

ALEX LEE INK

a magazine for alex lee employees



Alex Lee

VOLUME 16 NUMBER 2 | april 2018

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Alex Lee

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A MESSAGE FROM BRIAN

BRIAN GEORGE, PRESIDENT & CEO OF ALEX LEE, INC.

INNOVATION



SausageWorks, a Lowes Foods original.



Pick 'n' Prep, a Lowes Foods original.

Innovation is an Alex Lee value that is key to our growth. For the past several years, we have focused on innovation through teams, competitions, projects, and programs we developed to serve our customers and guests. We have seen many of these ideas come to life that have changed our business and caused the industry to take notice.

We introduced the “originals” concepts at Lowes Foods, creating new departments like SausageWorks, Pick ‘n’ Prep, and Beer Den. We created a whole new sausage category, produce category, and beer category. The growth from these innovations has not only made our stores competitive, but it has also gotten Lowes Foods noticed as an innovator in the industry.

In the 1990s, we introduced Lowes Foods to Go when no one was moving towards online shopping. Now we are offering an online shopping experience that is branded and evolving in this market where online is common place. With our originals and Ready, Set, Supper Meal Kits, we have offerings that

are unique both online and in-store. We are also introducing recipe cards online that can be used to build shopping lists. We continually evolve and improve the online shopping experience by listening to our guests and looking for ways to surprise and delight them.

At MDI, we developed an A-B pick-to-light system that included equipment designed to make the process work with fewer errors. With an equipment partner, we patented the technology that we now use in the warehouse to improve efficiency and accuracy. This process allows us to accurately pick two orders at the same time, which results in better service to our retail customers. Other companies are also adopting this new method of picking.

The idea to go into the frozen storage business at MDI came from the first Sparx Challenge in 2016. A team presented the option to fully utilize the new frozen expansion by seeking frozen storage customers. We now have a strong and growing storage business.



The Beer Den, a Lowes Foods original.



Ready, Set, Supper meal kit.



Freezer expansion at the MDI warehouse, a Sparx Challenge innovation.



Lowes Foods To Go was introduced in the 1990s.



Acquisition of Souto Foods, a Hispanic foods distributor, is a Sparx Challenge innovation.

Another Sparx Challenge winner that became part of the company operations was the idea for rapid expansion into ethnic sales. Ethnic sales are now a key part of the MDI strategy, and we have acquired Souto Foods to speed up the expansion. Souto is a rapidly growing Hispanic distribution company that has accelerated its growth with the support of MDI.

In partnership with Duke Energy, we installed electric charging stations for trailer reefers to reduce fuel use, noise pollution, and emissions. This started as an innovation project, and on November 7, 2017, the stations were installed. Our trucks and the trucks delivering to MDI use these charging stations daily. This project was first conceived by a Sparx Challenge team in 2017, and it is projected to save six hundred gallons of fuel per week.

With MDI's focus on helping our customers be more successful, we have been expanding services for independents. When looking to see what services the independent retailers



MDI's large-format printing facility, a Sparx Challenge innovation.



MDI charging station, a Sparx Challenge innovation.



The Beer Run, a Sparx Challenge innovation.



Chicken Kitchen, a Lowes Foods original, a "Lowe's and Behold" boxes for introducing new neighbors to Lowes Foods.

could benefit from, the team identified large format printing as an opportunity to better serve our customers and save money on print services that were being outsourced. This idea was submitted as a 2017 Sparx Challenge project, and on November 1, 2017, we opened a facility with large format machines printing in-store signage, truck wraps, floor graphics, display modules, window clings, etc. In a year, we introduced a whole new business that serves not only independent grocery stores, but also other industries.

Another 2017 Sparx award winner was the Beer Run concept. The idea was to create an internal beer distribution network involving pickup and delivery of certain craft beers without broad distribution so that we can carry them in all Lowes Foods stores. We have leased and branded a truck for this person and filled the driver/merchandiser position. The test program started in February 2018, and we are currently delivering to 17 stores and picking up at 12 breweries.

I have shared many of the larger projects here, but we also have innovations taking place daily that make us better. For example, the MDI damage reclaim center started having the warehouse exclude water and flour from damage bins to increase salability of product. MDI introduced an athletic trainer to improve the work experience in the warehouse and prevent injuries. Lowes Foods enters markets with "Lowe's and Behold" boxes to introduce neighbors to Lowes Foods, Private Brand products, and local vendor partners.

We have innovation happening throughout the company both as part of the challenges and in everyday work. As a core value, it is important that everyone in the company continue to look for innovative or new ways to serve our customers and guests. As John Wooden said, "Success is never final, failure is never fatal. It's courage that counts." Your ideas are making us a better company, and your ideas are key to our growth and success. Thank you for sharing your creative ideas!



THE SECURITY TEAM

Hi, I'm Josh, and I'm new here. Well, okay, I've been around for the past thirteen years at Alex Lee, Inc., and MDI. Before I tell you more about me, let's talk about some other people. First off, I would like to thank **Julie Brewster** for her work in Security. Julie formed or matured many of the security policies, practices, guidelines, and tools that are used to protect and guide Alex Lee companies today. The groundwork Julie laid was no small feat. She faced

a huge learning curve, an ever-frugal budget, a demanding security landscape, and evolving PCI (payment card industry) standards. Thank you, Julie, for those years of going above and beyond in the Security Manager role.

Next let me introduce you to my security wing men. **Jeremie Bolick** and **Jonathan Williams** support Alex Lee endpoints (desktops and laptops). Jeremie and Jonathan are also key players in reviewing logs,

maintaining antivirus software, and investigating threats. Jonathan joined the Alex Lee family in June of 2017. He lives in Newton with his wife, Amanda, and their two sons, Gavin and Asher. Jonathan enjoys brewing beer, cooking, traveling, and playing Xbox online with friends. Jeremie Bolick started at Alex Lee in 2009. Jeremie lives in Hickory with his wife, Julie, and their dog, Roxie. (**Julie Bolick** is Manager of Procurement Processes at MDI.) Jeremie's hobbies are Chevrolet Corvettes and 1980s-era arcade cabinet and pinball machine restoration.

