

Alabama Grocer

THREE TECHNOLOGIES
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GET YOUR
MOJO BACK
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2022, ISSUE 2

ALABAMA GROCERS ASSOCIATION

2022 IS A PIVOTAL ELECTION YEAR



Quality service is the main ingredient in everything we do.

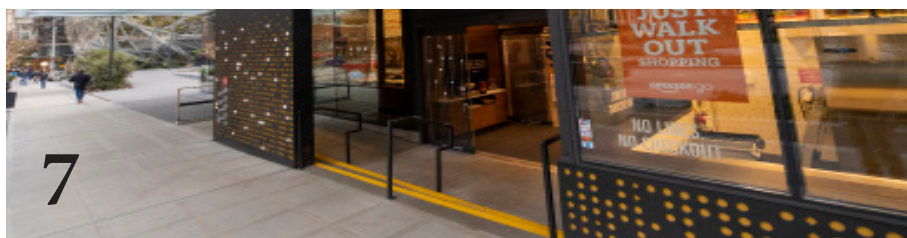
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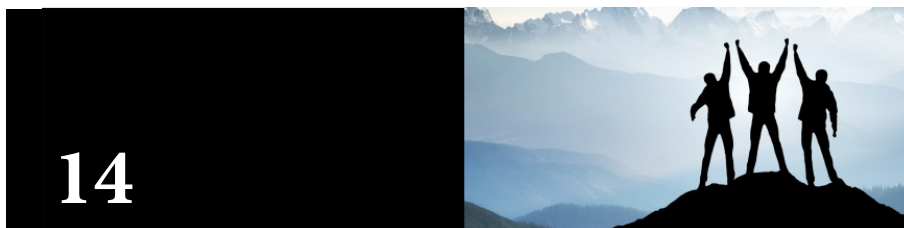
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Three Technologies: The Holy Grail of Frictionless Retailing

Curation, frictionless shipping, and subscriptions may be the key to the future and making your customers' lives easier.



How Leaders Get Their Mojo Back

People can't inspire others unless they are inspired themselves

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ALABAMA GROCERS ASSOCIATION

The Voice of the Grocery Industry

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

2022 IS A PIVOTAL ELECTION YEAR



Ellie Smotherman Taylor
President/CEO
Alabama Grocers Association

NINETY-FIVE PERCENT OF SACK PAC ENDORSED CANDIDATES WIN IN MAY 24 PRIMARY.

The Alabama Grocers Association, the leading voice of the grocery industry in the state of Alabama, officially made endorsements in the May 24, 2022 primary election. Over 95% of the endorsed SACK PAC candidates in this race won their respective primaries. Go to <https://alabamagrocers.org/alabama-grocers-association-sack-pac-makes-may-24-primary-election-endorsements/> to see the full list.

Out of the 128 candidates endorsed, 122 won their elections, 2 are undecided and 4 lost, including House Rules Chair Representative Mike Jones, Representative Proncey Robertson, Representative Ralph Howard, and Representative Joe Faust.

Despite almost \$20 million being spent against her, Governor Kay Ivey beat her opponents with about 55% of the statewide vote, avoiding a costly run-off.

Lieutenant Governor Will Ainsworth was unopposed in the primary and also has no

democratic opposition in November, ensuring he will serve a second four year term.

Another highly contested race was for United States Senate to replace long standing Senator Richard Shelby. Former Chief of Staff and Business Council of Alabama President Katie Britt received 45% of the primary vote. It was a battle between current Congressman Mo Brooks and military veteran Mike Durant for the second spot. In the end, Congressman Mo Brooks received 29% of the vote, ultimately leading to a run-off with Britt. The primary election run-off will be June 21st.

Many important candidates to the grocery industry were unopposed in the primary including Commissioner Rick Pate, Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries. Down the ballot, Birmingham attorney Greg Cook beat trial lawyer Debra Jones with 55% and will face Democrat Anita Kelly in the fall. Attorney General Steve Marshall overwhelmingly won his race with 90% of the vote. For more details on the 2022 primary

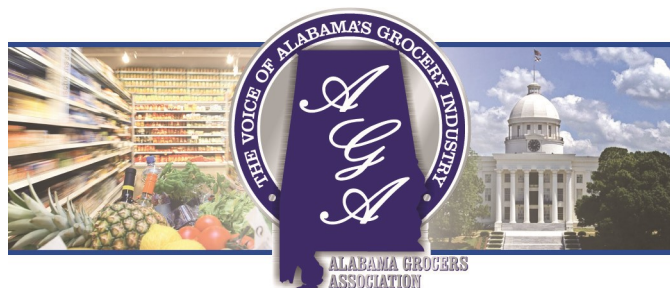
election, please see the report by our Legislative Consultant Patrick McWhorter in our AGA Communities App or in your weekly Market Minute.

The AGA Board of Directors does not take these endorsements lightly and will be making future endorsements soon. AGA is dedicated to advocating for a business climate that creates, protects, and promotes the grocery industry in the state of Alabama.

As I currently write this, there is one vote separating the election in Senate District 27 between current Senator Tom Whatley and Auburn Councilman Jay Hovey. I can not think of any better example to encourage all your coworkers, friends and family to get out the vote. Truly every vote matters.

Best Regards,

Ellie



United - Johnson Brothers of Alabama

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CHAIRMAN’S MESSAGE

HERE COMES SUMMER



Harold Garrett
Association Chairman
Gateway Foods

HELLO EVERYONE! WELCOME TO THE LATEST EDITION OF THE ALABAMA GROCER MAGAZINE.

I would once again like to thank everyone for giving me the opportunity to serve as Chairman again this year. It is such an honor to work with such a group of professionals.

