



# THE 2020 PROS TO KNOW AWARDS

Despite a difficult year, the convenience services industry has no shortage of individuals and teams leading the vending, micro market and OCS segments toward a stronger future

*By Adrienne Zimmer, Contributing Editor*

**F**or the seventh year, *Automatic Merchandiser* asked readers to nominate colleagues, thought leaders and industry innovators who deserve recognition for their hard work and dedication to the vending, micro market and office coffee service (OCS) industry. This year's individual and team Pros to Know have overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles in a challenging year. The spread of the COVID-19 virus across the country and the world halted business, changed the way consumers work and shop, and greatly affected the vending, micro market and OCS industry overnight.

Manufacturers and operators have had to adapt to changing consumer shopping behaviors, buying preferences and work locations in the blink of an eye and the 2020 Pros to Know have helped their companies not only survive this trying time, but also prosper. Each of this year's Pros to Know are leaning into new system and technology adoptions, leveraging data to help move their businesses forward, and creating innovative solutions to overcome the challenges faced by the COVID-19 pandemic.

# PROS TO KNOW INDIVIDUALS

## DAVID BARRIENTOS

North Region Sales Manager,  
Flowers Bakeries Foodservice

Barrientos, a NAMA/MSU Executive Development Program graduate, began his career in food sales in 1990. He has been North Region Sales Manager for Flowers Bakeries Foodservice's Mrs. Freshley's brand since November 2019, serving vending distributors and operators in the Northeast and upper Midwest. Although the pandemic provided challenges for how Barrientos got his job done, it did not affect the level or quality of support he has been able to provide for his customer base. He has been in contact with customers through weekly or bi-weekly phone meetings and video conferences, working to minimize any issues or disruptions for vending distributors and provide inventory management support.



**David Barrientos**

## BRIAN BUTRYM

Development and Web Solutions  
Manager, Tech 2 Success

Butrym manages the development of B2B e-commerce platforms for OCS, integrations with backend systems, and numerous customer-facing systems to enable operators to improve their ordering experience, fulfillment and reaching employees at home. His prior experience in IT working for IBM Global Services and Sirius XM Satellite Radio brings a wealth of knowledge and a desired skill set to our industry. His work ethic and creative problem solving capabilities will help improve the technology and processes the industry implements for years to come. Butrym has made an immediate impact in how vending management systems integrate with third party systems and has been able to bring experience with world-class technology to solve issues operators have faced for years. He joined Tech 2 Success in 2018 and manages development and web solutions that serve many convenience services operators and numerous other companies.



**Brian Butrym**

## CHRIS CAMPIONE

Vice President of Sales and Marketing,  
Servomation Refreshments, Inc.

In his role at Servomation Refreshments, Inc., Campione has overhauled the sales and marketing processes, creating a synergy between the two departments. His key accomplishments include a redesign of the company website and landing pages, aligning marketing with customer retention, managing execution of Servomation's point-of-sale marketing program, and production of a very robust digital marketing collateral portfolio, including video. Without the ability to integrate in-person cold calling for much of 2020, Campione worked with sales directors at Servomation to create a completely digital sales campaign by utilizing the company's website as a central hub, and then directing prospective clients to unique landing pages depending upon their job titles and industry. Campione is a great leader of both the marketing and the sales teams at Servomation, emphasizing a "servant leadership" approach. The team thrives because of this commitment toward the personal and professional development of each team member.



**Chris Campione**

## COLTON CHASTINE

Product Manager, Gimme

Chastine has been extremely involved with onboarding, training and technical support with Gimme VMS, using data to help improve operations and provide partner success reports. He has also worked tirelessly to pave a future path with Gimme VMS where operations can rely on Gimme's software and technical expertise to get the most accurate, quantitative information about the health of their businesses. He is committed to Gimme's customers and their success, spending a large amount of time in the field. He is extremely committed to the company's goal of using technology to improve the lives of others in the industry. From answering support calls at 3 a.m. to dropping everything to get on a plane with less than a two-hour notice, he works relentlessly at whatever it takes to get the job done right.



