely permitted by law and could land an employer in serious legal trouble. Always seek advice before considering this as an option.


Support Options

Your organization's Employee Assistance Program (also known as EAP) is a wonderful resource. You can also check the Government of Canada's "Get help with substance use" page at <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/substance-use/get-help-with-substance-use.html#a3>. There you can find Canada-wide resources, provincial and territorial supports, as well as other mental health supports.

Additionally, employers can create a supportive environment for employees with addiction issues by:

1. Providing comprehensive training for employees and managers on substance use disorders, focusing on understanding, prevention, and available support
2. Developing clear supportive policies that emphasize confidentiality and non-discrimination.
3. Foster an inclusive work environment that encourages open discussions about mental health and substance use without judgment and focused on recovery. Normalizing discussions about mental health and substance dependence can help to reduce stigma.
4. Offer access to employee assistance programs and other support services, ensuring employees know how to seek help.

Seek Advice from a Professional

If you need support or advice on matters regarding substance-dependence accommodation, or any other HR issue, then please reach out to us at Legacy Bowes. 

Renee Boyda is a human resources consultant with Legacy Bowes. Renee is a CPHR Candidate, received her Bachelor of Arts in Sociology from the University of Manitoba, and received both Human Resource Management and Management Development Certificates with Honours from Red River College. Renee is focused on building HR structures and processes to create consistency and fairness in workplaces across Canada. Renee is a proud Metis, with over 12 years of human resource experience in both union and non-union environments.

She can be reached at (204) 947-5525.



Assure the employee that their disclosure will be handled confidentially and shared only with those that need to know for support purposes.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Viessmann Generations Group Acquires KPS Global

By Angela Altass



Mike Eakins, CEO of KPS Global

The Viessmann Generations Group recently acquired US-based KPS Global. Viessmann has indicated that this investment is an important strategic expansion step into the North American market for their clean and cold solutions platform.

The Viessmann Generations Group is a global, broadly diversified company founded in 1917. KPS Global is a provider of custom enclosures for controlled environments.

"KPS Global and Viessmann are a perfect match," says Max Viessmann, CEO of Viessmann. "KPS Global is a strong addition to our ecosystem. We look forward to expanding our clean and cold North America platform together with the experienced and proven KPS Global management team."

Mike Eakins, CEO of KPS Global believes the relationship with Viessmann Generations Group will allow for significant growth while still maintaining the commitment to their customers, employees and vendors, including those in Canada and in the convenience store industry.

"Canada is very much an extension of our market," says Eakins. "The convenience store side is a really important part of our business. We've really seen the convenience store industry evolve over the past 10-15 years to where there are customers out there who count on them for their daily food needs as well as the typical, traditional convenience store items. We've seen it develop over the years from a one-stop gas station concept to where you could buy soda and maybe a granola bar; that has now developed into a concept where they have a lot of food service. You can go into a convenience store and get prepared foods. You can buy complete dinners from some of our convenience store customers, along with drinks and everything to support it. We're able to provide our convenience store customers with the equipment they need to preserve and store that product safely until the consumer is ready to collect it and take it home."

KPS Global has a strong focus on transforming clean and cold solutions to increase energy efficiency and reduce food waste, says Eakins.

"The stability and long-term commitment of a



KPS GLOBAL INNOVATION CENTER



family-owned investment firm is really exciting as it allows us to continue to innovate in the market and offer our customers leading edge sustainable solutions," says Eakins. "We focus on innovation. It's an ever-changing market. We have products that we've put out in the last three to four years that are better for the environment, saving energy costs and providing a higher insulation rate for walk-in coolers and freezers."

The food storage and walk-in cooler/freezer market has been changing over the past few years, says Eakins.