Here we are in June already. Seems like just yesterday we were packing up and leaving Destin, and here we are, preparing for the 2022 AGA Convention! And what a convention it is shaping up to be. I have been looking over some of the planning that Jack Carlile and his fine Convention Committee have done, and this year will be awesome!

Similar to last year, we will have two morning business sessions, Monday and Tuesday morning. You won't want to miss either of these sessions. The topics and speakers are spot on for our industry at this time. Topics ranging from healthcare costs to cybersecurity and the supply chains issues we have all dealt with over the past two years. I promise you won't be disappointed.

Back again this year on Tuesday before the exhibit hall opens to all attendees, there will be a one-hour time of networking for retailers and wholesalers to mix and mingle with the exhibitors. This was a big hit last year, and I believe will just get bigger each year. It is a rare opportunity for some one-on-one time to meet

and make a professional contact with folks that can be helpful to you and your business.

One of the things I am most excited about this year, the Convention will be offering a special half-off registration to first time retailers, or retailers that have not attended in the last five years! I believe this will bring a lot of new faces to the convention, the more the better! For more information about this special deal, see a member of the staff. They can help you get signed up.

I haven't even mentioned the entertainment—this year will be great as always. Monday night a live band will play while you wear out your phone bidding on all the wonderful silent auction items. Then Tuesday night Comedian Jimmy Travis will entertain us all.

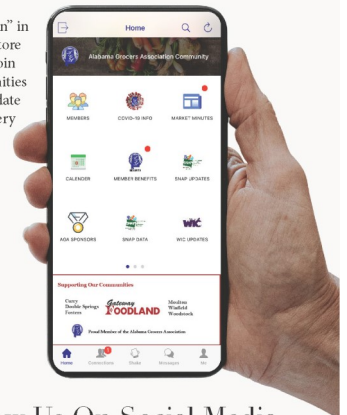
I really look forward to seeing everyone in Destin, July 24-26. If you haven't yet, there is still time! The 2022 Convention is looking like a good one!

See ya soon!

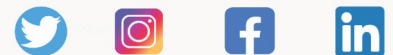
Harold Garrett

STAY CONNECTED WITH AGA

Search "Alabama Grocers Association" in your device's app store to download and join the AGA Communities App & stay up-to-date on Alabama's grocery industry.



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VIEWPOINT

THREE TECHNOLOGIES: THE HOLY GRAIL OF FRICTIONLESS RETAILING



KEVIN COUPE
FOUNDER
MORNINGNEWSBEAT.COM

CURATION, FRICTIONLESS SHOPPING, AND SUBSCRIPTIONS MAY BE THE KEY TO THE FUTURE AND MAKING YOUR CUSTOMERS' LIVES EASIER.

It is a fact of life that there are way too many technologies out there for retailers to keep abreast of, much less adopt, as they look to find ways to innovate in-store and online experiences. In many ways, I'm sure a lot of retailers feel like the average viewer during Super Bowl LVI trying to make sense of all the various cryptocurrency commercials – what the hell is the difference between these things, and are any of them really relevant to the day-to-day conduct of business?

I know I feel that way, and all I have to do is write about these things, not make actual choices or spend actual money or put the future of my company potentially on the line with my decisions.

It is true that people like me often gravitate to the “fail fast, fail early, fail often” school of management, but to be honest, I think it is because people like me love a good story; people and companies that endure failures but end up succeeding are better stories than those with easy successes or those unable to achieve their goals. (Consultants have a different reason for loving the “fail fast, fail early, fail often” model – they get

paid for both failures and successes, and so it sort of all works out for them in the end.)

I do think, however, that there are three general areas of technological innovation to which retailers ought to pay attention, largely because they potentially could help redefine the relationship to shoppers. I'm going to mention some specific companies, not because I'm doing a commercial for them, or because I have any interest beyond the academic in seeing them succeed. I just think they've identified something smart, and are shining a light in the right direction.

The Curation Challenge

It almost goes without saying that pretty much everybody who enters a supermarket is interested in just a small fraction of the products they find there. These folks may have an actual list, or they may just have a mental checklist of what they need or want.

There are a wide variety of factors that may go into the compilation of this list – health, allergies, ethics, lifestyle choices, etc..... The reasons are many, the rationales are infinite, and the act of adhering to the list can be complicated. To say the least.

What most retailers never have done to any great degree is simplify the act of curation so that it narrows down the choices to the ones that are appropriate to the individual shopper, or making sure that the promotions that people get are consistent with their behavior.

Into this environment comes a company named Sifter, which the founders – Andrew Parkinson and Thomas Parkinson, who in 1989 created Peapod, the world's first online grocer – describe as “an advanced, new online grocery site built for the 200 million consumers who need to avoid certain allergens or ingredients, address a dietary medical need, or follow a specific lifestyle diet. The interactive site delivers an unprecedented level of product information and allows consumers to shop and select products based on their personal dietary needs and preferences. Sifter increases retailer basket size and brand sales through enhanced shopper engagement.”

In other words, it allows the consumer to actually *sift* through the tens of thousands of products that a retailer may have in the store and, in the words, eliminate the positive and accentuate the positive. (Negatives and positives, of course, within their contexts of their lives. Your negative may be my positive. *Which is exactly the point.*)



The Frictionless Factor

The nirvana of a checkout-free store experience has been very much in the conversation ever since Amazon opened its first Amazon Go store. I was one of the folks who got an advance look at the original Seattle Go unit before it opened, and I can vividly remember my reaction – that checkout-free technology eventually could be as important and ubiquitous as scanning, and that once someone had a checkout-free experience, it would be like seeing Paris for the first time – *How are you going to keep them down on the farm?*

(If you disagree with me on this, I assume that means that you would like to go back to the time when people actually had to have physical money to use at toll booths, or would like airports to go back to those halcyon days before TSA Pre-Check and Clear. Yeah. That's what I figured – *nobody wants to go back those bad old days.*)

The thing is, there are a bunch of companies out there right now who are testing various iterations of a frictionless, checkout-free experience in environments that range from retail stores to sports stadiums, and the cost seems to be coming down even as the technology gets better and better. We see companies like Standard Cognition and Zippin getting ever more aggressive in this segment, and companies ranging from

ShopRite in New Jersey, Nourish + Bloom in Georgia, and Choice Market in Colorado, all are testing the technology.