**Colton Chastine**

# PROS TO KNOW INDIVIDUALS

## KAREN CLARK

Customer Business Leader,  
MARS Ice Cream

Clark started in the industry in 1993 with M&M/MARS when she began calling on operators in the Midwest. Since then, she has held multiple positions at what is now MARS WRIGLEY with the last seven years as Customer Business Leader for MARS Ice Cream. Her passion is the development of new business within the channel. For her, there is only one challenge — how to sell more ice cream. When she shifted from selling MARS Candy to MARS Ice Cream, she brought a lot of solutions that made ice cream easier to handle, more fun to sell and more profitable for operators. Clark brought a category management approach to micro markets, which not only increased sales on her own brands, but helped to elevate the entire ice cream category for micro markets.



Karen  
Clark

## LINDEL CREED

Owner, Vendweb.com

Creed has more than 20 years of experience in the industry, starting in the service department for a vending company. He then ran a service department and distributor training for a larger vending company. He moved on to manage one of the largest refurbishing centers on the East Coast and was one of the first companies to sell vending machines and parts on the internet. He has been in business at Vendweb.com for 15 years. He has been one of the first in the industry to provide age-restricted vending applications.



Lindel  
Creed

## ANDREW DIDIER

CEO, Agora Refreshments

In order to combat the confusion and unknowns of the pandemic early on, Didier introduced the idea of “Remote Breakroom boxes” — boxes of snacks and options to include coffee or tea — to be sent directly to employees’ homes. Everything they would normally have access to in the office now shipped directly to their remote work location. Within a few weeks, Agora launched a website for Remote Breakroom and began introducing the concept to existing clients. Over the course of the last six months, Agora was able to bring in more than \$100,000 in revenue



Andrew  
Didier

from Remote Breakroom boxes. This pivot in Agora’s business model helped the business tremendously during an unprecedented time and was the beginning of the solution to the challenges it faced. Didier did this not only for the survival of his company, but also for his employees.

## JOHN DOURSON

National Sales Manager,  
Sara Lee Frozen Bakery

Through his more than 28 years in the industry, Dourson has found ways to improve products and procedures that better serve growth for the channel. He continually stays committed to educating people and companies that are outside “the walls” of the industry on the value and benefits of participating in it. He has worked tirelessly to help the industry, the operator, the distributor, and the consumer. He has helped his companies to update packaging to meet the requirements of the channel and increased shelf life to better serve the needs of the operators and consumers.



John  
Dourson

## MATT DUDLEY

North American Sales Director,  
Marco Beverage Systems

As the North American sales director for Marco Beverage Systems, Dudley works with suppliers, distributors, operators, and end users across a wide variety of channels in the U.S. and Canada, with a sharp focus on enhancing the customer beverage experience. In addition to Marco’s existing lineup of sleek water and coffee brewing solutions, he introduces his clients to innovative solutions that solve real problems, such as hands-free cold brew dispense, hands-free water dispense and POUR’D draft coffee systems. He believes that for office coffee/vending providers, the challenge right now is balancing the need for investment in equipment that enables clients to return to workplace break rooms in a COVID-safe manner while operating with severely impacted revenue. Dudley recognized this challenge early on and got creative, pushing for more hands-free offerings.



Matt  
Dudley

Tom,

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to the **COOLEST**  
PRO WE KNOW,  
**TOM VOGT!**



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# PROS TO KNOW INDIVIDUALS

## SANDRA D. FAULKENBERRY

Sales Manager, All State Manufacturing

Faulkenberry came to All State Manufacturing in 2014 with a strong background in customer service after having worked in retail sales and management for more than 25 years. She is responsible for day-to-day interactions with a multitude of distributors and vending operators across the country and gives every account, large or small, the same level of care, always with her noticeable Southern accent and a smile in her voice. Despite working from out of the office for six months, Faulkenberry has maintained top-quality customer service without missing a beat.



Sandra D. Faulkenberry

## MIKE FERGUSON

CEO/Intermediary Vending Business Broker, VMAC Solutions

Ferguson has more than 32 years in the industry with a unique perspective on what it's like to be an operator (both as an owner/operator and as a branch manager for a large company). Given the current economic conditions and the pandemic, Ferguson has been out front, encouraging operators to stay the course and not sell their businesses during this crisis until things get closer to normal and the values come back. He has published many ways for operators to pivot in order to reduce overhead, find new revenue sources and consolidate operations with friendly competitors. For the last several years he has run VMAC Solutions, the leading business broker for vending operators who want to sell their businesses. Ferguson also is a contract sales agent for LightSpeed Automation, utilizing his experience as a LightSpeed Automation customer to help operators streamline their own businesses for better operations and profits using technology.