"I've personally been in the market for 33 years," notes Eakins. "It was stagnant. It was a very sleepy market with little innovation. That changed drastically with the recent pandemic. The government, as well as the pharma community, found out very quickly that we did not have enough cold storage distribution for the challenge of distributing a vaccine that required very strict temperature controls across North America to hundreds of millions of people. So, there's been a lot of efforts to increase the cold storage network and the cold storage chain across North America and we get

to participate in that."

There is also a growing demand by consumers for fresh and organic foods and having fresh produce delivered directly to their doorsteps.

"Controlling the temperature chain from farm to market used to be the challenge," says Eakins. "Now, we have to control it from farm to doorstep, which is another huge step in the cold chain distribution process. Consumers want fresh and organic products, which plays well into our wheelhouse of being able to maintain the cold chain and the network to be able to provide those products."

The KPS Global acquisition is Viessmann's first foray into North America, says Eakins.

"Viessmann is a multi-billion-dollar company and has been a very large player in Europe in the clean and cold space and it's common knowledge in our industry that Europe is light years ahead of North America when it comes to refrigeration technology so this acquisition gives us direct access to a lot of that technology," says Eakins. "We are excited about that. It's a real opportunity." 

WHAT'S NEW



International Carwash Association Partners with Learner Mobile to Elevate Training in the Carwash Industry

International Carwash Association (ICA) is excited to announce a strategic partnership with Learner Mobile, an award-winning learning management system (LMS), to deliver an innovative and comprehensive training solution for the carwash industry. This collaboration marks the next iteration of ICA's successful LEAD Manager Training Program, which empowers professionals to develop essential management skills and drive business success.

Learner Mobile's platform offers a host of advanced features, including the ability to author content using AI, enabling carwash operators to quickly and efficiently create customized courses and training programs. Combined with ICA's expertly curated content, this partnership ensures that carwashes can hit the ground running with a training solution tailored to the needs of frontline carwash employees and management teams alike.

"To date, LEAD has trained nearly 7,000 carwash professionals at more than 350 locations," said Claire Moore, chief learning officer of the International Carwash Association. "Partnering with a best-in-class company like Learner Mobile allows us to extend this unmatched training even further to train and develop carwash professionals at every level of an operation."

Learner Mobile's innovative platform is designed with simplicity and flexibility in mind, offering modern, mobile-first solutions that allow users to access training anytime, anywhere. The ability to quickly create custom training content using AI ensures that businesses can adapt and respond to evolving needs, creating a versatile and scalable resource for the industry.

For more information about LEAD and the partnership with Learner Mobile, visit www.lead.carwash.org.

National Carwash Solutions Acquires AMP Membership Platform Groundbreaking Acquisition Expands Portfolio to Include Advanced Membership and Point-of-Sale Solutions

Grimes, IA — National Carwash Solutions (NCS), the premier provider of carwash equipment, chemistry, aftermarket parts, and technology solutions in North America, today announced the acquisition of AMP Memberships, LLC (AMP), with Amplify Capital Group serving as the exclusive financial advisor to AMP. This strategic addition positions NCS to offer an advanced suite of integrated solutions tailored to the needs of carwash owners and operators, solidifying its role as the leading partner in the carwash industry.

AMP's innovative platform includes a next-generation mobile app and the groundbreaking Clarity point-of-sale (POS) system, empowering carwash businesses to increase revenue, enhance customer loyalty, and streamline operations. With features like data-driven marketing, advanced analytics, customizable membership programs, and powerful customer engagement tools, AMP delivers unparalleled functionality to help carwashes scale and thrive.

"AMP rounds out the NCS portfolio, allowing us to offer every solution a carwash owner or operator needs to build, grow, or restore their

business," said Jesse Wurth, CEO of National Carwash Solutions.

AMP has revolutionized the carwash industry by combining cutting-edge AI and machine learning software with best-in-class hardware to create a first-of-its-kind engagement ecosystem. The Clarity POS system offers real-time data insights, fraud reduction, and intuitive sales tools for attendants — all aimed at increasing revenue and reducing customer churn.