I continue to believe in the long-term relevance of checkout-free ... and would argue to anyone uninterested in checking it out (pun intended) that this means they better have the smoothest and most engaging checkout ever created operating in their stores. Otherwise, they got trouble.

The Subscription Solution

Any doubts about the compelling value of creating a subscription model can be alleviated by a simple understanding of how well Amazon's Subscribe & Save business works – alone, it generates an estimated \$25 billion in annual sales.

I've been using Subscribe & Save as a consumer almost from the moment it launched the program in 2007, and currently have about two dozen items – all things we use regularly, all things that *we used to buy in a supermarket* – on our list. The prices are fine, generally competitive.

But the real advantage is convenience – these are items for which there is no tangible or intangible advantage to buying them in the store, and so they just show up at the house on whatever schedule I've established. No surcharges, no cancellation fees. It just makes my life easier and locks in these

sales for both Amazon and the individual vendors over the long term, because once people get into these programs, they're in for the duration.

And yet, almost nobody seems to be competing with Amazon. Until now. My friend Tom Furphy, who does The Innovation Conversation with me on MorningNewsBeat, is the guy whose team launched Subscribe & Save at Amazon, and having left the company a number of years ago, he's now built a team that has developed a competitor called Replenium. Or, as I call it, Subscribe & Save for everyone else.

I think this is important because, just like Sifter and checkout-free technologies, the overarching goal of Replenium is to remove friction from the shopping experience and create a stronger foundation on which customer relationships can be built.

None of these businesses are about the individual transaction, but they are about building enduring connections that can lead to greater profit in the long-term.

For me, that's the Holy Grail of retailing. And I think it makes for more than just a good story. ■



ALABAMA GROCERS ASSOCIATION

The Voice of the Grocery Industry

LEGISLATIVE REPORT

2022 LEGISLATIVE SESSION REVIEW



Patrick McWhorter
Association Legislative Consultant
The McWhorter Group

THE 2022 REGULAR SESSION OPERATED AT WARP SPEED AND ENDED ON THURSDAY, APRIL 7TH.

This is roughly three weeks ahead of the normal schedule. That final day was filled with contention and strife, however, as several of the “red meat” party bills were left hanging until the last day.

But it was a good session for Alabama Grocers. We did not gain passage of our top priority, the “Ready to Drink” (RTD) legislation to allow grocery and convenience stores to sell canned drinks mixed with distilled spirits, but headway was made. The ABC has worked with us and drafted legislation, and we are waiting on Governor Ivey to give us the go ahead to introduce and pass that legislation. It will also allow distribution directly to the store.

Our second priority did see success on the final day. HB 318, sponsored by Rep. Gil Isbell of Gadsden, sets out requirements for sale of new or unused products on online marketplaces such as eBay and Amazon. It mandates that these online marketplaces verify a seller’s name, address, email, bank account, etc. before allowing their products to be posted. We expect, since Governor Ivey has now signed this legislation (Act # 2022-441), it will greatly help reduce the sale of items stolen through organized retail theft rings. A special thanks to our Senate sponsor, Sen. Jabo Waggoner, for leading the effort toward final passage that last day. Rep. Isbell is also leading our efforts on RTD. In just his first term in office, Gil has quickly become one of the best friends’ grocers have ever had in the Legislature.

Record breaking budgets were passed and signed into law for both the Education Trust Fund (\$8.2 billion education) and the General Fund (\$2.7 billion). Bolstered by record state revenues, the Legislature also passed select tax cuts that officials say total about \$160 million. There were pay raises for teachers and state employees and one-time bonuses for retirees, too.

In addition to HB 318, several pro-business bills were passed including HB 82 – the Small Business Relief and Revitalization Act of 2022 by Rep. Danny Garrett; HB 231 – exclusion of federal enhanced child care tax credits from the American Rescue Plan by Rep. Jim Carns (also SB 152 by Sen. Dan Roberts); HB 391 – phases out the business privilege tax by Rep. Steve Clouse; SB 19 – reduces state income taxes on lower income citizens by Sen. Arthur Orr; SB 150 – further excludes marketplace contractors from the Labor Department definitions of employment also by Sen. Orr; SB 216 – extends the Department of Revenue’s authority to regulate unstamped and untaxed tobacco products by Sen. Bobby Singleton; and SB 224 – requires that people on state unemployment apply for at least three jobs per week by Sen. Orr.

Gun rights advocates were able to pass HB 272 by Rep. Shane Stringer, doing away with concealed carry permits and allowing people to carry weapons.

Thanks to a united business front, we were able to amend the bill to preserve the private property rights of business owners to prohibit firearms in their places of business.

Lawmakers and Gov. Kay Ivey paused the regular session in January for a one-week special session focused on spending about \$772 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) money on a mix of broadband, water and sewer projects and health care reimbursements. Another special session to allocate an additional \$1.1 billion in ARPA funding, which the state hasn’t yet received, will likely happen later this summer.

Lottery and casino legislation failed again amid longstanding disputes over who should get casino licenses. A competing set of bills were introduced in the House creating a state lottery only. None of these bills made it to a full vote.