Mike Ferguson

## BRIAN FISCHER

Vice President of Sales, USA Technologies

Fischer has served as an industry expert throughout the more than 13 years he has been in the vending industry. He has helped lead his sales team in educating, consulting and supporting operators who are explor-



Brian Fischer

ing new or advanced technology tools for their businesses. Fischer has an outstanding grasp on both strategic and tactical requirements of the sales role. He establishes and maintains very strong relationships with his customers, as well as team members, and is someone they trust. He has an innate understanding of the business and what is required of his team to build a successful sales channel. He also goes above and beyond to help and his insights are invaluable.

## TROY GEIS

Co-founder, Fixturlite

Geis has been a dedicated and crucial part of Fixturlite's growth and success by way of constant and never-ending improvement with regard to design, logistics and merchandising solutions for customers.

He leads a team of Fixturlite Customer Success Enthusiasts and exhibits leadership within his role when working with and for internal customers. He supports the logistics, manufacturing, and finance divisions within Fixturlite to create and enforce best practices and project and material supply chain from a forward-looking perspective. Not only does he have a knack for finding otherwise impossible-to-find solutions, but customers call on him when they've hit a dead-end because he always delivers on their requests and seems to find or create a solution that fits their needs.



Troy Geis

## DONALD HAYNES

Regional Sales Manager, G&J Marketing Sales

Haynes has more than 40 years in the vending, micro market and OCS industry, starting as a route driver for a family-owned business in the 1970s. He has been involved with NAMA in various capacities since the 1980s and has gone through the NAMA Executive Development Program at Michigan State University. He has used his vast knowledge of the industry to educate others, including his customers. He is quick to answer customer needs with suggestions and routinely goes above and beyond to exceed his customers' expectations.



Donald Haynes

## PROS TO KNOW INDIVIDUALS

### BENOIT HERVE

Founder/CEO, Le Bread Xpress

Herve combined his background in high-tech entrepreneurship with his love of fine baked goods to create Le Bread Xpress in 2015. Building on the success of Le Bread Xpress, Herve launched the first multi-product micro-bakery, Bake Xpress, in 2019. Herve has led the Le Bread Xpress team to release a truly unique product to market, and during 2020, to be uniquely responsive to customers' needs in unusual, unexpected and unpredictable circumstances. While Bake Xpress customers already are able to obtain fresh-baked food without human interaction, Herve anticipates that the desire for touchless transactions will grow through 2021. Under his leadership, the company is releasing a mobile app that will remove all contact with the machine by providing an interactive menu on the customer's phone as an alternative to using the Bake Xpress machine's touchscreen.



**Benoit Herve**

### CORY HEWETT

Co-founder and CEO, Gimme

Under Hewett's leadership, Gimme has accomplished many major milestones and hit new levels of innovation in 2020. In addition to launching a new product, Hewett helped the company secure several big deals and partnerships, including the first seven-figure single deal, bringing national presence to tens of thousands of delivery routes. The company landed substantial partnership agreements with HighJump and other notable VARs in the DSD and grocery space. Hewett continues development of Auto-Drive, software that automatically identifies products, their placement and inventory levels using computer vision/AI verified by humans. He is a confident leader and has played an essential role in the day-to-day business operations while staying focused on his customers through a company-wide effort of being on-site and constantly improving processes.



**Cory Hewett**

# FOR SALE

## YOUR VENDING & OCS COMPANY

2020 proved to be a terrible year for most operators due to the Covid Pandemic. Selling your business could be the biggest financial decision of your life, so don't do it alone. VMAC Solutions owner

Mike Ferguson has over 32 years of industry experience as an owner and operator, Ferguson is the leading Business Broker/Intermediary who specializes in selling operators like you. I speak fluent Vending and Office Coffee! We do have parties who are interested in this great industry, so let us get you the best price for your business.



  
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confidential consultation  
Mike@VMACsolutions.com  
or call 713-569-6463

When hiring a business broker, make sure you hire one that only represents you and not the buyer. I am the only broker who has Vending/OCS industry ownership experience.

# PROS TO KNOW INDIVIDUALS

## ERIC LANGSWAGER

National Account Executive,  
365 Retail Markets

Langswager has been in the food and beverage space for several decades. In his role at 365, Langswager has grown the business and made a name for himself as the go-to for industry trends and organizational growth strategy. His prior experience with Coca-Cola has versed him in the retail and on-premise business, and he also started up the micro market program and initiatives for Birmingham Coca-Cola. He has been featured in multiple articles as an operator and has spoken on panels about operating markets. His guidance has helped operators become successful and profitable in micro markets and vending. His friendly demeanor and wealth of industry knowledge set him apart from others. He defines customer service on a daily basis and can be trusted to share candidly, accurately, and with an operator's best interests at heart at all times.