While I may be new to the role of Security Manager, I've served in a number of information technology roles at Alex Lee. With that experience, I'm certain that security at Alex Lee doesn't only rely on my small three-person team. Alex Lee's customers and networks are protected by every employee and host. By following security guidelines and bulletins, reporting harmful email, protecting passwords, and commonly doing what is right, each of you is a valued member of this team.

Lately, we have seen an increase in the number of attacks on our users through email. I believe we are all used to seeing spam. Hopefully, most spam lands in your "junk" folder. A type of malicious spam called phishing is the attempt via email to obtain sensitive information such as usernames, passwords, and credit card details (and money) by posing as a trustworthy entity. In a phishing email, the sender's account may be an imitation, likely of someone you know, whose account may be compromised. Below are some tips for spotting phishing emails:

1. Does the email display name say it's from a coworker but the body of the email has

a yellow warning at the top saying "External Email"? This should be a warning that the email wasn't sent from inside our email systems and should not be trusted.

2. Is the email using a threatening tone, such as stating a late invoice notice or that your account is going to be disabled?
3. Does the email just seem off somehow? Poor spelling or grammar, lack of a signature, a vague greeting, and poor-quality logos can all point to the email being a phishing attempt.
4. Is the email redirecting you to a site asking for your email username and password?

If you see any of these flags there are a couple of steps you should follow:

1. If you know the person who appears to have sent the email and you have his or her phone number, call and ask if he or she really sent the email. Make sure not to use the phone number in the signature of that email that you suspect to be fake.
2. If you are unable to call the person, please forward the email to spamemails@alexlee.com and explain why you are concerned.

If you feel that you may have fallen for a phishing email, whether by opening an attachment or giving out your username and password, contact the Alex Lee Service Desk at once. Also reset your password immediately. You can greatly help reduce any damage by reporting all security concerns.

To submit requests for IS Security topics you would like to see covered contact **Josh Craven@alexlee.com**. Please report any security incidents to the Alex Lee Service Desk at **828.725.446** or extension **54466** or by email to helpdesk@alexlee.com.



A MESSAGE FROM BOB

BOB McTEIR, PRESIDENT OF MDI

Local Before Local Was Cool

WHILE RECENTLY ATTENDING BOTH the IGA and NGA (National Grocers Association) conferences, MDI was honored with winning the IGA USA Licensed Distribution Center of the Year President's Cup Award. This is an award given to the best IGA distribution center in the country. Receiving this award made me reflect on why we would be considered for such an honor. Yes, we have great programs. Yes, we have a great facility that services our customers better than anyone else can. Yes, we are a great place to work. Yes, we are fearless, prepared, and diversified. Yes, we have great people, and yes, **Eddie Minton**, our MDI IGA ad director, is the best of the best.

That's not why we were honored with this award. We were honored because we have **GREAT CUSTOMERS**. Earlier this year, IGA Licensed Distribution Companies (LDCs) were each asked to submit one Five Star retailer as a candidate for IGA USA International Retailer of the Year. Those best-in-class Hometown Proud Retailers were recognized at the IGA Awards of Excellence Brunch.

MDI submitted Dill's Food City IGA as a candidate. Dills was founded in 1935, when Charles D. Dilworth, better known as "Mr. Charlie," built a 500-square foot wood slat store in rural Red Hill, Georgia. His son and daughter-in-law, Anderson and Joel, joined in 1955, and today the Dilworth family business includes four locations and 150 associates. Anderson and Joel's sons, Stan and Tracy Dilworth, now run the business with a lot of help



Mr. Charlie and his first store.

from their supportive family. Anderson still comes to work every day and stays as long as Joel will allow him. Three generations in, they recognize that the key to standing out in our northeastern-Georgia marketplace is knowing your shoppers well and making sure you're always delivering value, in all its forms. They also recognize the value of being hometown proud and part of their community. In northeast Georgia, they are finding that local — whether it's produce or protein or the local specialty items in their deli — is moving up the charts of importance for why a customer picks your store. Anderson says, "Our shoppers have a vested interest in buying and supporting local because nearly every family has someone who works in the beef or poultry industry. So we make it a priority to buy and support local too, and we also host several events throughout the year to highlight the local and regional products. Probably the most popular are our locally sourced truckload meat sales and our annual tomato event promoting the first regionally grown tomatoes of the season. For both events we put signage

throughout the store to maximize shopper awareness and we also prep our team so they can talk in detail about the products and producers."

At the event, MDI was honored because we have **GREAT CUSTOMERS!** IGA CEO John Ross presented the newly minted CEO's Innovation Award to four IGA retailers. One of those winners was MDI customer Rodhe's Marketplace. IGA CEO John Ross says, "I can tell you that national chains have nothing on the innovative programs our best IGA entrepreneurs are doing. We need to reward risk taking, creative thinking, and bold merchandising ideas. Grocery retailing and shopper expectations are changing so fast and we need to innovative leadership faster than ever before! Kurt Rodhe is the perfect ambassador to show the world that IGA is ready to lead the way in the innovative, fun, and hyperlocal experiences shoppers want."

We were honored because we have **GREAT CUSTOMERS!** Two days later we attended a National Grocers meeting where Tommy McKay (McKay's Foods and Pharmacy) received a Creative Choice Award for his merchandising and execution of a fantastic produce sidewalk sale. Walking their sale you would have thought that you were in the middle of a farmers' market. The produce was fresh and stacked high, and you could not help but get a basket and fill it up.

These are just a few of the **GREAT CUSTOMERS** that we have. It's exciting to see our customers focus on serving a customer's needs in their local communities. Our **GREAT CUSTOMERS** were local before local was cool.

MDI

MDI WINS IGA LICENSED DISTRIBUTION CENTER PRESIDENT'S CUP AWARD



IGA Chairman Mark Batenic (far left) and IGA CEO John Ross (far right) present IGA USA Licensed Distribution Center of the Year President's Cup Awards to MDI's (left to right) Eddie Minton, Bob McTeir, and Nick Carlino.

MDI Customer Rodhe's Marketplace IGA Wins IGA CEO's Innovation Award

As a third-generation IGA retailer with one of the longest standing IGA stores in the world, Kurt Rodhe attributes his family's continued success to his willingness to change along with his customers' changing needs. Recognizing that his shoppers were looking for a partner to help them make better choices for healthier lifestyles, Rodhe hired a full-time, certified natural health professional to place a focus on health and expand the store's wellness product offerings, boosting sales throughout the store and establishing a true differentiation in his marketplace.