All bills mentioned in this report have been signed into law by Governor Kay Ivey and will take effect as outlined in the various bills. Call if you have a question about a specific bill’s implementation date.

As always, please call or write if you have questions.

Best Regards,

Patrick McWhorter



INSIDE THE BELTWAY

NEW YEAR BRINGS CONTINUED SUPPLY CHAIN CHALLENGES – AND OPPORTUNITIES



JENNIFER HATCHER

CHIEF PUBLIC POLICY OFFICER AND SVP, GOVERNMENT RELATIONS
FOOD MARKETING INSTITUTE

THE PANDEMIC ALTERED THE GROCER-CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP. NOW, WE'RE WORKING TO ARTICULATE WHAT THIS MEANS MOVING FORWARD.

As America enters year three of the pandemic, it's clear that the last couple of years have been challenging for consumers and retailers alike. Our industry continues to grapple with inflation, supply chain complications, and record-setting consumer demand for food at home. Because these pressures are not expected to subside immediately, the food retail industry is addressing these issues in both the short and long-term. Through congressional briefings and press conferences, FMI is working to explain the complexities and intricacies of these challenges to public policy officials, the media, and consumers who want to understand why they are spending more at the grocery store.

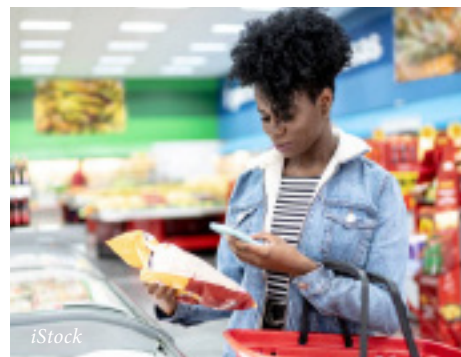
Due to the essential nature of grocers and food manufacturers, our industry has embraced the responsibility and privilege of serving our communities during the pandemic while continuing to provide a sense of normalcy for customers.

The food industry's supply chain challenges have evolved over time. In the early weeks of the pandemic when many were uncertain of how long lockdowns would last, consumers turned to their neighborhood grocery

stores to stock up on essentials. This panic buying, combined with the fact that shoppers increasingly embraced – or were forced to embrace – the idea of cooking their own meals at home rather than dining out, caused consumer demand for groceries to jump 50 percent almost overnight.

Prior to the pandemic, in February 2020, 52 percent of all household food spending was at restaurants. Two months later, that number fell to 34 percent, creating an enormous spike in demand for food retailers.

This shift presented a huge challenge to the supply chain as retailers struggled to keep up with the sudden surge in demand at their stores. As the pandemic progressed, the demand evolved from short-term



stocking-up to long-term, widespread lifestyle changes in which consumers continue to cook and eat more at home than at restaurants.

A combination of supply chain challenges are likely to persist as we move further into 2022. For example, in-demand products may be sitting idly in warehouses because there aren't enough truck drivers to distribute food throughout the country, resulting in shortages on store shelves. According to the American Trucking Associations, the nation is facing a record shortage of 80,000 drivers.

Like almost every industry in the U.S. economy, the food industry is reporting worker shortages driven by a host of factors including childcare responsibilities, health concerns, and difficulty recruiting and retaining workers. According to FMI's annual *The Food Retailing Industry Speaks* report, 80 percent of responding retailers said their inability to attract and retain quality employees is negatively impacting their business.

The cost of raw materials used to produce popular products is also increasing due to labor shortages, extreme weather events, higher fuel costs, and backups at ports. Supplies of cardboard boxes are low due to increased online shopping and higher costs for freight and raw materials.

If we drill down into the issue of packaging, we get a real sense of how many moving

Continued on page 13 ►



Cheers

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WASHINGTON REPORT

INSIDE THE BELTWAY



GREG FERRARA
PRESIDENT AND CEO
NATIONAL GROCERS ASSOCIATION

CONGRESS REVISITS 2022 TO-DO LIST

Partisan gridlock continues to be a theme as the Biden Administration and Congress take on economic concerns, new tax proposals, and child nutrition.

Earlier this year, Punxsutawney Phil, the nation's most famous groundhog, saw his shadow, leading us to brace for six more weeks of winter. Unfortunately, it doesn't appear things are warming up in the nation's capital either.

Between the situation in Ukraine and an open seat on the U.S. Supreme Court, Capitol Hill is buzzing, and both parties have their eyes already set on the midterm elections that will likely lead to an extended period of partisan gridlock.

Despite this political Groundhog Day, NGA remains focused on advocating on behalf of independent grocers throughout the country, ensuring their priorities are heard on both sides of the political aisle.

The Economy

Consumer worries over persistent supply chain challenges and soaring inflation have elevated concerns in both the Biden Administration and among members of Congress, particularly vulnerable Democrats hailing from battleground states. With that in mind, NGA expects to see a renewed focus on the economy, including efforts

to pass legislation, dubbed the COMPETES Act of 2022, to increase America's economic competitiveness with China.



The Senate passed its version earlier this year, but it has since undergone a number of changes to address broader economic and foreign policy concerns. That's not all, a problematic provision included in the Senate version would create mandatory online country-of-origin labeling for internet sales of a variety of imported products, including foods, and would charge the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) with enforcing its provisions.

NGA is working with Sen. Baldwin's office as well as House and Senate champions to get the COOL Online provisions removed.

Taxes

The majority of NGA's tax work in 2021 was spent been playing defense, and by Q2 of that year, the White House and Congressional Democrats had their sights on a \$3-\$6 trillion "Build Back Better" package that would be paid for, in part, by substantial tax increases on businesses and individuals.