Eric  
Langswager

## TIM LITTLE

National Sales Manager -  
Vending/Micro Markets, Jack Link's

Little and his company, Jack Link's, have helped operators improve their overall results by expanding the meat snack category in micro markets and vending. Although he brings a lot of experience to his job, he more importantly brings energy and passion that is contagious to those who work with him and the operators who rely on his insights. Above all, he is a "doer." He turns those insights into solutions that benefit his company, his broker and his customers. Little loves the industry, and the part that gives him the greatest satisfaction is analyzing an operator's current snack offerings and designing ways to help grow their business by taking advantage of snacking trends and the tremendous growth of the meat snack category.



Tim Little

## BOB MATTIAS

Owner, West Coast Concepts  
Brokerage Company

Mattias has proudly served in the OCS industry for more than 40 years, beginning with Arrowhead Water. From there, he went to work with OCS Distributors as co-owner working on the distribution side of the



Bob  
Mattias

business, which eventually was acquired by Vistar. In 1992 he saw a need for another broker in the West and partnered with Stu Case to form Pacific Brokerage Company. He also served as president of Western Coffee Association and has supported the local NAMA associations for years. His vast experience in all areas of office coffee/vending has greatly contributed to his ability to assist operators in finding the right products for their businesses, helping them to be more successful and profitable. For Mattias, great relationships, customer service and follow-up are most important and the key to success for all.

## ANTHONY MIGACZ

President, Cheesewich Factory

Migacz has always had an entrepreneurial spirit. His idea for Cheesewich came in 1997 and was trademarked in 1999. The company launched its first three original flavors in 2013. Since that time, under Migacz's leadership, the company has launched several additional Cheesewich flavors. Migacz has worked hard to bring his products to customers, selling 1.5 million his first year, then 3 million, then 5 million, and 8 million last year. He has continued to add many innovative products to the portfolio and is now starting a cheese conversion business. He has a bachelor's degree from Lewis University.



Anthony  
Migacz

## DEREK MYERS

Founder & CEO, Advana

Myers and the team at Advana take micro market promotions to a whole other level and focus on helping operators grow by providing data-driven insights. Myers brings the analytical expertise, fresh perspective, and years of industry experience to build the tools needed to win today and tomorrow. The team at Advana has enhanced their product offerings to help manufacturers and retailers emerge more vital, including the launch of Sentry, a new intelligence platform that provides manufacturers and operators with location-level insights that develop hyper-growth plans. Myers and his team are dedicated to leading the industry toward a performance-driven future.



Derek  
Myers

## PROS TO KNOW INDIVIDUALS

### ALEKSANDAR RADOSAV

President, Coffea Group Inc

Radosav has been in the industry for more than 25 years and has contributed to many new achievements and several U.S. patents. He developed the first Avalon brewer in 1996. A few years later, he changed the design and the programming of the piston brewer and developed the first iCup. In 2007 he founded Coffea Technologies and made a new standard in the coffee industry. Ten years later, many of his innovations are found in many famous branded machines. In 2020, he received a new U.S. patent for a paperless vacuum brewing system (bean-to-cup and leaf-to-cup). He was the winner of the National Restaurant Association (NRA) Kitchen Innovation Award 2013 and *Automatic Merchandiser's* Readers' Choice Awards in 2016. He is a NAMA-certified coffee specialist.



**Aleksandar Radosav**

### MIKE ROSSI

National Account Executive,  
Keurig Dr Pepper

Rossi has earned the respect of his customers by working in partnership with them to develop solutions that deliver profitable, sustainable growth. He has stayed active and made an impact on the industry since his entry seven years ago. He is the vice chair of NAMA's Government Affairs Board and a board member at RSA. Rossi also stays active within the industry through attending dozens of events each year including The NAMA Show, NAMA's Coffee Tea & Water event, NAMA's Fly-In, USG Elite Summit, Vistar Regional Shows, USConnect National Show, TMVA, SEVA and ACE, to name a few. He received his MBA from the University of Tampa's Sykes College of Business.