MDI Customer McCay's Fine Foods and Pharmacy Wins NGA Creative Choice Award

MDI customer Tommy McCay of McCay's Fine Foods and Pharmacy won an NGA Creative Choice Award in merchandising-store event for his Produce Sidewalk Sales. See all winners: PROGRESSIVEGROCER.COM/NGA-REVEALS-CREATIVE-CHOICE-AWARDS-WINNERS.

CUSTOMER PROFILE

FOOTHILLS IGA

Sales Roar with Perishables and Digital



Foothills IGA, owned by Jeff and Sandy Downing, opened in 2001 as a neighborhood grocery store and is known for providing world-class customer service. From the very beginning, community involvement has been an important part of Foothills IGA, and today it is recognized as the premier grocer in the Marble Hill, Georgia, community. Foothills IGA prides itself on providing its customers with competitively-priced products, a clean store, one-stop shopping services, a large selection of quality national and regional brands, and its signature perishable items. Jeff and Sandy and their management team at Foothills IGA always strive to offer their customers a shopping experience that can't be matched by any of their competition.

Foothills IGA was the first independent at MDI to be on-board with a digital marketing campaign, digital coupons, and the ability to shop with “Foothills IGA 2GO,” their online website. The community has loved this offering and it is growing each and every day.

Most of all they separate themselves from their competition with their fresh offerings in every department. Each time I visit, the aroma of smoked meats on the grill greets me. It makes my mouth water and sets the tone for a shopping experience that none of their competitors can match. They offer smoked pork butts, whole slabs of baby back ribs, and beef brisket. They sell them whole, but better yet they sell pulled pork and cut up brisket by the pound. They have branded this as “Foothills IGA Smokehouse Meats” and have labels that reflect this branding.





When you walk into the store you are wowed by the beautiful floral department, which Sandy runs. They are always merchandised for the season, creating an atmosphere for selling as soon as you walk into the store.

The produce department offers organic produce, in-store cut fruit, and vegetables, in addition to the tomato and potato bars.

As I enter the meat department, I gaze at the best beef one can buy, “Certified Black Angus Beef,” and also their local (Georgia) Springer Mountain Fresh Chicken. And then the display of fresh seafood, delivered four times a week, makes me think I have arrived in Florida.

Just past the meat department I enter into the deli and bakery. The deli offers premium, cooked roast beef, ham, and turkey breast. They also offer Nadine’s Chicken Salad and Pimento Cheese. These are handmade by a local chef two times a week at the store and cannot be sold by any of their competitors. Nadine will not share her recipes, but hundreds of pounds a week are sold and it is SOOO GOOD! Within the deli is also a huge offering of gourmet cheese. This store represents 15% of the total amount of gourmet cheese sold out of MDI, and of course you can find a large assortment of wine close by. If a customer needs help choosing a wine, Jeff is a wine master!

A “Savor a Taste of Georgia” display of local grocery products from local companies welcomes you to the grocery department. What makes these local vendors different is they are the product specialist, and they love to come into the store and share samples. Local is a huge selling point within this



community, and Foothills IGA does it better than anyone. Jeff and Sandy’s customers appreciate all the offerings.

The store’s sales have increased during the course of the last ten years. It’s truly because Jeff and Sandy’s talented team knows the market trends, and they make it happen daily within their store. He recently replaced all the refrigerated cases in the store to show their customers their commitment to providing them with the best shopping experience in their market!

It is such a pleasure to have this store as one of mine, and Jeff and Sandy, and the entire staff at Foothills IGA, are truly great friends and customers of MDI.

– *David Logue, Contributor*



MDI SAFETY

with **JANICE BECKETT**

HERE ARE SIX BASIC, EASY STRETCHES YOU CAN DO ANYWHERE, USING A CHAIR AND WALL.

1) Seated Twist: In a chair, keep feet parallel on the floor and your spine tall and twist from the center of your body with one arm on the back of the chair and the other on the armrest. Inhale your breath to lengthen your spine and exhale to deepen the twist. Repeat on other side.

2) Seated Forward Fold: This is a completely passive stretch. Relax forward in your chair, which lengthens your spine and releases tension.

3) Standing Spine, Shoulder, and Hamstring Stretch: You are essentially bringing your body into an inverted V. Place hands on armrests of chair, while keeping legs straight. Try to keep your spine and arms in one line. Lower your head to stretch shoulders further.

4) Standing Shoulder Stretch: With entire arm outstretched against the wall and parallel to the floor, turn your entire body away from the wall, leaving the arm against the wall. Repeat on other side.

5) Calf Stretch: This standing stretch, using the wall, isolates the calf muscle. Decrease the angle of your extended leg to increase the stretch.

6) Standing Forward Fold: With your knees bent (if your hamstrings are tight) or with your legs straight, fold forward as far as comfortable. Don't forget to breathe; the exhale will take you farther into the fold. You can touch your toes (or the floor!) or for added weight fold and hold your arms. As with stretches 2 and 3, Standing Forward Fold is an inversion, which relieves tension in the body and, in particular, the jaw and which reverses the blood flow, sending oxygen to the brain.

STRETCHING 101

You awake to the dreadful sound of your alarm clock from a deep relaxing sleep. At first you want to hit the snooze button and get just five more minutes. Instead, you reach above your head, straighten your legs, and take a deep breath and a good full body stretch. You may think this is just a conscious choice to feel good before you get up. Believe it or not, this is your body's natural reaction to help get blood flowing and revive itself for the day.

Stretching is an important part to maintaining your body. The goal of stretching is threefold: 1) loosen and warm up muscles, 2) relieve tension, and 3) release spasms. The more physical you are in your day-to-day activities increases how often you should stretch. Ideally, you should stretch when you wake up, before activity, and after activity. As physical as the jobs are at MDI this can be increased. Stretch when you get up, after the shower, before your shift, during your shift, when you feel sore, after your shift, and when you get home. You can stretch too far, but you cannot stretch too often.

Some basic rules to follow when stretching:

- Do not bounce! Once you get into position, hold that position.
- Hold each stretch for 20 to 30 seconds.
- If you stretch one side, stretch the other.
- Don't forget to BREATHE! Holding your breath could cause you to stretch too far and cause injury.
- Stretch to the point that you feel a good stretch, not to the point of pain.

