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1. Membership education through a formal seminar program is a recognized association responsibility.
2. It is becoming increasingly more important and will continue to do so, and finally,
3. Careful planning for an on-going meaningful seminar program will continue to be one of the top priorities of Cooperative Food Distributors of America in the years ahead.

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## COLONIAL'S APPROACH TO CONSUMER AFFAIRS

by  
Agnes Olmstead  
Director of Public Affairs  
Colonial Stores, Inc.  
Atlanta, Georgia

For those who do not know us, Colonial Stores is an Atlanta based chain of 384 stores located from Southern Maryland to Central Florida. Our store names are Colonial, Big Star, Richway, and in some areas, K-Mart.

In 1976 we will celebrate our 75th anniversary. In those early days, even before it was the "in" thing, Colonial Stores took the rights of its' customers and its' corporate responsibilities seriously. As a result, we have grown and prospered.

The Consumer Affairs Department, well-grounded in home economics, was established in 1952 by the President's office at management level at corporate headquarters. From the inception,

management's concept was the desire for customer representation in a man's world because 23 years ago consumers were customers and that equated with women. We have always had ready access to the company's policy makers with freedom to speak to any issue.

The success of our customer-consumer program has been flexibility. We have changed directions and emphasis many times in the last 23 years because there have been significant changes in customer needs and in supermarketing.

Many of our early activities were in the realms of a TV cooking school, weekend menus, and recipes because our job was to meet customer demands as we saw them at that time.

The work we do today is largely the result of the realities of corporate and economic responsibilities which make us carefully assess the benefits of any program before implementation. We have to be reasonably certain that we do not appreciably increase our costs of doing business to do things of relatively low benefit and of little interest to today's consumer.

Our total approach to consumer affairs has been very low-key. We firmly believe a consumer specialist can most effectively be an in-house consumer advocate to the Company. It is in-house, at corporate level, where day-to-day decisions are made on policies, operations and products that ultimately concern consumers. Consumer affairs people do not necessarily have to be publicly visible to achieve results. In other words, if the in-house consumer advocate does her job effectively, consumers will benefit as well as the company, its' employees and its' stock holders.

Our program has tried to develop an awareness of customer needs and wants, satisfaction and dissatisfactions then translating these to an effective corporate response. We have always had a strong internal program and a low-key external program. For example:

Our Company has voluntarily undertaken many consumer benefit programs:

- In our stores - We did one of the first woman designed supermarkets in the country. More than a thousand women in the stores' shopping area told us how to redesign the store. They were right, it became and still is the flagship in the chain. It has been copied from coast-to-coast. It is the Colonial Store at Lenox Square listed on one of your tours.

Also in our stores--in late 1973, the National Livestock and Meat Board and the Government recommended the adoption and use of a new meat identity and nomenclature program to unconfuse consumers at the meat counter. As the first chain in the Southeast, we voluntarily adopted the program company-wide even though it meant considerable expense in buying all new meat slugs for the scales. We felt consumers had the right to know the kind of meat, the name of the primal cut, and the straight-forward name of the retail cut so they could make more informed value/price comparisons

- On our products - Colonial Stores believes the customer's right to value for a dollar is justification for our quality assurance test kitchen. In this consumer nerve center last year, approximately 3,000 private label, nationally advertised and competitive products were tested and scored jointly by our product men and our consumer-home economists.

Also, in the last 18 months, about 300 labels, cartons, bags, boxes or cans have been redesigned or revised to include the metric measure, ingredient listing, nutritional analysis (when available), open date/freshness guarantee, home storage tips, Universal Product Code, recipes and an offer of free help for food shopping or nutrition information or recipes. (Show mandatory white bread, voluntary coffee and stewed tomatoes.) Our voluntary label revision program is a restatement of company policy to provide on house brand labels, as much information as possible in easy-to-understand language to enable consumers to buy and use food wisely.

- In our advertising - To help the Government launch its' nutrition

awareness program we have had several annual advertising campaigns using the theme "Good Nutrition Need Not be Expensive". For these we have received the Food Council of America's Gold Leaf Certificate for excellence in nutrition education.

But nutrition education is not new to us. Since 1955, we have been using the Government Daily Food Guide in consumer meetings and in consumer mail. This is the Basic 4 Foods made into a decorative useful hot dish pad which we advise consumers to use in planning menus and shopping lists.

Our advertising has long publicized a 100% guarantee on every purchase. Many customer adjustments are made at store level. Those complaints or inquiries that come to Corporate level are usually handled daily or within a few days. Full refunds are given, answers to questions provided and remedial action started within the company.

Responses to consumer mail includes not only the personal letters but a collection of timely recipes plus a "white paper" on a relevant consumer issue.

- In civic/community affairs - This year by executive order of the Governor, a Georgia Food Facts Council was created to collect and disseminate to consumers information about food prices, food value and nutrition. We serve on that Council as the only representative of food retailing.

Because of our geographic coverage it has been imperative that we be miserly in the allocation of our time. Our civic/community programs have, of necessity, been on a highly selective basis. In general, they are geared to thought leaders or to teachers-of-others.

The subject matter covers policies or services relevant to the food industry or to our Company. We talk about the economic facts of life, about food supplies, the trade-offs, wiser shopping, pricing, profits or technical industry subjects such as the Universal Product Code.

- In Schools - We pioneered and carried on from 1955 to 1970 a young consumer education program. This was developed to assist home economics teachers in teaching food economics and wiser food shopping. For this program we received the only Gold Rose Award given to a supermarket chain by Seventeen Magazine in recognition for outstanding service to education.

These are but a few of our milestones, but we think they are significant facts to indicate we are no johnny-come-lately in consumer affairs, nor has the department ever been window dressing for the Company image.

Through the years many food retailers have recognized their obligation to serve consumers. The National Association of Food Chains in 1956 established its' first Consumer Service Committee made up of the only 5 representatives in the industry. Today, virtually every major food chain is represented on this renamed Consumer Affairs Committee of some 50 members. So great is the interest in what committee members do that they have written this folder "Supermarkets--A Consumer's Friend". It identifies program objectives and makes suggestions for establishing a corporate consumer affairs office in a food chain.

In summary, we look upon a consumer and public affairs program as a positive commitment and a valuable marketing tool. In essence, this is

the same way politicians and government view consumerism.

- In business consumerism equates with sales or the lack of them.

- In politics consumerism equates with votes or the lack of them.

Either way, consumers and their concerns are an established and growing new force that is making business and government more responsive to consumer needs. For us it means more effective store operations, more responsive marketing, more open-door communications and hopefully a stronger positive corporate image.

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## MAJOR REASONS FOR LOW PRODUCTIVITY IN CLERICAL, MANUFACTURING AND SERVICE INDUSTRIES

by  
Don Schwerzler, President  
Southern Business Research, Inc.  
Atlanta, Georgia

### A. Reasons

1. Waiting for work, station fills.
2. Waiting for instructions--poor supervision.
3. Unavailability of a machine, tools needed to perform the job, or work station.
4. Lack of critical component parts to do the work.

5. Doing the job or work out of sequence or priority.

6. Employee errors in doing the job (workmanship, planning, set-ups, etc.).

7. Damaged material--lack of consistent quality control inspections in receiving and in process.

8. Redundant machine set-ups.