

SPRING 2022

The Official Magazine of NAMA

# InTouch

# NAMA®

*Convenience Service*

## REIMAGINED

At The NAMA Show 2022

The **NAMA**  
Show 2022  
*Convenience Service*  
**REIMAGINED**

Spring 2022

# contents



## features

10

Convenience Service  
REIMAGINED At The  
NAMA Show 2022

18

NAMA Advocates for  
Convenience Services  
Industry in States Across  
the Nation

20

NAMA Strategic  
Partnership Program  
Supporting Advocacy  
and Industry Research

23

D'Undre Lee Launches  
Vending Business at Age 17

30

NAMA Special Interest Groups  
Provide Excellent Networking

## departments

06

A Closer Look  
with Carla Balakgie

08

News & Views  
with Joe Hessling

26

WOMEN IN THE INDUSTRY:  
Up Close with Bren Benjamin

28

EMERGING LEADERS NETWORK:  
Up Close with Mark West





#### INTOUCH EDITORIAL BOARD



**Carla Balakgie,**  
*President and CEO,  
NAMA*



**Joe Hessling,**  
*Founder and CEO,  
365 Retail Markets,  
Chair, NAMA*



**Mike Goscinski,**  
*Senior Director,  
External Affairs,  
NAMA*

#### PUBLISHED FOR

NAMA  
1777 North Kent Street, Suite #1010  
Arlington, VA 22209  
p. 571.349.0149  
namanow.org

#### CONTRIBUTORS

Carla Balakgie	Joe Hessling
Carly Furman	Ryan Rickard
Ben Gordon	Nick Steingart

#### PUBLISHED BY

E&M Consulting, Inc.  
p. 800.572.0011  
f. 952.448.9928  
emconsultinginc.com



#### MANAGERS

Caleb Tindal & Kayla Grams

#### LAYOUT & DESIGN

Haley Paulson

#### COPY EDITOR

Victoria Luing

For information regarding advertising, please contact us at [advertising@emconsultinginc.com](mailto:advertising@emconsultinginc.com) or 800.572.0011 x8005.

**Please note:** Editorial and contents of this magazine reflect the records of the National Automatic Merchandising Association (NAMA). NAMA has done its best to provide useful and accurate information, but please take into account that some information does change. E&M Consulting, Inc., publishers, and NAMA take no responsibility for the accuracy of the information printed, inadvertent omissions or printing errors. We take no responsibility regarding representations or warranties concerning the content of advertisements of products/services for a particular use, including all information, graphics, copyrighted materials, and assertions included in the advertisements. The reader is advised to independently check all information before basing decisions on such information. Any views or opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of E&M Consulting, Inc., publishers.

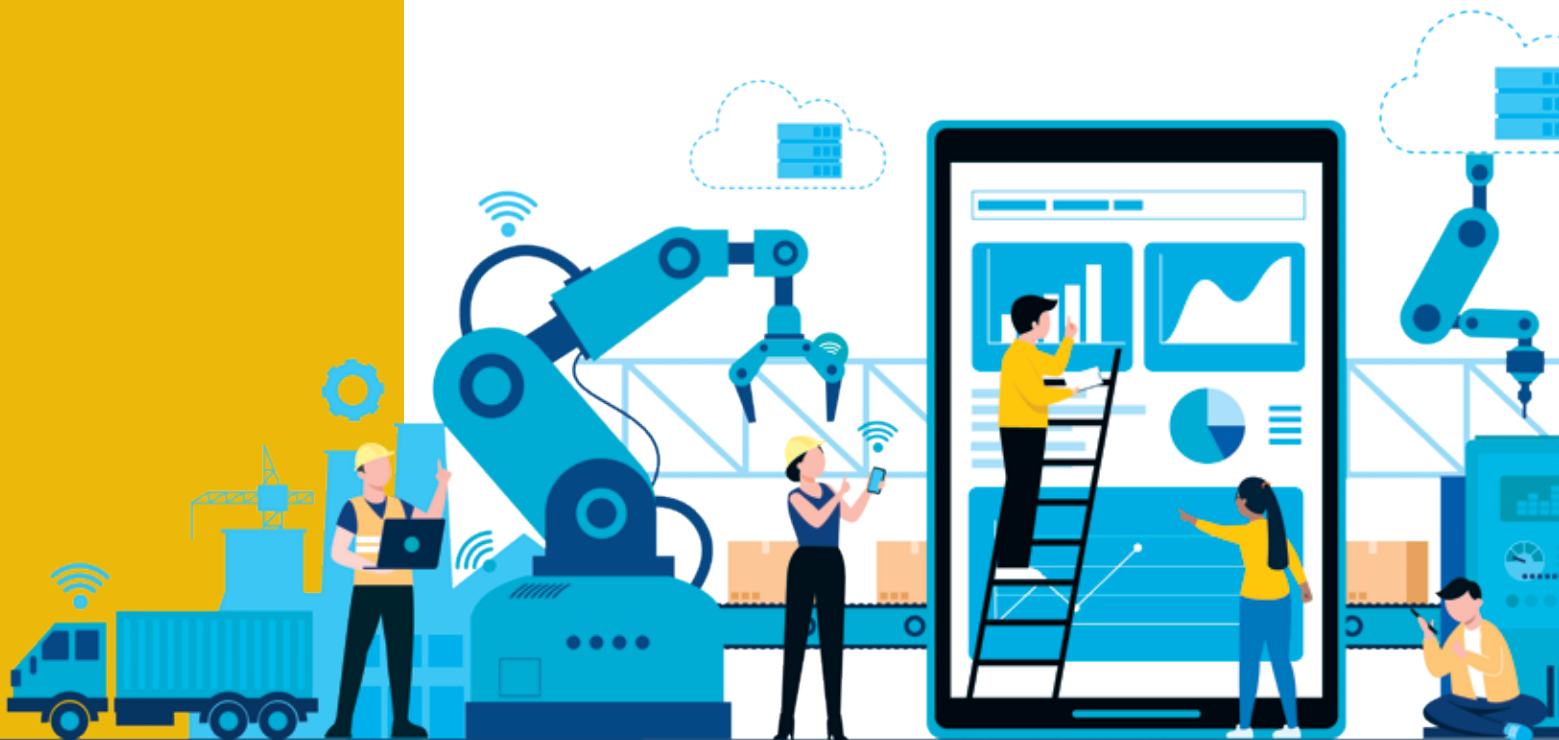


# Imagine the Future at The NAMA Show

*Carla Balakgie, President & Chief Executive Officer of NAMA*

**D**o you remember when the internet was new? It really wasn't all that long ago. It seems strange now, but the internet was so radically disruptive that people had trouble envisioning what it was, how it could apply to them — or be helpful to the world. There was no shared vision of the future with the internet in it, let alone an appreciation for the outsized role it would come to play in our lives.