Adam Trien, the CEO and CTO of AMP, expressed his excitement about joining the NCS family. "NCS shares our passion for innovation and customer success," Trien said.

At NCS, Carwash 4.0 isn't the future—it's happening now. The integration of AMP's advanced analytics, machine learning, and fully integrated POS solutions enhances NCS's connected carwash, which includes the soon-to-be-released smart controller, connected equipment through NCS Lens, and other cutting-edge technologies on the horizon.

"Our mission is to continue leading the industry with technology that connects and enhances every aspect of carwash operations," said Jimmy Belanger, chief innovation officer of National Carwash Solutions.

For more information about this acquisition or to explore how NCS is transforming the carwash industry, visit www.ncswash.com.

Sonny's Enterprises Integrates Payment Technology from Fiserv to Offer Enhanced Payment Solutions for CarWash Businesses

TAMARAC, FL — Sonny's Enterprises, a global leader in conveyerized carwash parts and equipment, announces the integration of payment processing capabilities from Fiserv, Inc., a leading global provider of payments and financial services technology.

By leveraging the ISV Partner Program from Fiserv, Sonny's aims to deliver tailored merchant payment processing solutions designed for the carwash industry, enabling operators to achieve secure, efficient, and cost-effective transaction management.

"We are committed to equipping carwash operators with superior tools for their business success," said Curt Hutchins, CEO of Sonny's Enterprises. "The combination of reliable, fast, and secure payment services from Fiserv and carwash solutions from Sonny's empowers businesses to provide a seamless payment experience for customers while enhancing operational efficiency."

These capabilities allow carwash operators to utilize Sonny's Controls point-of-sale systems,

benefit from a complete solution and competitive pricing, and access Fiserv's merchant processing expertise.

Key Advantages of the Sonny's Integration with Fiserv:

- **Integrated Solutions:** Seamless integration between Fiserv payment processing and Sonny's Controls offers insights into sales and customer data.
- **Member Recharge Protection:** Automatically refreshes customer payment information, minimizing membership attrition.
- **High-Speed Credit Card Processing:** Enables quick, seamless transactions, improving customer satisfaction.
- **Enhanced Security and PCI Compliance:** Safeguards customer data while simplifying PCI compliance.
- **Transparent Pricing:** Competitive pricing and personalized analyses based on customer statements.
- **Expedited Funding:** Optimizes cash flow with expedited access to funds.
- **Merchant Portal:** Allows operators to review transactions and manage payments efficiently.

To learn more about Sonny's integration with Fiserv, visit SonnyDirect.com.



Keurig Dr Pepper Canada Expands Beverage Portfolio with Exclusive Nestlé Licensing Agreement

KDP Canada enters multi-year agreement with Société des Produits Nestlé to Drive Growth and Innovation for the Nestea Brand in Canada

Mississauga – Canada Dry Mott’s Inc., doing business as Keurig Dr Pepper Canada (“KDP Canada”), has entered into a long-term licensing agreement with Société des Produits Nestlé (“Nestlé Canada”), to manage the manufacturing, marketing, sales, distribution, and merchandizing of the ready-to-drink

product range of the iconic Nestea brand across Canada, effective January 1, 2025. This collaboration propels KDP Canada to a leadership position in the iced tea category, integrating the country’s top-selling brand in that segment into its diverse portfolio.

Nestea, with its rich history and strong consumer loyalty, will benefit from KDP Canada’s extensive market expertise and commitment to innovation. The partnership will focus on further building Nestea’s brand image and go-to-market strategy, driving growth through new product launches and expanded availability.

“This partnership reflects KDP Canada’s forward-thinking approach to collaboration, emphasizing our commitment to driving value through strategic partnerships and expanding our portfolio with premium beverages,” said Olivier Lemire, president, Keurig Dr Pepper Canada.

“By combining Nestea’s strong heritage with KDP Canada’s leadership in consumer-driven innovation, we are well positioned to elevate the brand and meet the evolving preferences of Canadian consumers.”