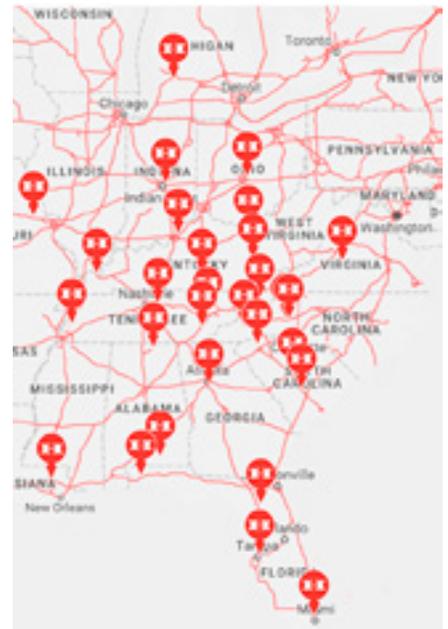
— **Janice Beckett**, Contributor



CUSTOMER PROFILE

HT HACKNEY

*MDI Commercial Accounts Expand with
Leading Convenience Store Distributor*



Considered one of the four largest convenience store distributors in the U.S., HT Hackney has developed a tremendous market share of the c-store industry in the Southeast. Currently they service over twenty thousand retail locations with over thirty thousand items in inventory. Founded over one hundred years ago and located in Knoxville, Tennessee, HT Hackney continues to be a driving force for innovation in the

highly competitive convenience retail landscape. Locally, MDI has been in business with HT Hackney for over twenty years. The goal now is to expand our supply outward to the many other Hackney warehouses.

I have had the privilege to work with this organization for the last fifteen years in many different roles. I'm very excited that my job with MDI is going to give me the access and ability to cover every location. I know MDI is equipped with all the tools to be a valuable partner for HT Hackney.

Within the last two months HT Hackney has opened a new facility in Milton, West Virginia. Out of the current twenty-nine distribution centers Hackney operates, this new facility is the second largest in size. In addition to the large warehouse, the location enables Hackney to compete for new business in West Virginia, Pennsylvania,

and Maryland — all areas that Hackney has been eyeing for expansion in recent years. The size of this new location will be a great opportunity for further expansion with MDI.

MDI made the first delivery to this new location on February 8. We are already planning item expansion and expect consistent orders that steadily grow over time. Currently, MDI is delivering to five Hackney warehouses. Two of their businesses are very close to us in Newton, North Carolina. As MDI Commercial Accounts continues to develop, HT Hackney is an ideal partner with tremendous potential.

— **Steve Matteo**, Contributor

MDI PRIVATE BRANDS SPOTLIGHT



Why?

We are introducing Simply Done because it has been tested and designed to increase purchase interest among millennial customers and has the same or better quality than leading, national brands but at a lower price point! Our guests will be confident that they have what they need to keep up with everyday life.

What Shoppers Have Said About Simply Done:

- “Essential products with cute and simplified packaging.”
- “Clean and simple. No gimmicks.”
- “A fun line of fresh and brightly colored items.”

We have always taken pride in carrying private brands that meet the customers’ needs and expectations, and the Simply Done brand fully aligns with these values. This line of products offers high quality and wide assortment, as well as long-term cost-savings for shoppers. The modern packaging represents a brand that is positioned to handle ordinary tasks simply and easily. Shoppers can check off their list and feel ready to handle everyday life in stride!

Simply Done is a nice complement to our family of private brands, ensuring that we have something for everyone throughout the store. Private brands are important to MDI because they include quality products at a lower price point, which make shoppers happy. In addition, private brands create loyalty to the stores and offer a higher margin rate than national brands.

Did You Know?

The average household in the U.S. saves \$714 annually with private brands! If you have kids in the household, that number grows to \$969 annually! The average price gap between national and private brands is 28.3% for all CPG categories!

— **MDI Private Brands Team**, Contributor



It’s that time of year again — time to deep clean your home and declutter everything you’ve been collecting this winter. Whether you love the refreshing idea of spring cleaning or you absolutely dread it, we have a new private brand solution for you!

We are excited to announce that MDI is introducing Simply Done as the total solution for all non-food private brand needs! Lowes Foods already carries this awesome brand, and we’re excited to roll it out to all of the MDI independent stores. Simply Done items go beyond cleaning supplies, too, with more than three hundred items in categories such as School and Office Supplies, Home and Kitchen Supplies, Household Paper Products, and Cleaning and Laundry Care. These items will be replacing the Hy-Top household items that were previously carried in the stores. We hope this will be a seamless and exciting transition to one comprehensive private-brands solution for all household needs!



WHY YOUR NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION MAY FAIL YOU

ARE YOU GETTING OFF TRACK with your New Year's resolution? Has time gotten away from you? Have those best of intentions fallen to the wayside? Chances are it wasn't a lack of

motivation or willpower that failed — it was the resolution.

Most resolutions are too vague and general, such as, "I am going to lose weight." We may think about cutting carbs or sugars or increasing exercise, but what is lacking is a specific plan of action on *how* you will achieve your goal, including the time to set aside for preparing and implementing those changes.

A smarter goal starts with being **SPECIFIC**. State your goal clearly, such as, "I will lose 10 lbs in 12 weeks by decreasing added sugars and starches in my diet." This helps us know exactly what it is we want to achieve and a general plan as to how we will do it.

The second part to a good resolution is making it **MEASURABLE**. How can you tell you are making progress? Setting up a weekly check-in, such as weighing every Monday morning, lets you know if you are making progress towards your goal. Tracking physical activity hours is another way to measure whether you are keeping to your plan.

Once you have a specific goal and a way to measure your progress, the next step is the one that usually trips people up. A **DETAILED ACTION PLAN** is required so you know how you are going to make progress. For example, taking steps to clean out junk food from your pantry along with setting up a meal plan and shopping accordingly are two big steps that are important for success. Time needs to be scheduled to do these things, especially if meal planning is not something you've done before. Add to this step accountability with someone you trust to be honest and hold you to your goals, such as a spouse, friend, or health coach who will help you during those frustrating days and keep you focused.