But, it didn't take long to get there. Soon, internet-connected computers began arriving in workplaces and in libraries. People started to experience the internet for themselves and, more importantly, interact with it. I recall I was working in a higher education association when I first heard the word Google. It was some internet tool that could search for anything, anywhere, using some fancy-sounding premise of Boolean logic. I was pretty certain I'd never have a need for such a thing. Surely that was just for academics, researchers and historians toiling away in dark, fusty corners. Then I tried using Google to search for the



location of a hotel in a distant city, and the rest is history. Somehow that's what it took — hands-on time to see it for myself — before I could understand what the excitement was all about and how it could apply to me.

### Transformational Change

Something similar is going on now in the convenience services industry. Advanced technologies and equipment are changing your core business with new smart touchless retailing, payment methods, data analytics capabilities and more. Meanwhile, social and cultural changes are affecting how, when and where consumers encounter your offerings — and what they find relevant. Footfall is up in many locations, but daypart and purchase patterns have changed dramatically. Your businesses are already diversified, with traditional vending, micro markets and office coffee and pantry services. And you're looking to take that expertise into new venues and channels.

Many of you have told us that, although you embrace these opportunities, you need help envisioning what this transformation means for your operation or for prospective customers. Just as it was helpful for me to try Google when it was new, it

***“Just as it was helpful for me to try Google when it was new, it would be helpful for you to put new technologies and equipment to the test.”***

would be helpful for you to put new technologies and equipment to the test.

You need to see it, touch it, engage with it. You need to talk with experts who can walk you through the potential applications and help you think about how to put all this change to work for your customers.

### Imagination Way

We listened, and we're making it happen at The NAMA Show 2022 in a new feature called “Imagination Way.” It will be an experience — literally — meaning you should come ready to explore prototype environments, interact with screens, press buttons, experiment with merchandising strategies and talk to thought leaders about how the concepts can be applied in your operation. Think about it like a “new car show” for convenience services.

To demonstrate how innovations can be used in various venues, displays within Imagination Way will emulate real-world consumer settings, like transit and transportation centers, multi-family and campus housing, senior living and health care facilities and in hotel, lodging and hospitality outlets. We expect to host representatives from these industries to visit Imagination Way and attend The NAMA Show 2022. This will give you a chance to engage with these leaders for additional insight about their particular needs and aspirations for their businesses. And we hope they will come away with the understanding that today's

convenience services offerings can bring exciting new retail and service solutions to their operations.

We also listened to consumers, bringing their evolving, post-pandemic attitudes into Imagination Way. The result is an unparalleled look at how consumer interactions with retail are shifting and how you can position your operation for growth. Imagination Way will show how you can respond to consumers' desire for control of the retail encounter by providing fast, flexible, option-rich self-service in novel retail formats. As part of the NAMA Public Health Commitment, Imagination Way also will demonstrate how you can satisfy consumer appetite for a broader assortment of better-for-you and fresh on-the-go food and beverage options.

They say an image is worth a thousand words. This is especially true of Imagination Way. You really must see, and experience it, to appreciate it. And we hope to see you there.

Of course, Imagination Way is just the beginning of how you can prepare for the future at The NAMA Show 2022. As always, the largest annual gathering of the industry will be full of exciting education and networking opportunities and a trade show floor teeming with new products, high-quality equipment and impactful service solutions. Read the article on page 10 of this issue of *InTouch* to learn more and make your plans to attend. 🌈





# Let's Get to It

*Joe Hessling, NAMA Chair, Founder and CEO 365 Retail Markets*

*Now is the time for convenience services to give consumers what they want.*

**O**ne of the things I love about this industry is the very thing that has seen it through the toughest time in recent memory: Most operators are small, owner-operated businesses. They will do everything necessary to service customers, including things they haven't done in 10 years or more.

Many of my customers are literally driving route trucks right now. But that's not because business is bad. In fact, from what I see, business is on its way up. Convenience services will be in high demand for the next decade — at least.


I'm not the only one who sees things this way. When convenience services operators were asked to share their perspectives with the NAMA Foundation, the results were resoundingly bullish. They expect growth to be substantially larger in 2022 than in 2020 — by a factor of nearly two-thirds.

No question, we're in a better place now. Gross domestic product is robust and expected to continue to gain steam. Consumer confidence has improved. More people are out and about. They're spending more. And, they're prioritizing their spending on experiences that can lead them to convenience retail. Transportation and recreation, for example, have seen an uptick.

The opportunity is all around us. Mega trends are playing directly into our industry's sweet spot. The pandemic gave more consumers a reason to become reliant on technology, automation and self-service. Consumers want less face-to-face interaction. They want to accomplish as much as possible on their own — through frictionless self-service. They want access to the things they need (or want) when and where they need (or want) them. These changes are here to stay.

No other industry is better positioned to execute on these mega trends than convenience services.

***“Mega trends are playing directly into our industry’s sweet spot. The pandemic gave more consumers a reason to become reliant on technology, automation and self-service.”***



One of the risks operators are facing today, ironically, relates to how hard they’re working to serve customers. This is a time of incredible growth due to opportunity and innovation — for this industry, in particular. However, every operator’s capacity is a finite resource.

If things weren’t changing so rapidly, work to prepare for the future could be deferred. Operators could commit all of their capacity to serving customers. Instead, the imperative is to do both — plan for tomorrow while keeping the business chugging along.

That’s really hard to do, especially in an owner-operated business, where labor is tight and it means doing it all on your own. In her *InTouch* column this month, NAMA CEO Carla Balakgie previews a new feature of The NAMA Show, Imagination Way, which can help. Be sure to read it, beginning on page 6 of this issue of *InTouch*.

The changes happening in the convenience services channel are the result of external forces. Self-service is the direction in which consumers are leading. This industry can rise to the top by continuing to do what it does best — giving customers all they’ve got — *and* by coming together to reimagine convenience retail through the lens of the consumer.

Progress is there. We can see it. We can see everything that we need to do. There is hard work ahead, but it’s going to be worth it. The way I see it, this is the moment we’ve been waiting for.