“We are excited to join forces with KDP Canada to elevate this brand to new heights,” said John Carmichael, president and CEO, Nestlé Canada. “Our companies’ shared vision for the future of the beverage industry, combined with a deep commitment to sustainability and innovation, makes this collaboration an exceptional fit.”

By leveraging its robust distribution network and beverage industry expertise, KDP will strengthen Nestea’s presence across key retail channels, supporting the brand for continued success and expanded market share for all ready-to-drink products across Canada.



Rabba Leads Efforts with Danone and Partners to Provide Much Needed Holiday Donation to Food Banks Mississauga

Mississauga – Rabba joined forces this holiday season with its partners to help families in need through a generous donation to Food Banks Mississauga.

Over 2,500 lbs of food, including thousands of items such as plant-based beverages and yogurt, holiday treats, flour, and fresh produce, were delivered to support local families. The donation reflects Rabba’s ongoing commitment to providing nutritious foods through its Rabba Roots Community Giving Program, continuing its holiday tradition of helping those in need.

“With food insecurity on the rise, we hope this donation is helpful and a sign of hope for families who are struggling,” said Rima Rabba, who leads the Rabba Roots Community Program. “We are grateful to our partners who share a commitment to the diverse communities we serve.”

Last year, Food Banks Mississauga served over 56,000 individuals, which is one in 13 residents in Mississauga. The number of children receiving food support has increased by 42 per cent compared to the year before, with children now making up almost 30 per cent of food bank visitors.

“With the recent declaration of food insecurity as an emergency by the City of Mississauga, we need the support of our community more than ever this holiday season as we work to provide food support to neighbours in need across the city,” says Daisy Yiu, director of marketing &

communications at Food Banks Mississauga. “Thank you to Rabba and its partners for stepping up during this time of crisis.”

Rabba has been a regular contributor to Food Banks Mississauga for more than 15 years. This holiday donation is just one of the many projects supported by the Rabba Roots Community Program. Together with partners and friends, the program supports food banks, homeless shelters, hospitals, and other community organizations. The Rabba Roots Community Program invests in the GTA community that Rabba has served as a family-run grocer since 1967—supporting greater access to food, health, emergency services, and more.

“It is an honour to once again partner with Rabba in this special initiative,” says Wayne Barker, director of sales – impulse at Danone Canada. “Like Rabba, we are committed to the Mississauga community and appreciate the work of Food Banks Mississauga. Our mission at Danone is to bring health through food to as many people as possible, so we believe that every family should be able to have nutritious, wholesome food on the table—especially at this time of year.”



Tim Hortons team members prepare to serve customers at their newest Tim Hortons located inside Rabba Fine Foods at 40 Asquith Ave, in downtown Toronto.

Rabba Fine Foods continues to expand with Tim Hortons Community grocer now offers the restaurant chain’s full menu at its Asquith Avenue market

Mississauga, Ont. – Rabba Fine Foods, the Greater Toronto Area’s trusted 24/7 urban market chain, is proud to announce the opening of its newest Tim Hortons at 40 Asquith Avenue in downtown Toronto, near Yonge and Bloor. This addition marks the 14th Tim Hortons location within a Rabba Fine Foods store.

“We’re proud to continue our partnership with Tim Hortons,” said Rick Rabba, president of Rabba Fine Foods. “Whether it’s breakfast, lunch or dinner, Tim Hortons enhances the in-store experience.”

This ongoing collaboration underscores Rabba Fine Foods’ dedication to offering high-quality products and services that cater to the needs of its communities—any time of day. The new Tim Hortons location will feature Tim Horton’s full menu, providing customers with a wide range of freshly prepared options.

Rabba’s relationship with Tim Hortons started in 2015 with the opening of a first franchise location in Mississauga and has grown to 14 locations within Rabba markets across the GTA.

For a complete list of Rabba locations, or additional information, visit rabba.com.

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