Democrats, however, continue to be locked in negotiations over their BBB spending plans and will likely look to budget reconciliation to move legislation. NGA and various tax coalition partners continue to be hard at work fighting against tax hike proposals.

NGA has also been working with various offices to promote tax credits for the independent grocery industry. NGA has helped to draft and introduce the Supermarket Tax Credit for Underserved Areas Act (H.R. 4687) and is working on a tax credit bill to help independents with the costs of becoming eligible to offer SNAP Online Purchasing.

Transportation & Supply Chain

NGA has continued a two-prong approach to advocacy on trucking and other transportation issues: working with federal agencies to push for regulatory flexibilities, and moving the needle on legislative solutions to transportation issues.

NGA successfully lobbied the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration to extend its Hours-of-Service waiver for grocery truckers. The current waiver was extended in November and carries through February 2022.

With the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (H.R. 3684) signed into law in November of last year, NGA was also successful in including provisions of the DRIVE Safe Act (H.R. 1745/S.659) in the bill, which creates an apprenticeship pilot program to allow commercial drivers under the age of 21 to operate across state lines.

Nutrition

2022 will likely jumpstart discussions on Capitol Hill surrounding the future of federal nutrition programs.

NGA is currently working with the House Education and Labor Committee as they

AS NGA CELEBRATES ITS 40TH ANNIVERSARY THIS YEAR, WE WILL LOOK TO CONTINUE TO CHAMPION THE INDEPENDENT SECTOR.

intend to mark up the first Child Nutrition Reauthorization legislation since 2010. Secondly, the House and Senate Agriculture Committees are beginning the process of preparing to write the next Farm Bill with the expiration date of the 2018 bill set to occur in 2023.

Although the House may move quickly to reauthorize child nutrition programs, finding bipartisan consensus in the Senate remains the largest obstacle to a bill becoming law.

Additionally, at the time of this writing, Farm Bill hearings were slated to kick off as early as February, which means that the nutrition title and pandemic-era programs like P-EBT will get a thorough review by the Agriculture Committees.

As NGA celebrates its 40th anniversary this year, we will look to continue to champion the independent sector by advocating for a level playing field and policies that advance independent community grocers and wholesalers. While we have made progress over the last 40 years, there is always more work to be done to ensure independent grocers will maintain their position as the heart of local communities across the nation.

For more information on these issues and how you can make your voice heard in Washington, D.C., visit grocerstakeaction.org. ■

INSIDE THE BELTWAY

◀ *Continued from page 10*

pieces are involved in getting a food product from farm, to factory, to shelf. For example, the ink used to label packages is in short supply in addition to certain packaging components.

THESE CHALLENGES COMBINED WITH THE ONGOING LABOR, TRANSPORTATION, AND WEATHER IMPACTS ACROSS THE SUPPLY CHAIN RESULT IN A "SLOWDOWN."

According to some industry experts, these conditions have delayed lead times

anywhere from eight to 12 weeks, stalling food manufacturers' ability to fulfill orders in a timely fashion.

To some degree, the food supply chain is a victim of its own success. Many fruits and vegetables that were once considered seasonal items are now available year-round thanks to an increasingly complex supply chain that delivers produce from a variety of sources. However, the level of convenience and availability that consumers are used to has been challenged by pandemic-related bottlenecks.

Despite the ongoing challenges posed by the pandemic, or perhaps because of them, the food industry has a profound opportunity to make the supply chain even more resilient. A key component of this will involve technology upgrades and advances in areas like artificial intelligence, machine learning, and data analytics. Technological upgrades will

help reduce inefficiencies by utilizing data to automate portions of the decision-making process and allow for faster, better forecasting of possible disruptions.

The industry is also examining ways to find a balance between the maximum efficiency supply chain model and a more robust system that relies on more inventory so that unanticipated bottlenecks have less of an impact down the line.

As we continue to transform our operations to adapt to the pandemic, our industry evolves the ways we invest in and implement new technologies that improve our operational efficiency and customer experience, while simultaneously reimagining the way we engage with our customers and serve our communities.

To learn more about these challenges, visit FMI.org. ■

BY **MIKE MADDOCK**, CEO AND FOUNDING PARTNER, MADDOCK DOUGLAS, INC.

HOW LEADERS GET THEIR MOJO

BACK

“People can’t inspire others unless they are inspired themselves.”

– Carmine Gallo, Talk Like TED

In December 2021, Adam Grant wrote a piece in *The New York Times* which put a name to how many people were feeling. He described the space between burnout, joylessness, and depression as “languishing.” Then, the article immediately went viral as the world gave a virtual head-nod to how a year of a pandemic had impacted them.

Fast forward to 2022. Leaders are still dealing with a pandemic and many of us have moved well past languishing. In fact, Dr. Heidi Hanna, who has made a living writing, teaching, and speaking

about how leaders function best under stress, is now recommending techniques used regularly to treat PTSD for her CEO clients most impacted by the pandemic.

According to Dr. Hanna, “Stress itself isn’t good or bad, but rather energy potential that can be used in positive or negative ways.” In fact, many leaders use stress to get more done and perform at higher levels. But when the stress is unrelenting it can be damaging, leading to an utter depletion of the mojo that makes us special.

[Continue Reading »](#)

My buddy, Rand Stagen, runs a leadership academy in Dallas. He'll tell you he helps entrepreneurial leaders of companies with hundreds of millions in revenue scale to billions in sales. While this may be the outcome, I believe his most valuable skill is helping leaders see that their teams are simply reflections of themselves.

If that's true – and I sincerely believe it is – then paying attention to how our own engines run is one of our most important jobs as leaders.

This just makes sense. When the leader is focused, the team is focused. When the leader is oozing with mojo, so is their team, and when the leader is out of gas... well, you see where this is going.