Let’s get to it. 🏁

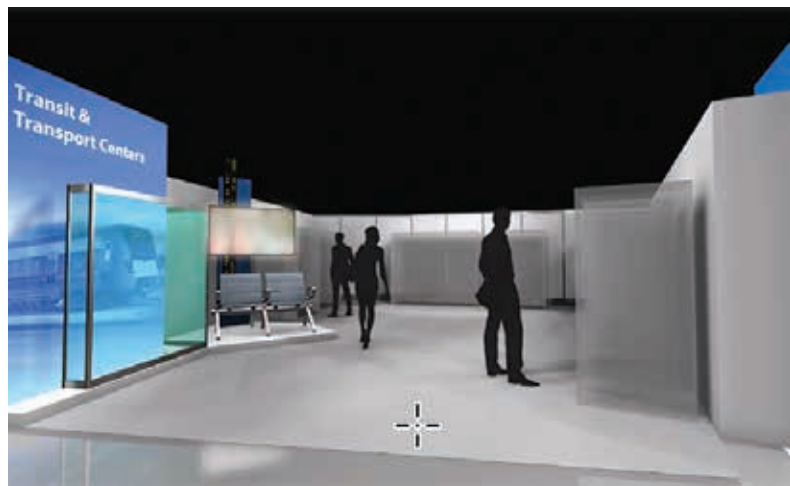
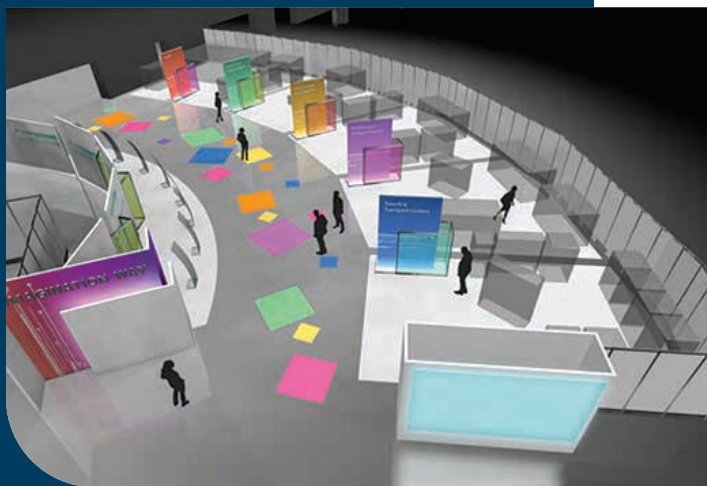


## *Convenience Service* **REIMAGINED** At The NAMA Show 2022

*Interactive “Imagination Way” demonstrates the future; innovation icons to deliver incisive business development presentations*

**T**he past two years have seen a tremendous amount of change and upheaval. The usual norms and patterns of doing business have been turned upside down.

But change brings opportunity, and the convenience services industry is uniquely poised at this moment to capitalize on rapidly evolving customer needs, new technology and more to innovate into the future.



*The new Imagination Way interactive experience will help operators envision the future of the convenience services industry and what it means for their businesses.*





*The NAMA show main stage will feature innovation icons who will share new ideas and strategies for NAMA members to grow their businesses.*

NAMA is leading the way by showcasing these opportunities at The NAMA Show 2022, April 6-8 at Chicago's McCormick Place. Never has it been more important to attend this show to learn firsthand about the latest business thinking, meet potential new customers, and connect with colleagues to learn how new approaches can succeed in the marketplace.

The NAMA Show 2022 is the largest event for the convenience services industry and is designed for operators and professionals in the micro market, vending, pantry, coffee/tea/water

service and unattended retail sectors of the convenience services industry. Details are available at [www.thenamashow.org](http://www.thenamashow.org).

"With a theme of 'Convenience Service Reimagined,' The NAMA Show 2022 meets the moment of rising opportunity for self-service," says NAMA Director of Meetings & Events Kristen Keenan Griffith. "Attendees will discover powerful technology, explore new products, uncover emerging trends and build a strong network of allies — assets that will help set any convenience service business on a path to success."



### **Inspiration in "Imagination Way"**

The NAMA Show experience is highlighted by "Imagination Way," the newest part of The NAMA Show 2022. An experience in itself, this interactive gallery puts the edgiest emerging technologies and service solutions on display and in the hands of attendees. From self-service kiosks to unattended dining and stores, Imagination Way demonstrates how these innovations may be leveraged in unique consumer environments. An enhanced New Product Zone, where manufacturers will premiere the latest offerings to wow customers and increase sales, is also part of this area.

"Imagination Way provides the vision for the future of convenience services, unattended and self-service retailing," says NAMA President & CEO Carla Balakgie, FASAE, CAE. "It reflects consumer demand

for greater control of retail encounters, more options and flexibility in retail locations, and ubiquitous availability of better-for-you and fresh on-the-go food and beverage options. The result is an inspired look at how consumer interactions with retail are shifting and how the most routine purchases will be made in the near future."

Imagination Way will showcase products, equipment, best practices, technology and merchandising tactics in real-world retail scenarios. Participating companies as of mid-February included Retail 365 Markets, Cantaloupe, Kellogg's, Keurig Dr Pepper, Kiosoft, Mondelez International, Popshop, Three Square Market and Vistar.

Attendees will be encouraged to put these new solutions to the test while exploring their application in fully functional displays. Experts will help operators imagine how new features can be applied to existing operations and how operations can be expanded to serve more customers in different venues and channels.

The Imagination Way experience focuses on four unique consumer venues, highlighting a broad range of capabilities to meet distinct consumer needs:

- Transit/Transport Centers
- Multi-Family/Campus Housing
- Senior Living/Health Care
- Hotel/Lodging and Hospitality

Imagination Way is situated at the entrance to the exhibit hall at The NAMA Show 2022, ensuring that every attendee will engage with leading-edge technologies and service offerings.

## Redefine Customer Engagement

What do Tesla Motors, Apple Computer and Gap Inc. have in common? They all redefined customer engagement and created breakthrough customer experiences and brand loyalty under the direction of George Blankenship.

Blankenship, who offers 30 years of international strategy, retail and real estate experience, will deliver the keynote address at The NAMA Show on Wednesday, April 6 at 1:00 p.m., sponsored by PepsiCo.



**George Blankenship**

He most recently disrupted the auto industry and revolutionized the car-buying experience in his executive role at Tesla Motors. Earlier, as Vice President of real estate at Apple, Blankenship executed an impressive retail growth strategy and is widely recognized as the architect of Apple's brand-building retail method, which generated a sustained increase in sales, profit and consumer loyalty.



**Mark Jeffries**

He will demonstrate how businesses can remain competitively positioned in the modern market and deliver first-class customer care. His innovative processes inform and transform

secure, status-quo organizations into forward-thinking and dynamic players of the future.

Blankenship will be interviewed on stage by Mark Jeffries, a leading host, emcee and moderator for major events around the world. Back by popular demand, Jeffries will act as emcee of The NAMA Show General Session and will interview session speakers as part of the 90-minute program.

Many NAMA members already know Jeffries as the main stage host and facilitator of NAMA Executive Forum events. He brings sharp business knowledge, years of insight into many industries and a warm wit to the role. A former stockbroker, Jeffries regularly appears as an expert guest on NBC's Today Show, Fox Business, BBC News and writes for *The Huffington Post*.



The best way to experience The NAMA Show 2022 is by gathering with peers, colleagues and industry leaders to converse, network and share solutions for successfully servicing customers in line with emerging changes to on-premise and at-home work environments.

However, if traveling to Chicago is not in the cards for this year, consider the virtual experience of The NAMA Show. This online version of the show is designed to keep your business moving forward with highlighted educational opportunities, the chance to connect with suppliers and tools for discovering new products.