**Mike Rossi**

### GINA RAPHANELLA

Owner, MV Vending

Three and half years ago, Raphanella quit her job to focus on her vending business, Merrimack Valley Vending. Throughout the pandemic, she has gone above and beyond for her customers, doing all of the manual labor herself. She has remained committed to her business and customers by being extremely focused and driven to succeed in the time of COVID-19. She not only focuses on her customers' needs, but she handles every situation with remarkable poise. She received her bachelor's degree from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University.



**Gina Raphanella**

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# PROS TO KNOW INDIVIDUALS

## RAKESH TIKU

President & CEO, inField Solutions

Tiku is described as a creative leader who focuses on developing viable business models that leverage cutting-edge technologies. He is a serial entrepreneur with more than 20 years of experience focused on strategic business growth in the building automation, telecommunications, retail, and manufacturing industry verticals. Under his leadership, the company introduced inField Shoppe iQ Platform which enables a traditional retailer to offer its customers the ability to order using their mobile POS App and AI-driven procurement engine, within the comfort of their home or physically within their store. They are also about to launch their intuitive smart locker system, Connected Cubbies, which enhances the takeout and delivery management user experience within the inField Shoppe iQ platform.



Rakesh  
Tiku

## KRISHNA VEDULA

Chief of Technology and Operations,  
365 Retail Markets

Vedula works tirelessly to ensure that 365 is on top of changing technology, developing innovative ways to help the company's partners, being economically and environmentally conscious, and keeping his team and others motivated on a daily basis. He is a thoughtful, incredibly hard worker who brings new ideas and ways to work together to the industry. The products that Vedula and the team have developed speak for themselves and have helped numerous operators grow their business faster than they thought possible.



Krishna  
Vedula

## JOHN VEIT

Regional Customer Success Manager,  
Avanti Markets

Veit has a knack for seeing the operator perspective, which allows him to suggest and create valuable documents and videos that assist customers every day. He is viewed as a valuable member of Avanti operators' teams and is called upon to assist, share viewpoints and perspectives, train team members and represent their needs and desires to the Avanti team. He is an excellent communicator and is very responsive to his operators. He adds value to every project and initiative he is involved with and has proven himself



John Veit

an incredibly integral part of the Avanti team. Throughout the pandemic, he has worked closely with the marketing and customer success teams to offer how-to documents and videos for market sanitization, no-touch purchases and inventories, and other help-related advice. He was also instrumental in planning and executing a series of training webinars for operators.

## TOM VOGT

Vice President, Vending Division,  
AVS Companies

Vogt joined AVS Companies in 2016 when AVS acquired his company, Midwest Equipment Supply (MES), and he immediately began making an impact. He brought on new product lines that offer new revenue sources for operators, as well as sourcing parts and supplies that provide a greater return on investment. When the pandemic hit, Vogt immediately began brainstorming ways to help AVS customers get back to business, bringing on lines of personal protective equipment (PPE), cleaning supplies and antimicrobial barriers for equipment. As the crisis continues, he is continuing to evolve processes and products to provide the highest level of service and quality to the AVS customer base. He has a passion and love for the vending industry that shows in his dedication to his work every day.



Tom Vogt

## JOHN WARD

Owner, Serenity Markets

Ward started his Illinois-based vending company part time in 2002. He grew routes over the next 10 years and opened his first Three Square Market micro market in 2013. By 2015, he sold off his vending operation and moved completely over to micro markets. In the last seven years, he has opened more than 75 markets, operating them as stores with specials and customer appreciation with deposit match promos and gift cards the location buys to give to employees. Under his leadership, Serenity Markets has opened the first Three Square Self Pay Market convenient stores in Illinois and Wisconsin. Ward would like to give a heartfelt thank you to Three Square Market and all the people who have helped with his journey along the way.



John  
Ward

## PROS TO KNOW INDIVIDUALS

### BRIAN WHITAKER

Senior Director of Business Operations,  
USA Technologies

Whitaker joined USA Technologies in 2018 after spending more than 20 years with the Coca-Cola Bottling Co. Consolidated in North Carolina. He began his career with the company as an on-premise route salesman and worked in many other positions including on-premise vending/fountain account management, territory delivery and sales manager, and director of vending. He has a keen understanding of the industry from both sides, which makes him invaluable to colleagues and customers alike. Whitaker understands how important data is to an operator; the challenges some operators face is the lack of access to data, data accuracy, or understanding what the data is telling them. Whitaker's goal is to simplify the data and make it easy to drive key business decisions.