Leadership guru Marshall Goldsmith wrote a great book titled, *MOJO*, in 2010. The year before the book was published, I shared a quiet moment with him at an entrepreneurial gathering that I was chairing.

I had asked Goldsmith to come speak to the group about leadership. During our conversation, I admitted that I was feeling run down and feared that "I had lost my mojo." Marshall responded with something like, "Well then your team has probably lost its mojo too."

HE WAS SPOT ON. EVERY TEAM BECOMES A REFLECTION OF THEIR LEADER — GOOD AND BAD — AND IT IS NATURAL FOR LEADERS TO RUN OUT OF GAS OCCASIONALLY. THE LEADERSHIP ROAD IS LONG AND BUMPY.

After speaking to Marshall and some other trusted advisors, I knew I had to do some work on myself first, company second. I took an intentional, lengthy break, during which I left my phone and computer on one continent and spent four weeks with my family, wine, cheese, and lavender on another one.

Our executive team could have reached me if Rome was burning, but it would

have involved a carrier pigeon or a Frenchman on a Vespa. It worked.

The following two years were the best our company ever had, and the break inspired me to launch a new division which would triple the size of our firm. I am convinced that my thinking was directly related to the fresh perspective that comes with a clear head.



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SO, IF YOUR MOJO-METER IS RUNNING ON FUMES, HERE ARE A FEW SIMPLE WAYS TO REFUEL:



TAKE A BREAK

Sometimes the most obvious ideas are the best ideas. When was the last time you really got away from your business? The axiom that you can't work on your business when you are working in your business is true. One of the best ways to gain new perspective and the energy to act upon it is to leave your business behind – for a while.

Verne Harnish, founder of The Entrepreneurs Organization (now EO) and Gazelles, recommends you step away from your business and take a sabbatical every seven years. He notes that every culture celebrates life transitions in seven-year increments, e.g., Confirmations and Bat Mitzvahs, which were naturally designed around our need to reset. So, taking time to recalibrate as a business leader every seven years makes a lot of sense.

For this strategy to work, you really have to be committed to leaving your business behind. Take at least three weeks and commit to not checking email or calling in to see how things are going without you. If possible, go to a completely foreign location – the further off-the-grid, the better. Your goal is to be intentionally distracted by things other than business.

I have done this twice now, in my three decades of running businesses. Upon returning from each trip, I was able to see things more clearly, and the results were extraordinary.

I learned that the necessary changes I was putting off because they required too much emotional capital were much easier to make upon return. I also noticed that it was easier to make subtle connections that lead to disproportionate returns. For example, upon returning from one trip, I repositioned our company and started a new one. These shifts would have required “juice” that I didn't have when I left the country.



Naps aren't just for grandparents and babies, leaders everywhere have learned about the value of 30 minutes of downtime. A NASA study on pilots found that a 40-minute nap improved performance by 34 percent. The National Sleep Foundation even describes napping as a mini-vacation.

It's up to you as a leader to make taking quick breaks okay. We have a room in our office that is used for napping. I am delighted when I see someone emerge from a mid-afternoon break because it means that they feel comfortable taking care of themselves, and they will be performing at a higher level for the rest of the day.



WORK OUT DURING WORK

If you can't nap, then exercise in the afternoon. Research shows that muscle strength, power and output are all better later in the day. Nothing shrinks stress like the endorphins you get from a good workout. One benefit of the pandemic is that many companies are now embracing the benefits of more flexible schedules, making this accommodation possible.



SWITCH JOBS

I've joked for years with my entrepreneurial friends that we ought to do a "Boss Swap," during which we'd run each other's companies for a period. While running the friend's firm, we'd have carte blanche to make any decisions we thought necessary for the good of the company and its shareholders. After all, it's always easier to solve other people's problems than your own.

Thankfully, there are simpler and perhaps less dramatic ways to switch jobs. They are called special projects. Just pick a really big challenge that is new to you. This could be in your department, another department, or within a client's company.

Commit to working on this singular challenge. Establish a time limit to solve the challenge. Since this is essentially a working sabbatical, a good rule of thumb is 4–6 weeks, but even dedicating a week to something completely different will work wonders. Choose the biggest, most important challenge you believe you can solve within that time frame so you are completely distracted and engaged.

Switching jobs will give you a fresh,

meaningful problem to solve. It will allow your brain to stop grinding on your old challenges and it will remind you that you are a great problem solver. As long as you pick the right challenge, you will find that this practice is invigorating. It's important. It's worthy of your time.



FOCUS ON FUTURE OUTCOMES

I've noticed that for leaders, the past sucks energy, but the road ahead fuels mojo. The solution to this is simple on paper, but hard for many to implement: We must always be focused on the future we want.

The easiest way to do that is to simply ask this question constantly: "What is the outcome I want?" Great leaders have the ability to focus and refocus themselves and their teams on this powerful question. In doing so they are constantly writing a story about a better future instead of reflecting on a past that they cannot change.

One last bit of experience to share. Social media can be insidious. It is impossible to check out if you are always checking in. So when you take a break, leave your smart phone in a drawer. The world will be fine without you for a while. ■



Mike Maddock is an entrepreneur, a keynote speaker, an executive coach and a writer. He calls himself an Idea Monkey because he loves to solve problems with disruptive ideas. This passion for problem solving led him to establish Maddock Douglas, Inc. in 1991. Maddock Douglas has become an internationally recognized innovation consultancy that has helped more than 25 percent of the Fortune 100 create and launch new products, services and business models.



ALABAMA GROCERS ASSOCIATION

The Voice of the Grocery Industry

AGA NEWS

BUY ALABAMA'S BEST DAY ON THE LAWN

The Alabama Grocers Association, the Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries and the Alabama Food Manufacturers and Producers Association held a media briefing for the Buy Alabama's Best campaign on Wednesday, March 2, 2022.