Available for just \$99, the virtual experience includes:

- Online access to a searchable database of new products and equipment, including product launches and first-time announcements
- Downloadable product guides and online product demos
- The ability to schedule one-on-one appointments with suppliers
- Access to a selected group of recorded presentations covering industry trends, workforce development, technology and business efficiency
- Viewing permission for the General Session and keynote speaker

Want to involve your whole team? Register five members of your team for a total of just \$399.

**Learn more at:**

[www.namanow.org/events/thenamashow/virtual-option](http://www.namanow.org/events/thenamashow/virtual-option).

## Disrupt and Innovate

When it's time to define what's next, award-winning author and innovation expert Jeremy Gutsche, MBA, CFA is the person called on by Google, Sony, Disney, IBM, Adidas and other world-class organizations. He even helped NASA prototype the Journey to Mars.

Now he brings his innovative ideas to The NAMA Show as the plenary session speaker on Thursday, April 7 at 9:00 a.m. Gutsche is the founder and CEO of Trend Hunter, the world's number-one trend website and innovation consultancy with over 3.5 billion views and 10,000 projects completed.

In a fast-paced plenary session, Gutsche will draw parallels from social changes happening now to those that occurred due to the Bubonic plague and the Spanish Flu. Gutsche says these pandemics, respectively, were responsible for ushering in the Renaissance and the Roaring '20s. He says that times of crisis lead to urgency, action and ultimately to innovation. In post-pandemic periods, for example, Gutsche says people are drawn to leisure activities that help them live life to the fullest.



**Jeremy Gutsche**

## 2022 NAMA Industry Award Winners to be Honored

The NAMA Industry Awards are prestigious honors recognizing leaders in the industry who best exemplify consistent advancement of the convenience services industry. NAMA congratulates the three 2022 award recipients below who will be honored at The NAMA Show 2022 as part of the General Session on Wednesday, April 6 at 1 p.m.

### Industry Person of the Year

**Mike Brown, President,  
PGI Services**

The Industry Person of the Year Award recognizes an individual who has consistently exemplified the highest standards of professional excellence and achieved business success throughout their career in the convenience services industry. Recipients have been an inspiration and thought leader to others throughout their career.



**Mike Brown**

### Operator of the Year

**Scott Halloran, CEO,  
Trolley Hospitality Companies**

The Operator of the Year Award is presented to an individual who best exemplifies consistent advancement of the convenience services industry. Recipients are innovative and possess a willingness to expand conventional business practices.



**Scott Halloran**

### Allied Member of the Year

**Patty Closser, CEO, and  
Steve Closser, Co-Founder,  
Translucent LLC**

The Allied Member of the Year Award, presented to a non-operator member, recognizes an individual who has exhibited the highest level of integrity, dedication and leadership to the convenience services channel. Recipients provide innovative leadership, demonstrate responsiveness to the needs of the industry through education and best practices and offer products and services that help operators grow their businesses.



**Patty and Steve Closser**



## Curated Knowledge and Insights

What are your priorities when it comes to learning engagement? Strategy and outlook? Knowing customers and growing revenue? Protecting your assets? Leveraging your convenience services expertise?

The NAMA Show offers in-depth education tracks in each of these areas, delivered by leading minds in the convenience services industry.

Learn from dozens of sessions, including these:

- Don't Kill Your Golden Goose: Protect and Perpetuate Your Business
- Trending Technologies in Convenience Services
- How to Make the Most Out of Supplier Relationships
- What We Do Well, and What It's Worth
- The Labor Shortage: How to Accomplish More with Less
- What's in a Brand? The Importance of Establishing Your Identity
- The Importance of Consumer-Facing Promotions in Micro Markets
- Lessons From a Lawyer: Managing Your Security and Workforce
- What Comes After Micro Markets? How New Technology Will Transform the Industry
- Five Dynamics Shaping the Office Coffee Industry in 2022 and Beyond
- If Shrinkage is Evil, Why is Waste Acceptable
- Winning Over the Office Gatekeeper for Fun and Profit
- Snowballing: How to Make More Money from Every Transaction
- Taking Calculated Risks with Technical Innovations
- Spilling the Tea About the Role of Functional Beverages in OCS and Pantry
- Taking Coffee Services Outside of the Office

Round Tables also offer peer-to-peer learning opportunities, where attendees can meet other operators and gain new perspectives.



*The NAMA Show trade show is always a hub for discovering new products, services and networking.*

## An Expansive Trade Show

Hundreds of leading companies representing the full range of vending, micro markets, kiosks, unattended retail, coffee services, pantry and self-service sectors of the convenience services industry are part of The NAMA Show 2022 trade show.

Their products and services include transformational technologies to help operators automate many aspects of their businesses such as self-service kiosks and payment solutions; advanced machinery; the latest candy, snacks and beverages; and a range of professional services to help convenience services businesses operate more efficiently.

*Attendees from The NAMA Show 2021 gained valuable knowledge from a range of education sessions; The NAMA Show 2022 offers even more education.*



### **Starbucks Roastery Tour Among Exciting Pre-Conference Sessions**

Attendees can get a head start on The NAMA Show experience on Tuesday, April 5 by adding a pre-conference session to their main event registration. Choose from these exciting programs:

#### **Starbucks Roastery Tour**

Take a tour of the spectacular Starbucks Roastery building in downtown Chicago, convenient to McCormick Place. Experience four floors of Starbucks ingenuity and architecture. The event includes an exclusive tasting with Starbucks partners, a Starbucks gift card and an Uber credit for transportation. Two one-hour tours of up to 30 people are offered at 1:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m.

#### **Selling Convenience Services: Strategies of Elite Performers**

Every operation's growth is dependent upon an effective sales team. Through a series of interactive exercises, industry veteran Bob Tullio, owner of Tullio B2B, will reveal key principles that are crucial for an effective sales program. This program is offered from 1:00-4:00 p.m.

The price for each session is \$199 for NAMA members and \$249 for non-members. Reserve your session when you register for The NAMA Show. 🌱

### **Networking Connections**

Personal interactions and connections established throughout The NAMA Show will create one-on-one learning opportunities, which are so valuable to the show experience.

The trade show floor is the prime venue for networking, and receptions for the Women in Industry and the Emerging Leaders Network provide more targeted networking forums.

#### **Register Today**

There is still time to register for The NAMA Show 2022.

#### **Learn more at:**

[www.thenamashow.org](http://www.thenamashow.org)

If you can't be there in person, NAMA offers a virtual option that includes networking opportunities. See the sidebar, "Your Virtual Option," on page 12 to learn more.



## THE NAMA SHOW SPONSORS LEAD THE WAY

NAMA thanks the many sponsors of The NAMA Show 2022. These companies make it possible to offer this robust event with the latest products, technology, services and insights.

### DIAMOND



### PLATINUM



### SILVER



### BRONZE







# NAMA Advocates for Convenience Services Industry in States Across the Nation

*By Nick Steingart, NAMA Director, State Affairs*

**T**his winter has been a busy time as lawmakers in 36 state legislatures gaveled into session. While legislatures have been historically less active on policy in Midterm election years, 2022 is shaping up to buck that trend.