**Brian  
Whitaker**

### BRADLEE WHITSON

Operations Manager,  
K&R Vending Services

Whitson is a third-generation operator, formally starting at K&R Vending Services in 2007. In 2020, Whitson undertook a top-to-bottom review of his operation in response to COVID-19. He worked with impacted locations to find safe methods to service locations that were remaining open while preparing those that closed for their eventual re-opening. He used the downtime (and extra staffing) to reset micro markets and vending banks and help prepare them to accelerate sales as staff returned to locations. He undertook internal operational projects to improve efficiencies while allowing for flexibility to deal with new challenges. Whitson is a forward thinker and is incredibly savvy with technology and how systems can integrate to perform at maximum level for both a foodservice company and its customers.



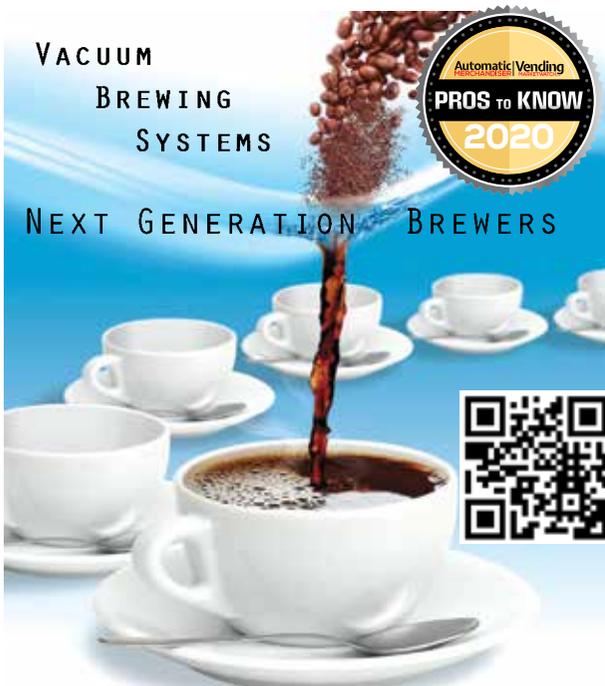
**Bradlee  
Whitson**



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# PROS TO KNOW TEAMS



## 365 RETAIL MARKETS PMO TEAM

**Team leader:** Chad Young, Director, Project Management, IT, & Security

**Team members:** Kelly Jeffrey, Manager of Project Management; Scott Dansubry, Senior Project Manager; Smita Kotecha, Senior Project Manager; Gabe Stevens, Project Manager; Matt Munerantz, Project Manager and Tracey Michael, Project Manager

Throughout the COVID pandemic, 365 Retail Markets' short-term goal was to provide immediate operational relief to its customers, as well as long term profitable solutions allowing their businesses to thrive. First, the project management office (PMO) focused on delivering new technologies that helped operators address the safety concerns of their clients. They expanded their Touchless Transaction<sup>SM</sup> product line to include beverage dispensing integrations and legacy micro market kiosks. Additionally, the team enhanced existing touchless options across its V5 platform including the 365Pay mobile app and 365Beacon. This allowed operators to create "pop up" markets offering consumers a fully touchless checkout experience from their mobile phones.

Next, the PMO concentrated on projects to help operators navigate the returning workforce. To fill the need for smaller footprint markets, the PMO delivered PicoCooler, allowing operators to install a controlled access cooler with all the payment options expected from a 365 product. Also understanding the returning workforce still needed dining options, 365's PMO managed the OrderAhead project. This allowed operators to offer a completely contactless dining experience through online and mobile ordering, coupled with food pickup locations and a fully integrated kitchen management system.



## G&J MARKETING AND SALES CUSTOMER SERVICE TEAM

**Team leader:** Barbie Manchester, Customer Service Supervisor

**Team members:** Amy Volpe, Social Feedia Coordinator; Ashley Reith, Customer Service Coordinator; Christina Stedge, JAS Supply Customer Service Coordinator; Erika Laboy Vargas, Customer Service Coordinator; Jessica Milbrand, Office Coordinator; Jon Stansberry, Customer Service Coordinator; Lenor Eicher, Customer Service Coordinator and Tiffany Pelella, Customer Service Coordinator

The G&J Marketing and Sales Customer Service Team is critical to the success of the G&J Sales Team by assisting in adapting to the changing landscape of the convenience service industry. Through coordinating and assisting in webinars with manufacturers, operators and distributors, the team assures all business and meetings continue as normal as possible. Amy Volpe, Social Feedia Coordinator, conducted webinars for current and prospective customers on why the mobile app-based micro market solution is needed more than ever. Operators are now realizing the need to go touchless and meet consumer demand. The customer service team stepped up to help G&J's major brands with telesales projects to help meet and exceed initiatives.