Another critical step before getting started is to take a moment to make sure your goal is **REALISTIC**. Have

you set aside the time needed to implement the steps you outlined? Making too many changes at once often leads to frustration and feeling overwhelmed. Sometimes taking those steps and working on them one by one over a couple of weeks leads to better long-term success than taking on several changes at once.

The other common factor people omit when making a goal or resolution is a **TIME FRAME**. Set a time limit or time limits in increments. People are often more successful with giving up something for Lent than with a New Year's resolution because they know what they are doing for Lent is time-bound. If your goal is to lose 50 lbs. in the next year, setting smaller goals in 6 to 12 week increments helps with focus and a sense of achievement. Monitoring progress is a great way to know when adjustments need to be made to keep you successful in achieving your goal.

The last component to successful resolutions is a **REWARD**. Celebrate the successes along the way. Rewards remind you to acknowledge your achievements and pat yourself on the back. A good reward will also help motivate you on those difficult days.

If you are serious about making your resolution successful, take the time and work through these steps. By developing a resolution that is specific, measurable, action-oriented, realistic, time-bound, and rewardable, you increase your chances of success. And remember, there are two trained Health Coaches available for free to Aetna members if you would like support and assistance.

For MDI and Alex Lee: Sharon O'Renick (828) 725-4025 or (980) 505-1423. For Lowes Foods: Sandra Hagen: (336) 775-3131, (336) 430-6461.

— **Sharon O'Renick, RN,**
Health Coach, Contributor



A MESSAGE FROM TIM

TIM LOWE, PRESIDENT OF LOWES FOODS

“You are creating a memorable experience and fostering a sense of belonging for our guests inside our stores.”

The bell rings three times and you hear “Hot fresh bread!” being echoed throughout the store. Then as you walk further in you notice a six-year-old blowing with all of his might to make the candles atop the Cakery go out so his wish will come true. Then, you hear a “cock-a-doodle-doo” as folks scurry to gather under a chicken chandelier and do a rousing chicken dance — the adventure begins.

Nothing makes me more proud than when I see the reaction of our guests when they enter our stores, and we bring them into an experience they have never seen before. That’s what our brand is all about. I once had someone ask me how I felt about doing the chicken dance in our stores.... This is a very intriguing question to me as the answer is very simple. I asked them this question in return: have you ever been to Disney? Of course, they respond. Great, when you were there did you ask them how they felt about making someone dress up like Cinderella? What about Mickey? Goofy? Of course not! Why not? Because it is an entertainment company. Exactly! That is exactly what we are — an entertainment company. The only difference is rather than selling amusement rides and kids shows, we sell groceries.

You have probably read the recent headlines about Toys ‘R’ Us closing all of their stores. Last year alone over 8,600 retail stores went out of business. This was the highest number since the economic pull back from 2008. To me, this is a warning about what happens when the experience takes a back seat inside a store. Most of the news stories blame the growth

of online toy sellers for the demise of Toys ‘R’ Us, but few call out the failure of Toys ‘R’ Us to create a meaningful experience inside the store. If the stores had made it possible for kids to become a super hero or officially adopt their favorite stuffed animal, then ordering online would have never been an adequate alternative. Online retailers did not kill Toys ‘R’ Us; its failing to give a magical experience did. You see, when you create a brand that creates magic, that brand will excel in-store as well as online.

When you think about our purpose, “We grow community,” think about how you are creating a memorable experience and fostering a sense of belonging for our guests inside our stores. Each time we take a moment to share a story about a product, describe what is unique about our stores, or offer a favorite recipe, we make the shopping experience more memorable. Special events such as Tryday Night, Thirsty Thursday, or an event at the Community Table provide the perfect reason to invite guests back in and experience something different. Look for the opportunity to invite new folks in the community to come join these events or experience your favorite concept. We all know someone who needs a smile on on his or her face — who needs exactly what we have to offer.

Your role in the show is the most important of all. When you create the right experience for our guests, you help guide our company in creating an experience that will be rivaled by none.

Because of you, Lowes Foods Rocks!



CAROLINA CRATE

The upcoming Carolina Crate season is approaching, and we couldn't be more excited to support our local growers for the eighth year in a row. The Carolina Crate is the Lowes Foods version of a Community Supported Agriculture box or "CSA box." We all hear this term thrown around, but has anyone stopped to wonder, "What is a CSA box?"

Typical CSA boxes allow community residents to purchase a "share" of produce from a nearby farmer. Most of the time, this requires an upfront bulk payment for the entire season, usually around \$450 to \$700! The payment guarantees your spot, enables the grower to plan for the season earlier in the year, and helps the farm's cash flow. Each week the shareholder needs to pick up the box from the local farm or a central pick-up location. Some CSAs offer a delivery service for a fee. Each week the box is packed with fresh produce the farm has harvested that week. Oftentimes, there is an abundance of one item, and it's not unheard of to receive an entire box of kale or squash or herbs. Farmers can only grow so many crops on their land at one time, and they can't always predict

the harvest date. So a challenge for typical CSA boxes is the variety each week. These challenges aside, CSA boxes give folks the chance to get to know their farmer, to access fresh produce, to enjoy new vegetables they may not get in a store, and to support a local farmer and business.

Carolina Crate provides our guests the benefits of a CSA box without the downsides. We source local produce from multiple farmers in North Carolina and South Carolina and the majority run small to mid-size farms. So this gives our box a variety of eight to ten different produce items, and they aren't the same items on our produce shelves. The pick-up location is Lowes Foods To Go; how convenient is that? Guests can do their typical weekly shopping and support local at the same time! Our subscription to the Carolina Crate is around half the cost of a typical farm share, so there is an awesome value to the guest on that side as well. Also included in every Carolina Crate is a newsletter with a farmer bio and recipe for that week's produce.

Be on the lookout for updates on the upcoming season. We are always looking to improve the Carolina Crate program and welcome any ideas and input anyone may have!

— **Krista Morgan**, Contributor



BROWN BAG CLEAN LABEL COMMITMENT

We continue to grow our Brown Bag Clean Label program. This January, we launched our Brown Bag marketing campaign that included billboards, in-store point-of-sale, in-store sampling, Community Table events, and social support.

BROWN BAG SUCCESS

Our Lowes Foods Brown Bag Coffee is on track to be the #1 brand in coffee at Lowes Foods in 2018. We continue to expand and innovate in the category. In February, we introduced new 12, 30, and 80 count K-Cups.