States are redrawing congressional and state legislative lines as part of the once-per-decade redistricting process. The infrastructure bill signed by President Joe Biden in November 2021 will be largely allocated through states. Layer in the ongoing economic issues brought on and accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic — inflation, supply chain disruptions and the workforce shortage — and state lawmakers have plenty of challenges on their plates this year.

## Supply Chain and Workforce Solutions

To help address supply chain delays and the workforce shortage, NAMA continues to advocate at the federal and state level for policies that would bring more truck drivers into the transportation industry. To that end, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) included NAMA-supported language to allow 18-to-21-year-olds to drive trucks under enhanced safety protocols, an important step to address the estimated 80,000-driver shortage.

The IIJA will also distribute significant investments in projects that will provide long-term benefits to the convenience services industry. Funding for rail, roads and bridges, and expanded broadband access were included in the package,

and much of the newly appropriated \$552 billion will flow through states. NAMA will follow developments as governors and legislators determine funding priorities to ensure equitable benefits to these projects for our industry.

### Addressing Inflation

Inflation continues to be top-of-mind for many Americans — 56% of respondents in a recent *Wall Street Journal* poll said it was causing major or minor financial strain in their lives. States, especially those with budget surpluses and reserves, are looking to alleviate inflation pressures through targeted tax cuts.

Proposals to lower taxes on businesses and individuals have popped up across the nation, including a bill in Kansas that would eliminate the state's grocery tax and includes an exemption for items sold through vending machines. Virginia Governor Glenn Youngkin proposed a similar elimination of the grocery sales tax as one of his administration's top priorities for 2022.

### NAMA Action at the State Level

Beyond pandemic-induced issues, NAMA continues to make your voice heard in states by advocating for consistent vending and micro market regulations and sensible sustainability policies and by monitoring consumer privacy legislation.

In 2021, NAMA supported legislation in Alabama and Tennessee that brought clarity to micro market and unattended retail regulations by ensuring these locations are not subjected to licensing and inspection regulations that are intended for restaurants and establishments that prepare food on site. A total of 12 states have clarified this important distinction for regulatory purposes, and we look forward to working with lawmakers to expand this law to additional states in 2022.

Legislation aimed at reducing greenhouse gases, preserving natural resources and promoting recycling have gained momentum in recent years in statehouses, and 2022 shows no signs of slowing down. For the convenience services industry, issues such as hydro fluorocarbon phase-outs, bans on single-use plastics and more strict recycling regulations are at the forefront of the NAMA government affairs strategy.


State privacy laws continue to gain traction as well. Last year, 27 states proposed consumer privacy laws, many modeled on the California Consumer Privacy Act signed into law in 2018. Colorado and Virginia soon followed California's path, and already this year at least another 22 states along with the District of Columbia have proposed consumer privacy laws. Additional localities like Portland,

Oregon have banned the use of facial recognition technologies, while other state laws and local ordinances place certain requirements on establishments and operators regarding storing, securing and documenting data captured by these technologies.

NAMA faces a busy year ahead. Forty-six states will meet in legislative sessions in 2022 and it is anticipated that more than 100,000 bills will be introduced. But, despite the vast playing field, NAMA is ready to address today's challenges while also defending member interests when they are under threat.

Lawmakers are looking for creative answers to address pandemic-driven and longstanding issues that threaten America's recovery, and NAMA continues to offer proactive solutions and put the convenience services industry in a position of strength. From Congress to statehouses to local municipalities, NAMA embraces the opportunity to serve as the voice of the convenience services industry at all levels of government. 🌿

*To learn more about NAMA state advocacy or to get involved, contact me at [nsteingart@namanow.org](mailto:nsteingart@namanow.org).*




**SMART**

Managing your business doesn't have to be hard.  
We can help you work SMART.

- Field Service Management
- Asset and Inventory Tracking
- Contract and License Management
- SMART Mobile/SMART Portal
- Visibility of Operations
- Customer Relationship Management



Call today to set up a demo!

(844) 762-7802 |   SMART.Software



## NAMA Strategic Partnership Program Supporting Advocacy and Industry Research



**Craig Kushner**



**Joshua Wells**



**Tom Steuber**

**A**dvocacy and industry research are at the core of what NAMA and the NAMA Foundation do for NAMA members.

These two priorities foster a business environment and actionable intelligence that help the convenience services industry grow and prosper.

Many NAMA member companies have joined the NAMA and the NAMA Foundation Strategic Partner Program, which provides support for these initiatives.

Their support provides NAMA the opportunity to expand its proactive advocacy efforts and the NAMA Foundation the ability to support its mission to provide education and research to the industry, policymakers and other important stakeholders.

To learn more about the NAMA member perspective on the Strategic Partner Program, *InTouch* magazine interviewed three longtime Strategic Partners:

- Craig Kushner, President, Monumental Markets
- Tom Steuber, President, Associated Services

- Joshua J. Wells, Chief Operating Officer, American Food & Vending | American Dining Creations

### **Why did your company choose to become a NAMA Strategic Partner?**

**Kushner:** Our industry operates in a very fluid business and political environment. It is essential that NAMA continually generate the best business intelligence and research to use proactively in communicating with all our stakeholders. Protecting operator interests with policymakers is crucial to our business success.

**Wells:** As a third-generation family-owned company in the convenience services industry, we must invest in the long-term health of the industry. NAMA has demonstrated its leadership in ensuring the industry's health today and for generations to follow.

**Steuber:** We believe in NAMA's ability to help our industry by leveraging the research of the NAMA Foundation and through the advocacy that NAMA provides to its operator members. We wanted to add our support to make NAMA even more effective.



**What is the biggest challenge facing your company this year, and how is your NAMA involvement helping to address it?**

**Wells:** Challenges and opportunities confront us with labor availability, public health concerns and other government regulatory threats. With the combined voices of operators and manufacturers, NAMA's government relations apparatus is uniquely positioned to engage with public policy officials to ensure that our industry's voice is heard in this process.

**Steuber:** We are facing a historic downturn in the business climate in our region due to the pandemic and work-from-home policies implemented by our customers. NAMA is helping us through its government advocacy. From the beginning of the pandemic, when we were deemed to be an essential service, to now, when NAMA is working on the extension of the ERTC, NAMA has greatly helped us weather this storm.

**Kushner:** Like most other companies, labor shortages and the supply chain have presented significant hurdles for our company during the past year. Making our voices heard through the NAMA Fly-In & Advocacy Summit last fall was critical to helping turn these around, and that effort was underpinned by the powerful research generated by the NAMA Foundation.

**What would you say to a fellow industry leader who is considering becoming a NAMA Strategic Partner?**

**Steuber:** Becoming a Strategic Partner is an investment that really pays dividends. We need your help now more than ever.

**Kushner:** This program is essential for the convenience industry to succeed. All of us should consider the best way that our time, talent and resources can assist the collective interests that NAMA represents.