The team helped Smucker's create video content for the Folgers Excellence Compact Coffee Machine. Barbie Manchester, Team Lead, and Jessica Milbrand, Office Coordinator, worked with Smucker's to create videos for the potential end-user and OCS operator/distributor partners to convey the features and benefits of the Smucker's liquid coffee program. By highlighting the ease of the machine and limited-touch cleaning capabilities, G&J was able to help Smucker's put the spotlight on the Excellence Compact Machine as the workplace hero of the current time.

# PROS TO KNOW TEAMS

## RENETEC, INC.

**Team leader:** Sasha Shturma, CEO

**Team member:** Igor Shturma, CTO and Co-Founder



**Sasha Shturma**

**Igor Shturma**

The Renetec team has been working hard to enable businesses to stay open, while also helping stop the surface spread of COVID-19. Renetec has launched a kit for traditional vending machines that enables touch-free product selection and purchases with only a QR code scan. There is no need to install any apps, and a dynamically generated QR code prevents unauthorized remote access to the machines. It can be used in combination with cashless payment terminals or as a standalone cashless and touchless solution. On machines with automatic doors, the Renetec touch-free kit eliminates the need to touch anything except the product.



## VAGABOND

**Team leader:** Michael Lovett, Chief Executive Officer

**Team members:** Bonnie Trush, Chief Operating Officer; Juan Jorquera, Chief Marketing Officer and Scott Meskin, President

The Vagabond team's highest priority in 2020 was to help its members survive the government-mandated shutdown. As federal, state and local governments announced vari-



**Colton Chastine**  
Product Manager

**Cory Hewett**  
Co-Founder

# Fixturelite™

Congratulations to Troy Geis-Hernandez, Co-founder of Fixturelite, and this year's Pro's to Know Individual winner in his industry category.

Our thanks go out to our customers and industry partners for their nominations and support.

We look forward to helping you grow your business in 2021!

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# PROS TO KNOW TEAMS

ous assistance programs, the Vagabond team went above and beyond keeping members current on ever-changing legislation and helping them prepare materials needed to apply for government assistance. Fortunately, much of what they needed to prove economic hardship is available in their Vagabond VMS accounts. Vagabond offered one-on-one sessions during which the team helped members prepare Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) applications and related materials using data from Vagabond. The Vagabond team also worked with members to determine which machines should be paused to save costs, how to reallocate labor, redistribute inventory and minimize other costs. The result is that Vagabond's membership remained intact (in fact, it has grown by 8% since March) despite vending operators nationwide experiencing an average of 70% revenue declines at the depth of the pandemic. It's these types of challenges that showcase the importance of the partnership Vagabond shares with each and every member.



## VENDCENTRAL

**Team leader:** Neil Swindale, Founder & CEO

**Team members:** Jen McSherry, Director of Marketing & Business Development; Tara Giordano, Director of Operations; Elisabeth Wrede, Social Media Manager; Aaron Bode, Sr. Web Developer; BreAnna Jones, Marketing Project Manager; Christine Schneider, Marketing Project Manager; Zack Swindale, Cloud Operations; Jordan Fields, Assistant Project Manager; Cindy Sherman, Office Manager

VendCentral's goal is to protect existing business and drive new business opportunities for clients post-COVID-19. Right now, in-person sales calls are limited, if they even exist at all. Refreshment service operators who have shied away from digital marketing initiatives in the past no longer have that luxury. VendCentral is educating and helping them use online marketing tools to recover and grow. This year, VendCentral supported clients and the industry in three big ways. First, the company realized the importance of proactive communication and took the initiative to publish COVID-19 health and safety policies on clients' websites right away. It provided peace-of-mind to customers and reassured them that every necessary precaution was being taken to ensure their safety. Second, the company helped clients quickly respond to the changing needs of their customers and community by promoting new offerings like home delivery services, new online ordering platforms, bagged lunch programs, and food donation services. Third, VendCentral went above and beyond to support fellow industry members through personal outreach and uplifting, motivational publications. In June, they rallied industry members together to create a two-minute video of encouragement that was a useful tool for refreshment service companies to share with customers. ■

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