The media briefing was held on the Alabama State Capitol Lawn. Speakers included Governor Kay Ivey, Agriculture Commissioner Rick Pate, AGA Chairman Harold Garrett, Emily Hornak with Children's of Alabama, AGA President/CEO Ellie Taylor and AFMPA President Mike Hanson.



Governor Kay Ivey
State of Alabama



Commissioner Rick Pate
Alabama Dept. of Agriculture



Ellie Taylor
AGA President/CEO



Emily Hornak
Children's of Alabama



Harold Garrett
AGA Chairman



Mike Hanson
AFMPA President

The Buy Alabama's Best Campaign formed in 2006 when four Alabama companies, the Alabama Grocers Association, and the Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries saw a need to identify products that were made in Alabama. Today, Buy Alabama's Best has grown to over 50 companies that are headquartered in Alabama, or produce and/or manufacture their products in our state.



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Alabama food manufacturers not only sell products in Alabama and employ Alabamians, but they also purchase vast amounts of raw farm products to make goods, paper, boxes and packaging. Alabama food product sales have a \$2 billion impact on Alabama's economy, tax base and along with the food service industries, employ one out of every four Alabamians.

Retailers throughout Alabama will be supporting this campaign in their stores with Alabama product displays, ads, signage and special promotions. When consumers shop in their local grocery store, they need to look for the Buy Alabama's Best logo under products to ensure they are buying the best products made right here in Alabama.



The Buy Alabama's Best Campaign is proud to announce a renewed partnership with Children's of Alabama. BAB previously partnered with Children's from 2006-2019 and raised over \$750,000 for the charity through icon sales, donations, and grants. Founded in 1911, Children's of Alabama provides medical care for ill and injured children. With more than 3.5 million square feet, it is one of the largest pediatric medical facilities in the United States. The Alabama Center for Childhood Cancer and Blood Disorders treats more than 90% of Alabama's children with cancer and blood disorders and is committed to finding a cure for more than 2,000 children each year.

"We are really excited about our partnership with Children's of Alabama," said Ellie Taylor, President of the Alabama Grocers Association. "Children's Hospital touches the lives of so many in Alabama, and we are lucky to have such a great charity for our campaign. All of the funds raised will stay right here in Alabama."





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BUY ALABAMA'S BEST DAY ON THE LAWN





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OUTSIDE THE BOX

NEW RETAIL PERSPECTIVES

H(AIR) Tools

Innovative electronic company Dyson, known for its sleek vacuums and restroom hand dryers, has entered the business of hair. The company's new "Airwrap" hair styling wand (one of the hottest holiday gifts of 2021) uses air and controlled heat to dry and style hair simultaneously, causing less damage than traditional hair tools that use heated plates. The Airwrap has five interchangeable styling barrels to replace the rest of your hair tools and comes in at \$549.99.



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CHIC ON THE STREETS

Prada and Adidas have released the third installment of their ongoing collaboration. The highly anticipated collection features 21 sharply designed pieces including sneakers, bags, and now, apparel, carefully crafted in Italy by Prada artisans. Prada's Re-Nylon fabric, made from recycled and purified plastic trash recovered from the ocean, is a focal point of the collection and demonstrates the brands' commitment to environmentally-conscious innovation.



MIRROR MIRROR ON THE WALL...

The Sound Mirror 'Voice-Activated Acoustic Mirror' from Icon.AI combines an everyday household item with a Voice-activated Smart speaker to create a speaker-mirror hybrid. Users can stream music to the mirror wirelessly from their phones via bluetooth and connect to Alexa Voice Services with WiFi. The Sound Mirror was named three CES 2022 Innovation Awards Honoree with Audio Segments. It features a waterproof speaker and has capabilities to set alarms and control smart products.



Icon.ai

A New Take on Tonic

Olipop puts a healthy spin on classic soda flavors. The sparkling tonic claims to support digestive health, contains 32 percent of your daily fiber, and boasts no artificial sweeteners. The sparkling beverage made of plant fiber, probiotics, and botanicals, offers flavors like classic root beer, vintage cola, cherry vanilla, and orange squeeze. Olipop was developed in collaboration with a team of human gut microbiome researchers.



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Open-Ear Listening

Shokz headphones allow you to listen to music solely through bone-conduction – vibrations to your bones – without putting anything inside of your ears. While this can take getting used to, it's a good option for those who suffer from hearing loss. Previously “Aftershokz” the company rebranded to “Shokz” and refreshed its best-selling OpenRun headphones. The updated sports-friendly model is waterproof and lightweight with an 8-hour battery life and quick charge feature for \$129.95.

NFTS MAKE A CAMEO

Celebrity video shout-out platform Cameo has entered the NFT space. Beginning February 17, fans of the 50,000 musicians, influencers, and athletes on the platform will be able to mint a Cameo Pass via OpenSea. Starting at \$550, the NFTs will give users exclusive access to Cameo events, meet-and-greets, merchandise drops, and celebrity Q&As.

ON-TREND ORANGE WINE

Step aside Rosé, there's a new sheriff in town. Orange wine is the newest trend captivating tasting rooms across the state. Despite its name, the white wine is not made of oranges at all, but rather refers to the drink's orange hue created by leaving grape skins and seeds in contact with the juice, also known as “skin contact.” The wine has little to no additives and usually has a bitter taste and dry profile. You can try orange wines from California makers including Donkey & Goat and The Vice Wine.