**Wells:** The leveraging effect of investment in NAMA is enormous. Any single NAMA-led success story — and there have been many — easily returns many times the investment.

NAMA Strategic Partners make five-year commitments at amounts that suit each donor. This consistent support over a period of years provides the ongoing support needed for research planning and an effective advocacy program. Current NAMA Strategic Partners are shown on the side bar. 🌈

*For more information about the NAMA and the NAMA Foundation Strategic Partner Program, contact NAMA Executive Vice President Eric Dell at [edell@namanow.org](mailto:edell@namanow.org).*

## NAMA Strategic Partners

### \$750,000+

The Coca-Cola Company

### \$250,000+

Canteen

### \$100,000+

Accent Food Services

Aramark Corporation

Vistar

### \$50,000+

365 Retail Markets

G&J Marketing and Sales, LLC

Mondelez International

Nestle Coffee Partners

Royal Cup Coffee & Tea

### \$25,000+

Associated Services

Buffalo Rock Company

Cantaloupe

Sodexo

VENDEGE

### \$10,000+

All Star Services, Inc.

American Food and Vending

Canteen of Coastal California

Flowers Foods/Mrs. Freshley's

Kimble's Food by Design

Monumental Markets

Pepsi Bottling Venture, LLC

Premier Broker Partners

Trolley House Refreshments

### \$5,000+

BUNN

ConAgra Brands

Five Star Food Service

Foley Foodservice

PrairieFire Coffee Roasters

Tomdra, Inc.



# D'Undre Lee Launches Vending Business at Age 17

By Ryan Rickard, Publishing Associate, Association Vision

**D**'Undre Lee is a senior at Newsome High School in Hillsborough County, Florida. At age 17, he has already started his own vending machine business by putting the time and effort in to bring his dreams to reality.

Lee runs Mo' Munchies Vending and is currently operating four vending machines and two drink machines at various locations in the Tampa, Florida region.

From business registration to equipment acquisition and maintenance, he conducted his own research and overcame both the typical and unexpected obstacles that come with entrepreneurship.

In our modern society, video games have become a staple of childhood experiences — learning the rules, focusing and building something. Lee was able to study the concepts illustrated in one his favorite video games and put consistent effort into something and make it better over time and learn how to apply that mindset to a goal in real life.

Lee took a prudent approach to starting the business, beginning with research online — browsing Google for tips, analyzing existing vending businesses on social media and employing the advice of those close to him.

"There are online courses out there that you can learn from, but ultimately if you search hard enough, or know the right people, you can find quality information for free," Lee says. "For me, these people included Candice Scotland with Horus Construction, Eric Graham at my county's Office of Supplier Diversity Department and Sonya Lowery, who have all been amazing in helping me grow my business."

"To start the business, research always came first," Lee explains. "I needed to find the requirements needed to run a business within my state/county. For me, that was registering Mo' Munchies through Sunbiz.org, obtaining my EIN number, and if you really want to get specific, signing up with county agencies to partner with larger locations for our vending machines."

"For my first vending machine, I saved up my own money by working for Publix and bought it through eBay. Although our sequential vending machines have been purchased through Extra Mile Vending, I still have the first snack machine and it has never caused any issues."

## Resources for Young Entrepreneurs

### All Terrain Brain

[www.allterrainbrain.org](http://www.allterrainbrain.org)

### Junior Biz

[www.juniorbiz.com](http://www.juniorbiz.com)

### Teen Business Forum

[www.teenbusinessforum.com](http://www.teenbusinessforum.com)

### YoungEntrepreneur.com

[www.youngentrepreneur.com](http://www.youngentrepreneur.com)

### Collegiate Entrepreneurs' Organization

[www.c-e-o.org](http://www.c-e-o.org)

### DECA

[www.deca.org](http://www.deca.org)

### Future Business Leaders of America

[www.fbbla-pbl.org](http://www.fbbla-pbl.org)

### Global Entrepreneurship Week

[www.unleashingideas.org](http://www.unleashingideas.org)

### Mind Your Own Business

[www.mindyourownbiz.org](http://www.mindyourownbiz.org)

### Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship

[www.nfte.com](http://www.nfte.com)

### Students in Free Enterprise

[www.sife.org](http://www.sife.org)

### Youth Venture

[www.youthventure.org](http://www.youthventure.org)

### Youth About Business

[www.youthaboutbusiness.org](http://www.youthaboutbusiness.org)

### Independent Youth

[www.independentyouth.org](http://www.independentyouth.org)

Source: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED515591.pdf>

***"If you begin with excellence, you have to continue and finish in an excellent way. The best thing about starting strong is that it pushes you to continue to be great!"***

Using his own money to start the business, Lee said there were unexpected expenses he didn't account for such as a credit card reader for cashless payments and coins for the machines. With a few hundred dollars from his family, he set up his first location for about \$2,300.

Finding locations wasn't easy, facing rejection from many prospective locations at the beginning. But Lee stayed vigilant until the right opportunity came up. He explains, "After about a month of speaking to people at what I thought were good vending machine locations, a friend of my mom's reached out to us, informing us that their real estate office would like a snack vending machine. That is how it all began. Now that I have a little bit of experience in the vending industry, the process of finding quality locations to place vending machines has become less demanding."

Lee spends about 20-25 hours per month filling vending machines, and another 25-30 hours per month packing and ordering products, filling inventory through NAYAX software, finding new locations and other various business activities.

Lee handles all aspects of the business, including coordinating with location owners about machine conditions and repairs. While rare, if repairs are needed,

he has the right plans in place to get them professionally serviced quickly.

"Vendor's Choice has been working with us since the beginning, and their technicians are very knowledgeable and have a lot of experience in the vending market," he says.