Lowes Foods Brown Bag Granola is the #1 granola brand we carry. We

are proud to say that our granola is produced locally in High Point, North Carolina.

Our Lowes Foods Brown Bag cookies have seen a 21% sales increase, as of January 5, 2018. We are proud to say that our cookies are produced locally in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

Lowes Foods Brown Bag pizzas continue to be a guest favorite. Our pizza is driving category growth. Private brand pizza sales are up 58.1%, as of January 5, 2018.

COMING SOON

This year we will convert over four hundred brown bag SKUs, including Beef

Jerky, Trail Mix, Premium Ice Cream Pints, No Stir Peanut Butter, Tortilla Chips, Salsa, Frozen Vegetables, Snack Crackers, and Greek Yogurt.

— *Claudia Mota, Contributor*



BUY
TWO 6-PACKS *or* ONE 12-PACK
SAVE \$2

ON SELECT

CAROLINA
CRAFT BEER
all month long!



NORTH CAROLINA
APRIL 2018
NC
BEER MONTH

NC CRAFT BEER MONTH

This April, Lowes Foods will be supporting Carolina breweries with an extra \$2.00 off of one twelve-pack or two six-packs in celebration of North Carolina Craft Beer Month. All breweries in both North and South Carolina will be part of this promotion.

We're already big supporters of our local breweries, as we work hand-in-hand with nearly one hundred and fifty of them in our stores and our Beer Dens. For Lowes Foods, craft beer continues to grow in sales at a rate of +12% in the latest fifty-two weeks, and local craft beer is growing at +25% over the same time period.

Lowes Foods is a proud member of the North Carolina Craft Brewers Guild, and we are part of their advisory council. Therefore, not only do we help build local breweries' business, but we also support the efforts to help these breweries build a lasting and sustainable contribution to our communities.

— *Charles Slezak, Contributor*





GRAND OPENING

December 6, 2017

SUMMERVILLE STORE #270

On December 6 we cut the ribbon for our latest store. Our Summerville store is the first in the Charleston market. **Jon Golden** and his team were ready to greet the line of new guests.

— *Kelly Davis, Contributor*





READY SET SUPPER AND VIVIAN HOWARD BOOK SIGNING EVENTS

In October we signed a sponsorship agreement with Vivian Howard, who is the personality and producer behind the PBS series *A Chef's Life*; the author of the cookbook *Deep Run Roots*; a five-time James-Beard nominated chef; and proud owner of three North Carolina restaurants: Chef & the Farmer and The Boiler Room, in Kinston, and Benny's Big Time, in Wilmington. Most importantly, she is an ambassador for farmers in the Carolinas. Her show focuses on the people who make the food for her restaurants and the traditions of Eastern North Carolina.

As part of our partnership, Vivian is helping with our Ready Set Supper program. She is working with Chef Joe to interpret some of her recipes into a pre-prepped meal for two that just needs to be assembled. These Ready-Set-Supper Kits are similar to what people can order online, but what makes us different is that ours features a famous chef, freshly prepped products in the store, and the ability to pick up the kit without ordering a week in advance.

Vivian has also been making appearances in our stores. She visited our



Community Tables in Clemmons, Oak Island, and Five Forks. We had over three hundred guests stop by to talk to Vivian, get a photo, and have Vivian sign their book. Due to the success of these events, there are plans for her to visit additional stores.

— *Kelly Davis, Contributor*



Minor League Baseball Partnerships

PLAY BALL! LOWES FOODS BRANDS LOAD THE BASES

Minor League Baseball is a natural partner for Lowe's Foods. After all, we have SausageWorks and we have the Beer Den. This season we will be expanding our partnerships to include additional teams and areas of our store that make our shopping experience unique.

We will continue our partnerships with the Winston-Salem Dash, the Myrtle Beach Pelicans, and the Wilmington Sharks. We will also add the Hickory Crawdads, Columbia Fireflies, and Durham Bulls.

Our partnership with the Myrtle Beach Pelicans will feature our Bag Childhood Hunger program. We'll use their connections to launch a donation drive that will let our guests receive half off admission on Mondays.



At the Columbia Fireflies, the Cakery will be the official cake of all birthday parties in the park. We love to celebrate, and it will let people taste the best icing anywhere.

Our bases are loaded with sausage and beer. The SausageWorks stand at The Dash is being expanded because of high demand. We will also continue to sponsor Thirsty Thursday at The Dash. We are talking to the Crawdads about a "Craft Beer Tuesday" and the Sharks will be serving up our sausages. At the Durham Bulls, we are working on a Beer Den bar in the park. This fully branded area will serve craft beers from the Carolinas. It's time to play ball!

— *Kelly Davis, Contributor*



Mike Greene, Patrick Eisinger, Donny Arnold, Wes Doub, and Gary Baker prepare for Valentine's Day.

OUR PRODUCE DEPARTMENTS' "CO-OP"

Seems like we tend to get comfortable in our own silos. But for years the produce departments at Lowes Foods and MDI have shared a common goal — delivering the freshest product available to our customers and guests. This requires daily communication about almost every commodity we carry. We regularly share the good and the bad and immediately have to remedy difficulties to stay on task. In addition to our daily communication, we negotiate contracts together and share ideas. We have also always been willing to pitch in and share the work load with each other as needed. From vetting local farmers together to MDI assisting at new Lowes Foods store openings and remodels, team projects have become a regular part of what we do in our departments. In early February, Lowes

Foods sent an entire team of category managers and merchandisers to assist with the massive quality control and receiving task to get us through the Valentine's holiday. This is one of the largest single selling events for both companies every year. Receiving and inspecting ten tractor trailer loads in the middle of the night is a daunting task. To get this work done, **Gary Baker** and the warehouse QC team at MDI welcomed the team from Lowes Foods that included **Patrick Eisinger, Wes Doub, Donny Arnold, Mike Greene, and Chris Beckstead**. In addition, our vendor partners Carolyn and Mac Gilbert assisted us as well. After all, one silo does not make a farm!