Gourmet Eats at Your Door

Goldbelly food delivery allows eateries across the country to deliver to your doorstep. Ship NYC bagels, Philly cheesesteak, or lobster rolls from Maine directly to your home. Goldbelly has expanded the possibilities for restaurants struggling to survive during the pandemic. The platform offers access to over 800 eateries from meal kits to complete dishes. Food is shipped in a freezer container for freshness.

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MOMMY BLOGGER

LET'S PLAY THE INFLATION GAME



KIMBERLY RAE MILLER
WRITER, ACTRESS

AS FOOD PRICES CONTINUE TO INCREASE, FAMILIES HAVE STARTED TO STRATEGIZE FOOD SHOPPING.

I don't want a lifetime supply of canned ravioli, but I am impressed by the people I see on TV who somehow manage to fill their basements, closets, and toolsheds with years' worth of pantry- stable items that they bought for 37 cents.

Extreme couponing, or couponing in general, has never been my thing. I like a deal as much as the next person, and if something I generally buy is on sale, I'm not beneath stocking up. Still, the few times I've opened the circulars that show up on my lawn each week to look at the coupons inside, I haven't seen anything that we would typically include in our weekly grocery haul.

When my local newspaper hosted an Extreme Couponing master class with someone I assume is famous in couponing circles, I surprised myself and signed up for it. But 2022, in all its humbling glory, has me rethinking many things in my life like if I can walk the 27-miles I drive to work each day and if a pantry full of ravioli isn't worth a shot.

While I may never have the time, energy, or passion for couponing like the masters, I find myself regularly brainstorming new ways to trim my ever-increasing food budget. For instance, I've learned to leave my husband

and kids home for shopping trips. Everyone is an adventurous eater when they're roaming the brightly colored aisles of the grocery store, but they're far less committed to trying new things once they're home.

We've nixed our weekly takeout night, as restaurant prices unsurprisingly reflect the same uptick in food costs we're feeling at home. Instead, I've been making my own pizza dough at home (Note to grocers: more self-rising flour, please!), turned Taco Tuesdays into a tradition, and making the most of my Instant Pot Indian Food cookbook.

I've cut back on meat significantly. Thank goodness my kids love tofu. Not only has meat been harder to come by lately, but it

is by far the steepest price increase we see at the store. I've also been picky about the fresh produce that we buy. We go through pounds of fruit each day, but I'm relying heavily on frozen vegetables to cut back on waste and cost.

I've even attempted to figure out the in-app coupon system for my local grocery store. Please note, if you rely on an app to incentivize customers, please have in-store wi-fi or at least don't block cellular service, so customers can actually access it.

All in all, as prices continue to increase in just about every aspect of our lives, keeping our food budget manageable may ultimately be a pointless endeavor. Still, I will continue to try to find healthy food I can ultimately afford to feed my tiny humans. Although let's be honest, they'd probably prefer the canned ravioli. ■



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AGA NEWS



AGEF SPRING GOLF OUTING

The Alabama Grocers Education Foundation held its Annual Spring Golf Outing on Thursday, April 7, 2022, at Inverness Country Club in Birmingham, Alabama. This tournament raised funds for the Alabama Grocers Education Foundation, to provide

scholarships to employees and children of employees of Alabama Grocers Association companies. To date AGEF has awarded over 1.4 million dollars because of the tremendous support of our members at golf tournaments such as this one.



First Place Team: Greg Rains, Rod Tulloss and Simon Lauderdale with Alabama Crown Distributing.



Second Place Team: Eddie Parnell and Greg Clements with Reynolds American and Joe Naro with The Hershey Company.



Third Place Team: Don Richardson with Coca-Cola Bottling Company UNITED; Jim Coalson with Tom Williams Piggly Wiggly; and Hal Keeton and Casey Keeton with Big Star.

Individual award winners were:

Closest to the Pin: Manny Shoemaker with Acosta.

Longest Drive: Zach Chambliss with the Chambliss and Chastain Group.



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AGEF SPRING GOLF OUTING

The Alabama Grocers Education Foundation Golf Outings would not be as successful without the many companies that sponsored this event and contributed their goods. The Presenting Sponsor was UNFI. The Breakfast Sponsor for this event was BTC Wholesale

Distributors and the lunch sponsor was Byars | Wright Insurance. Additional sponsors and contributors of the AGEF 2022 Spring Tournament included: 5 Hour Energy; A&R Super Markets; Alabama Crown Distributing; Alabama Power Company; Amber Falls Winery & Cellars; Associated Grocers of the South; Autry Greer & Son's; Bimbo Bakeries; Blue Bell Ice Cream; Buffalo Rock / Pepsi; Bunzl Distribution; Campbell Snacks; Chambliss & Chastain Group; Cobbs Allen; Coca-Cola Bottling Co. UNITED; D&T Sales and Marketing; Don Francisco's Coffee; EdLinco; Federated Insurance; Gail's Biscuits; JM Smucker's; Kelley Foods a Ben E. Keith Co.; Keurig Dr. Pepper; Milo's Tea; Mitchell Grocery Corp.; MolsonCoors; Mrs. Stratton's Salads; New Orleans Roast Coffee; Country Bob's / Acosta; Perfect Hydration; PictSweet Farms; Piggly Wiggly #130 & #134; Piggly Wiggly Alabama Distributing Company; Post Consumer Brands; Priestler's Pecans; Publix Super Markets, Inc.; Red Diamond Coffee & Tea; Reynolds American; Sister Schubert Rolls; Stratus Group; The Hershey Company; Truno, Retail Technology; UNFI; United Johnson Brothers; and UTZ Snacks/Golden Flake.





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james.bailey@borden.com

Ms. Karla DeBrunner

Food Bank of East Alabama

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Ms. Jeanne Eichinger

Wawa, Inc.

Jeanne.m.eichinger@wawa.com

Mr. Matt Helms

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