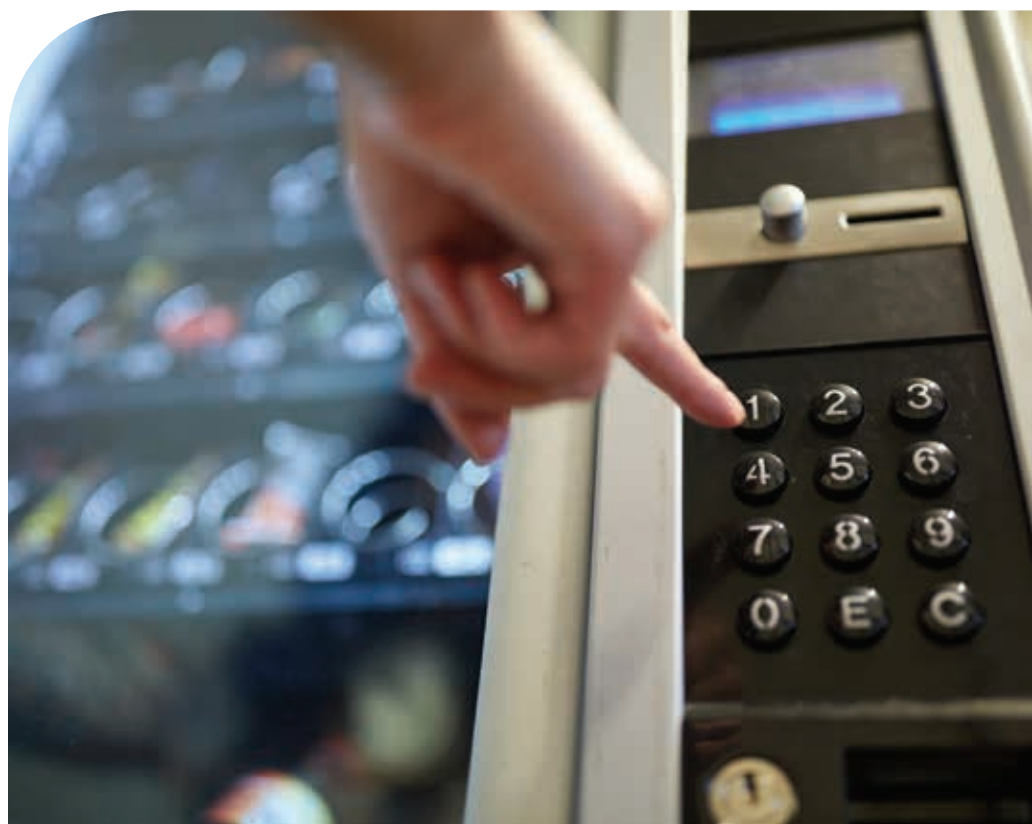
Lee notes that a big part of the business is being able to assess the best potential locations. "Foot traffic, visibility of the vending machine(s) and the hours and days of operation are all important factors when searching for vending machine locations," Lee explains.

Given his early start and current success, he is on a good track to continue the development of his business and expand both his knowledge and his profit potential as he continues to further his efforts with Mo' Munchies Vending.

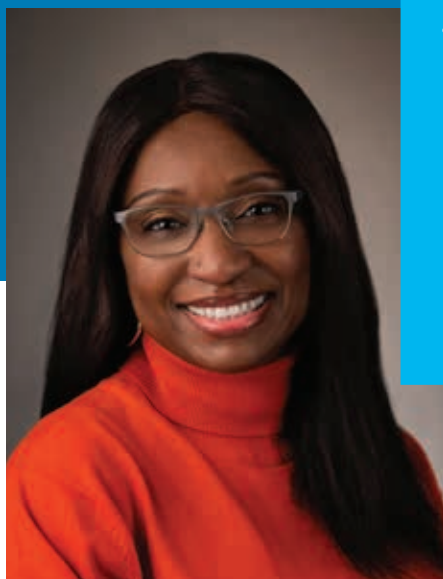
Lee says that his faith in God helped him succeed, and his mother, and older brother, Darnell have helped with many business tasks.

"In my youthful experience, I believe the biggest challenge in running a business is remaining consistent within one's level of service," Lee says. "If you begin with excellence, you have to continue and finish in an excellent way. The best thing about starting strong is that it pushes you to continue to be great!"

Lee was also happy to learn about NAMA and wants to learn more about how it can help him grow his business. 🌿







HELLO

*I'm Bren Benjamin*

*Business Operator/Administrator, TFL Vending, LLC*

*WIN (Women In the Industry) Member*



*How did you get into the convenience services industry?*

I began working at TFL Vending, LLC in 2020 after being asked by the owner (Flen Purvis) to handle day-to-day operations. The company was growing rapidly, and to keep up I quickly jumped in and got to work.

*Give us an overview of your role and key responsibilities.*

My role requires me to keep up with the accounts on a day-to-day basis. This includes preparing and organizing information for each account, setting up meetings to keep the needs of the accounts front and center, assisting with company queries and maintaining the mission statement of TFL Vending to ensure exceptional customer service.

*What are the skills you use most in your career?*

Skills that I use the most in this career are exceptional communication, being detailed oriented, having a keen sense of company goals and exceptional reporting skills that provide transparency during meetings.

*What are the biggest challenges you face in your business?*

The biggest challenge my company faces is competing with another company that has been around for 43 years. That company has an established brand and we are new. We have been able to handle that by exceeding the expectations of our customers, which has led to us being recommended to others. We have innovated our approach to every account and risen to become number one in our market. We have also introduced micro markets and are not afraid to take risks and bring our accounts up to speed.

*What are the greatest opportunities?*

The greatest opportunities of vending are being able to get locations and show what TFL Vending can do for the morale of people who work in these

locations. Also being able to partner with new brands that are not available in the area to showcase exciting foods. We also give to charities that our customers support.

*How has COVID-19 impacted your life and business?*

COVID-19 has impacted us since our locations have many employees and had to shut down for quarantine periods. Also we were not able to get some of the best-selling products due to back orders. To address the supply chain issue, we partnered with logistics companies TFL Enterprises, LLC and FEI Transportation to pick up product instead of waiting for deliveries. We also started a campaign at each location to pick up sells and keep each account happy.

*What are your personal and professional goals?*

My personal goal is to get more involved in Women in the Industry (WIN) to be able to share and gain new ideas. My professional goal is to get TFL Vending more accounts and become more innovative in the industry.

***“We have innovated our approach to every account and risen to become number one in our market. We have also introduced micro markets and are not afraid to take risks and bring our accounts up to speed.”***

***Tell us about the most memorable work experience you’ve had.***

My most memorable work experience was being able to attend The NAMA Show with Flen and learn about the latest innovations in the vending industry. Not only was this eye-opening but also exciting to network with others in the industry and join WIN.

***What is one thing you learned in the last month?***

One thing I learned in the last month is to stop doubting myself and get comfortable with taking losses. With the world in a pandemic, you can easily become lost in the “what ifs.” We must plan as best as we can and take the bumps as they come.

***What advice would you offer young people starting their careers in this industry?***

Research, research, research and study, study, study! Join NAMA and any other vending organizations. Also get a mentor because this is an industry that is ever-growing and if you think it is just about snacks and drinks you are moving BACKWARDS!

***What is a favorite piece of advice you received that has helped you in your professional career?***

Although you are starting off small, make sure you get the locations you have right before you move up in quantity. Be sure to maximize every opportunity you can and maintain it.

This business is not about money; it is about longevity.

***What is the value of participating in WIN?***

The value of participating in this group is hearing the perspectives of other women in the group and learning how they maneuver in this industry. WIN allows me to gain education about convenience services and be able to assist in a variety of WIN projects that can help the industry excel.

***What is something about you that not many people know?***

I have a great sense of humor, and I have a green thumb. I have over 40 plants! I need a greenhouse! 🌿

# Welcome!

**TO OUR  
NEWEST MEMBERS**

**GLOBE VENDING**

**DEFINITIVE TECHNOLOGY GROUP**

Questions? Contact NAMA's Membership Department at  
888.337.8363 or [members@namanow.org](mailto:members@namanow.org).