— *Richard McKellogg, Contributor*



WE'RE SCREAMING FOR OUR NEW ICE CREAM

We've partnered with High Road Luxury Ice Cream in Marietta, Georgia, to create our Lowes Foods Brown Bag Premium Ice Cream Pints. High Road produces chef-crated ice cream that is produced in small batches with a strong emphasis on quality. According to gourmet food and wine magazine *Saveur*, "In blind tests, High Road vanilla ranks above all other national brands." We are extremely excited about our partnership with High Road. **Randall King**, **Gregg Hamilton**, and **Claudia Mota** traveled to Georgia to hand-select the flavors. The following eight flavors will be on-shelf this April:

- **PIE ME TO THE MOON** — *Peanut Butter Pie Ice Cream with Crumb Topping and Dark Chocolate Chunks*
- **PERK UP** — *Espresso Ice Cream with Chocolate Stracciatella*
- **DON'T MESS WITH PERFECTION** — *Vanilla Ice Cream*
- **BAKE IT BETTER** — *Black and White Cookie Ice Cream with Chocolate Ganache and Shortbread Cookie*
- **WHISK ME AWAY** — *Bourbon Buttermilk Ice Cream*
- **MAKE ME BLUSH** — *Strawberry Ricotta Ice Cream*
- **DARK & HANDSOME** — *Double Chocolate Ice Cream, Chocolate Custard with a Fudge Caramel Ribbon*
- **MANGO FANDANGO** — *Mango Coconut Ice Cream*

This brings our total Brown Bag Ice Cream SKU count to 29.

— *Claudia Mota, Contributor*



LOCAL LEGENDS

Y'ALL AWARD WINNERS

CAITLIN SHELTON

On numerous occasions Caitlin has worked over in LFTG to help get other hosts caught up with orders, so they wouldn't be late. She frequently comes in on short notice for shifts that need to be replaced. Caitlin has a very optimistic attitude and displays our Lowes Foods Culture each and every day. She's a tremendous asset to our Front Porch operations because she has been cross-trained as a GSL, office host, and certified LFTG shopper.

— *Lisa Landry, Store #222*

FRED CUOMO

Fred has been with the company for seventeen years, and he always comes in with a positive attitude. Every time we have a group of children come in to the store, he talks to them about the lobsters, and he's always the one who takes them out for the field trips. He always has stories or a joke to tell. He enjoys his job, and he always has the guests laughing and having a good time in the store. Fred is very knowledgeable about the meat and the seafood in his department.

— *Elana Bennett, Store #199*

LYNN MILLER

Lynn is an outstanding host who is always willing to go above and beyond for the store. She did a fantastic job helping out in

floral for Valentine's Day, without letting the integrity of her department suffer. She is always eager to lend a hand wherever needed. Lynn also exemplifies the Lowes Foods standard, always being friendly and bubbly with everyone, guests and hosts included.

— *Ariel Runge, Store #267*

MICHAEL GARNES

Michael always goes above and beyond to live the culture here at Store #165. Michael recently took this to the next level. We had a lady in our store that was handicapped and needed help out with her groceries. Michael not only helped the lady with her groceries, but also helped her into her car. Then as soon as the lady made it home, he called to check on her. This is what you call a Local Legend.

— *Matthew Bratton, Store #165*

JOANNE WILLIS

While Joanne has only been a host for a short time, she has brought a refreshing spirit into the Chicken Kitchen. She goes above and beyond for all guests she serves and greets every guest with a warm smile. Joanne is always willing to lend a helping hand when needed and helps to train our new hosts.

— *Sherrie Johnson, Store #169*



WHAT'S NEW *at* LOWES FOODS?



OUTDOOR FLORAL CENTER

This year we're expanding our outdoor floral selection to include more variety. Along with our local partners from Rockwell Farms, we'll be working with additional local vendors this year. Bonnie Plants has nurseries across the Carolinas and will offer potted herb deliveries in sixty locations. Almost thirty stores will have an outdoor garden center and expanded variety from Green Leaf Nursery, which is based in Tarboro, NC. All of these plants are greenhouse quality with better pricing. This is a great time to start your own herb garden or just spruce up your landscaping.

SAUSAGEWORKS

Number 60: The Stout is a sensually house-made beer brat featuring Foothills Brewing Sexual Chocolate Stout

Number 61: The Nacho Mama is a house-made fresh pork sausage with cheddar cheese, sweet onion, garlic spice, and diced jalapeno peppers.

BEER DEN ALE HOUSE CHEDDAR CHEESE

We partnered up with our friends from Vermont Farmstead Cheese Company to create an Ale House Cheddar Cheese made from our very own Beer Den Beer. This flavorful cheese has a balance of cheddar, nuts, and hop, giving off notes of floral and butter. We are working with them again to make a bigger batch for next year. Did you know it generally takes about 10 pounds of cow's milk to make one pound of cheese?



TRYDAY NIGHTS

Free + Food. Two words that grow more awesome when they're together. Join us the first Friday of every month for ample samples under a different theme, plus half price pints and wine!

Upcoming Themes and Dates:

- April 6 - Ball Park Favorites
- May 4 - Cinco de Mayo
- June 1 - What to Take to the BBQ
- July 6 - All American Classics



MONSTER MUFFINS

We've switched up our monster muffin recipes to make them even better! They are delicious muffins with more fruit — made with whole berries, not berry pieces. We cleaned up the ingredient list to exclude things like artificial flavors and trans fat. Keep an eye out in store for our new flavor, Triple Berry, which is made up of whole blueberries, sweet raspberries, and tart cranberries for a perfect combination of flavor.



YEARS OF SERVICE



Rex Willis
45 YEARS, MDI
Mechanic



Tim Austin
40 YEARS, MDI
Sanitation



William Johnson
40 YEARS, MDI
Driver



Debbie Phillips
40 YEARS, MDI
Admin Assistant



Terrell Wilson
40 YEARS, MDI
Driver



Robert Eller
35 YEARS, ALI
Corp Director, Treasury Service



Dinah Herman
35 YEARS, MDI
Lead Accountant



Kevin Hildebran
35 YEARS, MDI
Utility Whse.



