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require careful study while multiple systems are in operation.

For the manufacturer, the watchword should be caution. For the same reasons as stated above for the retailer, the quality of the information becomes a key factor in whatever marketing decisions are made.

Also, the usability of UPC data for long-term decision making (and I'm sure you recognize that the marketing of products in grocery stores from beginning to end - planning through tracking of progress is not a short-term game) is something that needs further study. The merchandising or short-term decisions should be easy; the marketing or longer term decisions may be another ball game.

Finally, for the researchers, including those of us at Nielsen, it seems evident that the golden age often discussed is not here yet. I think it behooves all of us in the research community to do our utmost to see that whenever possible, assistance be given to retailers and manufacturers to insure UPC data is being made as strong as possible, and that improper use of the data be prevented by all parties.

INDUSTRY RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT; WE CAN DO IT BETTER

by
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The convenience store industry is in a hurry. It has always been in a hurry. By the end of 1976, there will be 31,000 convenience stores in the United States. This number is expected to grow to 44,000 by 1980. 1976 industry sales will be \$7.5 billion; 5% of U.S. grocery sales. And all of this in just forty short years.

In the beginning, the owners of convenience store companies picked all the sights, selected the products, designed the stores, hired the employees and handled all of the paperwork. The industry was filled with hard workers, working long, long days.

As the companies built more stores, a Store Manager or two was promoted to Supervisor. And the owners kept working long hours, picking more sights, selecting new equipment and looking over the accounting office. These new Supervisors were expected to work the same long hours; and surely a fate worse than death awaited any Supervisor caught sitting at their desk. "You don't make money in the office" became the industry slogan.

Undoubtedly, this dedication to personal involvement and seven 18-hour days a week was a positive influence to the convenience store industry's rapid rise. But, I believe that while it may have helped in the early years, this work style has now come back to haunt us. For if the industry slogan is "you don't make money sitting at your desk," then the convenience store industry symbol is a Supervisor in the "sprint" position, wearing a fireman's hat.

Convenience store Supervisors are most often found like this because of what they hear from their superiors:

"get out and motivate your people!"
"get your sales up!"
"work on that store appearance!"
"better hire some good people!"

The Supervisor says "Yes Sir!!" and sprints from the office to the car. Then, right after they've turned the ignition on, it suddenly hits them: "How do I motivate, increase sales, clean up my stores, hire good people?"

And this is where the breakdown, the haunting, occurs. For because Supervisors are not sure about these specifics, they do a lot of general work. They stay out of the office, sprinting through their stores saying things like "Better get to work on your store appearance;" or "Those sales aren't too good, get'm

up!" and "come on, you guys, Let's work harder!" And then they're gone. Because if they slowed down to discuss anything, someone might ask them about the specifics.

Then, for reinforcement, firefighting Supervisors are told, "You're sure spending a lot of time out in your stores. Keep up the good work!" Hearing this, our Supervisor thinks to himself that if this running around is making me look that good, I'll start running even faster. The faster I go the more impressed my boss will be. So he does.

Let's not kid ourselves. The effect of this reinforcement from above goes beyond one Supervisor. For as this is all happening, all the other Supervisors in the company are watching. And pretty soon you've got a sprint team made up of every Supervisor in your company. All of them being as active as they can.

I believe that changing this one outlook is the most important work the convenience store industry can do. For if we are to continue our successful growth, convenience store management at all levels must change their emphasis from ACTIVITY to PRODUCTIVITY. I believe that our first-line management must stop being congratulated for fighting fires; and be held responsible for the careful, thorough construction of fireproof operations.

To insure that our management can build a fireproof business, we must begin to help these people become familiar with that large body of knowledge called "managing." We must introduce them to the "people skills" of listening, teaching and helping. For these coaching skills are the foundation of a fireproof building.

Then our industry should demand that these new skills be put to immediate use in two areas:

- NEW EMPLOYEE EDUCATION
- PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS

The area of New Employee Education needs our attention. For if we are to build a solid operation, we need to retain employees. And how an individual is introduced to their work has a tremendous effect on their desire to stay with it.

We need to encourage our management to stop running; to sit in the office and think. Think about what it is that employees need to be able to do. And how it is they are to do these tasks. Most importantly, we need to commit these thoughts to writing.

Then we must work to develop a system that ensures every new employee, full and part time, will be exposed to these tasks; learning how to do them exactly in this way, every time, without fail.

This education process doesn't need to have a lot of fancy gadgets and machinery. It doesn't need to cost a lot of money to be good. But it does require uninterrupted thinking time. Time spent out of the sprint position being productive. For if we are to retain employees to help us grow, we must remember that the seeds of success, and of termination, are sewn the very first day on the job.

Working through this type of educational process will give each employee the information they need to answer questions on the specifics of convenience store operation. Questions that will be directed to them at any management level. But even after we have helped each employee learn what they are to do, and how they are to perform each task, we should periodically sit with each of them and evaluate how well they are performing.

When I talk of a Performance Appraisal, I am speaking of a formal, planned discussion; as opposed to a passing comment thrown out as we sprint through our operation. I believe that the convenience store industry must begin to encourage its management to conduct one-on-one performance appraisals. Discussions that emphasize a study of an employee's methods, the system(s) they use to accomplish tasks, rather than emphasizing results. For as we cause each employee to stop and study how they work, their methods will improve. And better results will soon come to be.

There are many systems available to help performance appraisals - management by objectives and mutual goal setting being the most prominent. But the system used, even whether or not you have a form, is not that important. The regular discussion of means rather than ends is the critical characteristic of these appraisals.

For too many years the convenience store industry has caused their management to take a position similar to that of a sweeper to a parade. We have rewarded those who stay busy sweeping up the debris, patting the firefighters on the back. We must begin to recognize the "Fire Marshall." Those who calmly and smoothly go about their work; directing the creation of knowledgeable employees and planning operations with fireproofing built in.

There is a term for all of this. The term is "Professionalism." In my mind, this term means more than just being paid for what one does. To me professionalism means "going about your job as if your career depended on it."
