

Gourmet Insights

TGR hosts intensive educational summit

The *Gourmet Retailer* wrapped up its first — and successful — Gourmet Insights Summit in Dallas June 16 and 17.

The day-long intensive education event designed for retailers by retailers attracted Bristol Farms, Cooks of Crocus Hill, DiBruno Bros., Draeger's Market, Rolling Pin Kitchen Emporium, The Epicurean Connection and more. Local retailers and specialty food companies in attendance included Bloom's Candy and Soda Pop Shop, Kitchenwares on the Square, Price Hardware, Le Petite Gourmet, Scardello Artisan Cheese, Antonelli's Cheese Shop, Mozzarella Co. and Gourmet Catalog.

After kicking off with a networking reception on June 16, the summit's June 17 roster was packed with informative sessions.

Tom Mirabile, senior vp of Global Trend and Design for Lifetime Brands and the International Housewares Association's trend watcher, gave a rousing presentation on How to Thrive in Today's Changing Economy. His well-researched presentation included snapshots of today's consumers, the challenges they're facing and the opportunities for gourmet retailers. All segments — Active Seniors, Baby Boomers, Gen X and Millennials — were addressed. Mirabile spoke to the group on how to adapt, inspire and motivate.

Joe Tarnowski, the former technology editor for Progressive Grocer and editor-in-chief of PG Independent who is now vp and chief content officer for ECRM,

◀ **The inaugural Gourmet Insights Summit was a day-long intensive education event designed for retailers of gourmet housewares and specialty food products.**

shared some quick tips on how to optimize social media. Gary Hawkins, executive director of Center for Advancing Retail Technology, addressed the latest in technology for independent gourmet retailers, many of which are single-store operators. Hawkins focused his presentation on affordable technologies that are available now. For example, beacons are inexpensive but powerful devices, and retailers can use them to communicate with customers — who opt-in or agree to communications — when they're in the store. These devices, which cost about \$100 for a three-pack, can be used to cue up a video when a shopper approaches a cookware display or to distribute targeted marketing messages, to name a few.

Sharing Their Stories

Retailers from around the country shared their success stories and challenges in two lively panel discussions.

Doug Poling of Bristol Farms, Kathleen Taggart of Draeger's Market, and Dave West of Rolling Pin Kitchen Emporium shared their tips for effective merchandising that drives sales.

A second panel of retailers shared their prognostications on what's next on the food scene and how to connect to increase profits. Karl Benson of Cooks of Crocus Hill, Sheana Davis of The Epicurean Connection, and Janet McDonald and Cindy Utecht of The Gourmet Gallery all shared their observations, experiences and entrepreneurial ideas.

Bradley Stone Nix of Brand Chorus shared in-depth insights on marketing to Millennials, and Anna Wolfe, editor-in-chief of *The Gourmet Retailer*, presented the findings of TGR's annual State of the Industry survey. (The survey's analysis begins on page 12.)

"The Gourmet Insights Summit gave retailers a lot of food for thought. Attendees were able to gather information to run their businesses smarter and ideas on new techniques and revenue streams. And they were able to make connections with other retailers," said Wolfe. "Based on the feedback we received from our engaged group of retailers, our first Gourmet Insights Summit was a success."

Gourmet Insights Summit was produced by Stagnito Business Information, a provider of retail industry information, insights, and strategic communication programs for retailers and suppliers. **TGR**





The Gourmet Insights Summit was sponsored by Sheila G's Brownie Brittle, ASR Group/Tate & Lyle Sugars, Daregal, Emmi Cheese, KitchenIQ, Howard, Le Gruyere AOP, Ritter Sport, and Wind and Willow.



Gourmet Insights Summit provided an intimate atmosphere in which retailers could interact with one another and with the speakers. Bradley Stone Nix from Brand Chorus is sharing his marketing to Millennials tips with Paula Lambert, the Mozzarella Co., and Kathleen Taggart, Draeger's Market.



The event featured tabletop displays with sponsors and their products. Melissa Moore demonstrates KitchenIQ's newest gadget.



Two panel discussions featured retailers who shared their successes and challenges. Pictured are Dave West of the Rolling Pin Kitchen Emporium and Kathleen Taggart of Draeger's Market.



New friends and old. Anna Wolfe, *The Gourmet Retailer*; Paula Lambert, Mozzarella Co.; Sheana Davis, The Epicurean Connection; Kendall Antonelli, Antonelli's Cheese Shop and Rich Scardello, Scardello Artisan Cheese.



Tom Mirabile, senior vp of Global Trend and Design for Lifetime Brand and the International Housewares Association's trend watcher, shared research and tips on How to Thrive in Today's Changing Economy.