William Pernel III
35 YEARS, MDI
Courier



Douglas Tyson
35 YEARS, MDI
Lift Operator



Susan Beach
30 YEARS, LFS
Store #149



Leestar Culbreath
30 YEARS, MDI
Whse. Clerk



Danny Jenkins
30 YEARS, LFS
Store #250



C. Lynn Jones
30 YEARS, ALI
Project Leader



Eugene Leatherman
30 YEARS, MDI
Driver



Paul Witherspoon
30 YEARS, MDI
Driver



Robert Dula
25 YEARS, MDI
Driver



Gladys Dunn
25 YEARS, LFS
Store #179



Gina Godbey
25 YEARS, ALI
Ops Scheduler/DP Admin



Ronnie Goulds
25 YEARS, MDI
Driver



Randall King
25 YEARS, LFS
Corporate



Keith Lail
25 YEARS, MDI
Utility Whse.



Billy Long
25 YEARS, MDI
Safety Manager



Will Pulliam
25 YEARS, MDI
Selector

Donna Hilton, 30 YEARS, LFS, *Store #216*
David Mahala, 30 YEARS, LFS, *Store #158*
Sheila Horne, 25 YEARS, LFS, *Store #187*
Steve Suddreth, 25 YEARS, MDI, *Supervisor*

ALI

Max Singley, 20 YEARS, *Project Leader*

MDI

William Gentry, 20 YEARS, *Checker*

Jonathon Griffin, 20 YEARS, *Selector*

Samuel Hinkle II, 20 YEARS, *Auditor*

Thomas Hurd, 20 YEARS, *Dir. Retail Services*

Stanley Leonhardt Jr., 20 YEARS, *Receiver*

Terry Lidey, 20 YEARS, *Driver*

Jeremy Looney, 20 YEARS, *Receiver*

Thomas Sinclair, 20 YEARS, *Retail Merchandising Coord.*

Ronald Wallace, 20 YEARS, *Driver*

Roger Wurth, 20 YEARS, *Receiver*

Lena Younce, 20 YEARS, *Selector*

Ricky Ashley, 15 YEARS, *Driver*

Albert Brewer, 15 YEARS, *Checker*

Eduardo Chavez, 15 YEARS, *Fueler/Tire Changer*

John Daye, 15 YEARS, *Lift Operator*

Richard Edwards, 15 YEARS, *Lift Operator*
Christopher Hamby, 15 YEARS, *Driver*
Mike Johnson, 15 YEARS, *Sanitation*
Robert McTeir, 15 YEARS, *President*
Brian Norwood, 15 YEARS, *Driver Supervisor/Coach*
David Rodebaugh, 15 YEARS, *Sanitation*
David Seymore, 15 YEARS, *Driver*
Randy Shelton, 15 YEARS, *Driver*
Jeffrey Wilks, 15 YEARS, *Driver*
Jack Yang, 15 YEARS, *Lift Operator*

LFS

Sylvia Blalock, 20 YEARS, *Store #224*
Alisa Buckner, 20 YEARS, *Store #158*
Julie Dinkins, 20 YEARS, *Store #164*
David Cunniffe, 20 YEARS, *Corporate*
Barbie Cutrell, 20 YEARS, *Store #235*
Heather George, 20 YEARS, *Corporate*
Melinda Shumate, 20 YEARS, *Store #171*
Trevor Smith, 20 YEARS, *Corporate*
Randy Weaver, 20 YEARS, *Store #182*
Janet Williams, 20 YEARS, *Store #191*
Joseph Worrell, 20 YEARS, *Store #153*
Luther Grant Anderson, 15 YEARS, *Store #171*
Shalonda Nico Arrington-Sallah, 15 YEARS, *Store #191*
Misty Bess Brown, 15 YEARS, *Store #254*
Ananais Covington, 15 YEARS, *Corporate*
Michael DuMortier, 15 YEARS, *Store #207*
Patrick Hicks, 15 YEARS, *Store #165*
Tamara Jones, 15 YEARS, *Store #190*
Brian Moore, 15 YEARS, *Store #248*
Daniel Myers, 15 YEARS, *Store #190*
Kusum Patel, 15 YEARS, *Store #184*
Anna Pochek, 15 YEARS, *Store #184*
Annette Yvonne Suggs, 15 YEARS, *Store #248*
Jeffrey Weimann, 15 YEARS, *Store #218*

PROMOTIONS

ALI

Joshua Craven, *IT Sr. Infrastructure Engineer*
to Manager IS Security & Endpoint
Michael Lail, *Lead Computer Operator (1st)*
to Support Analyst I

MDI

John Anderson, *Sales Analyst*
to Mgr of Analytics, Sales & Mkt
Tracy Whisnant, *Driver Supervisor/Coach*
to Trans Driver/Dispatch Asst Mgr

LFS

David Adams, *Grocery Manager Level IV*
to Center Store Co-Manager
Daniel Bernard, *Center Store Co-Manager*
to Store Manager
Robert Edmisten, *Store Manager*
to Store Director
Robert Hays, *Division Director of Stores II*
to Sr Division Director
Jerrica Hill, *e-Commerce Data Mainten Admin*
to e-Comm Product Exp Specialist
Kevin Jordan, *Fresh Co-Manager*
to Store Manager
Jeremy Nipper, *Fresh Co-Manager*
to Store Manager
Ashley Oliver, *Category Analyst*
to Category Manager I
Drew Senesac, *Insights Analyst*
to Guest Relation & Insights Mgr
Mitchell Shireman, *Grocery Manager Level V*
to Center Store Co-Manager

RETIREMENTS

Boyd George, *ALI*, 48 years
Patricia Hedrick, *MDI*, 42 years
Terry Maynard, *MDI*, 39 years
Michael Greene, *ALI*, 37 years
Anner Ramseur, *MDI*, 33 years
Janet Markham, *MDI*, 29 years
Janie Blum, *ALI*, 24 years
John Dollar, *MDI*, 20 years
Ricky Whisnant, *MDI*, 19 years
Danny Summerlin, *LFS*, 19 years
Sybil White, *LFS*, 17 years
Clara Simpson, *LFS*, 16 years
Zelda Compton, *LFS*, 13 years
Linda Gulino, *LFS*, 12 years
James Brookman, *LFS*, 6 years
Christine Gorman, *LFS*, 5 years
Bruce Smith, *LFS*, 5 years
Tommy Anderson, *LFS*, 3 years

IN *Local* FARMS

WE TRUST.

FINE PRODUCE FROM EVEN FINER FOLKS.

THE
Carolina