 **HELLO**

*I'm Mark West*

*Vice President Sales & Marketing,  
West Dairy Inc., dba Canteen Berks County*

*Bachelor's degree in Business Administration  
(Management Concentration) from Millersville University  
NAMA Executive Development Program, ELN Member, Tri State  
Automatic Merchandising Council Board of Director*



*How did you get into the convenience services industry?*

I grew up in the industry as a third-generation member of our family business. My childhood was heavily influenced by the business, and I worked part time while growing up. When I graduated college in 2010, I joined the company full time by taking over an open warehouse manager position.

*Give us an overview of your role and key responsibilities.*

My focus is on developing new business along with key account retention. As a family company, I am also flexible with wearing many hats and helping out in every facet of our operation.

*What are the skills you use most in your career?*

Creative problem solving is the skill I use most in my career. There are always

new challenges and opportunities in this industry, and figuring out the best ways to serve our customers is my priority. Listening is crucial while trying to find the right solutions between our internal operations team and our customer experience.

*What do you believe are the biggest challenges you face in your business?*

The biggest challenges we face are evolving government policies, rules and regulations, especially regarding COVID-19.

*What are the greatest opportunities?*

The greatest opportunities are coming from the evolving product offerings and consumer trends. This wider selection is helping us increase customer satisfaction as we bring a broader audience to our services.

*How has COVID-19 impacted your life and business?*

COVID-19 has created a lot of difficulties both personally and professionally. It forced us to get laser-focused as a company, and make sure we are operating as efficiently as possible. That energy helped us survive through

the early days of the shutdowns and allowed us to grow and adapt as the world opened back up.

*What are your personal and professional goals?*

Continuous growth and improvement are core values of mine. I want to work on improving my core skills, along with gaining more industry and operational knowledge.

*Tell us about the most memorable work experience you've had.*

My most memorable work experience was installing our first micro market. We had all hands on deck. However, many problems arose. Figuring out on the fly how to navigate all the challenges that came up made it a rewarding and memorable moment.

*What's one thing you learned in the last month?*

This past month I learned to take a breath after completing a task. This has helped both personally and professionally. Specifically for work, this allows a moment for a final examination with fresh eyes.



*What advice would you offer young people starting their careers in this industry?*

Make sure to learn all facets of the business, regardless of your job title. It is very important in this industry to have a variety of skills, and knowing how the whole puzzle fits together will help you excel in any role.

*What's a favorite piece of advice you've received that has helped you in your professional career?*

There is a Vince Lombardi quote I have had in big bold letters on my desk for years, "The quality of a person's life is in direct proportion to their commitment

to excellence, regardless of their chosen field of endeavor."

*What is the value of participating in the Emerging Leaders Network (ELN)?*

There is tremendous value in the ELN group being able to learn and exchange ideas with other members. It is helpful to hear what they are experiencing in different regions and roles. That helps you understand the industry as a whole.

*What is something about you that not many people know?*

I gave my son his middle name, "Dawkins," based on my favorite athlete, Brian Dawkins, a former Philadelphia Eagle. 🦅

***"The greatest opportunities are coming from the evolving product offerings and consumer trends. This wider selection is helping us increase customer satisfaction as we bring a broader audience to our services."***

**HOLIDAY HOUSE**  
DISTRIBUTING

*Come See Us!*

NAMA SHOW, CHICAGO  
**BOOTH# 1033**

INFO@HHDONLINE.COM | HHDONLINE.COM

SCD 2CB5 2FC H5KP10 H5KP3 KW4G PGLDF



## NAMA Special Interest Groups Provide Excellent Networking

**T**he value of NAMA for networking with members who share common roles and interests has been reinforced during the past year by the exponential growth in three Special Interest Groups (SIGs). More than 30 NAMA members are members of one or more SIGs.

SIGs are member-led groups organized around areas of professional interest. They offer a forum for peer-to-peer learning in a small-group atmosphere.

The three NAMA SIGs include:

- **Human Resources/Hiring & Retention** — For specialists who deal with organization-wide issues like staff management, organizational culture and hiring.
- **Purchasing Managers/Warehouse Managers** — For professionals who oversee the receiving and shipping of goods and process purchase orders and requisitions for materials.
- **Service Managers** — For those whose area of expertise is diagnosing problems and making repairs.

"SIGs are an opportunity for NAMA to reach into organizations so they can get their human resources folks, service managers, purchasing managers, warehouse managers and other leaders to start participating in NAMA," says NAMA SIGs Task Force Chair Scott Halloran, chief executive officer of Trolley House Refreshments, Inc.

To provide a convenient forum for networking participation, NAMA created "SIG-a-Palooza" virtual events in 2021.

"We held our first SIG-a-Palooza roundtable event on December 14 and another one on February 1," Halloran explains. "Both events drew many people to the discussions in each of the three areas, and they had lively and informative discussions. I think every person got at least one new idea by participating."

It is easy to join a SIG, and there is no additional cost beyond the regular NAMA membership fee.

Visit [www.namanow.org/network/sig-a-palooza](http://www.namanow.org/network/sig-a-palooza) to learn more or email [events@namanow.org](mailto:events@namanow.org).

**LICHTMAN AND ASSOCIATES, INC.**

**Jo Ann Lichtman**

Manufacturer's Representative for Vending, OCS, and Micro Market Products

2019 Forest Creek Lane  
Libertyville, Illinois 60048

(847) 680-4790 Tel  
(847) 680-4796 Fax  
(847) 826-9530 Cell

[joann@lichtmanandassociates.com](mailto:joann@lichtmanandassociates.com)

**Saverino & Associates, Inc.**



**Frank Saverino Sr.**  
Founder - CEO

Ph 630-868-2626  
Cell 708-373-4376  
800-242-6036 Ext. 626  
Fax 630-563-2812

538 Randy Road  
Carol Stream, IL 60188-2122  
[FrankSr@TeamSaverino.com](mailto:FrankSr@TeamSaverino.com)  
[www.TeamSaverino.com](http://www.TeamSaverino.com)

Sales & Marketing Specialists

**PROMOTE  
YOUR BRAND  
AND BE SEEN**

**\$25 BILLION+**

THE U.S. CONVENIENCE SERVICES INDUSTRY  
IS WORTH MORE THAN \$25 BILLION.



For more information,  
contact E&M at p. 800.572.0011  
[advertising@emconsultinginc.com](mailto:advertising@emconsultinginc.com)

# InTouch

The Official Magazine of NAMA

Published quarterly, *InTouch* magazine is a one-stop-shop for convenience services industry news written for professionals in the field. As a recognized industry publication with established readership and trusted content, it makes a targeted impact. Advertise directly to your peers and get noticed.

**18,000+**

*InTouch* magazine reaches more than 18,000 operators, suppliers, and manufacturers, distributors, and brokers of vending, coffee service, and micro market products.

**\$9.4 BILLION+**

Vending and micro markets as well as coffee and pantry services jobs account for more than \$9.4 billion in wages.

**159,000+**

The convenience services industry provides more than 159,000 jobs nationally.

