



LEADING FOOD INDUSTRY RETAILERS

Embrace the Retail Management Certificate

By Linda Duffy

For the Western Association of Food Chains (W AFC), education has always been a strategic tool that supports its companies' challenges. Since the W AFC's inception in 1921, their primary mission has been to provide industry-related educational opportunities that ensure each company's workforce has the leadership skills needed for success in grocery retail.

In 2000, this non-profit organization, led by senior food industry executives representing over 7500 food retail and wholesale stores in the Western US--459 of them in Arizona--launched a program to meet the challenge of creating well-qualified managers. The resulting industry-driven program, called the Retail Management Certificate (RMC), is comprised of coursework provided by over 150 community colleges in both traditional and on-line formats. In Arizona, the certificate is offered at almost every community college in the state. With its recent re-validation in 2013, the certificate continues to offer the most robust and relevant content possible, closely aligned with skills and competencies needed in today's retail industry.

Several AFMA member companies have embraced the W AFC's Retail Management Certificate as a critical tool for developing knowledgeable and passionate employees who see the bigger picture of the grocery industry and are prepared to step into leadership positions. Three of these companies, Albertsons, Fry's, and Bashas'; believe so strongly in the value of this program that their presidents serve on the board of the W AFC, and also offer board leadership to AFMA. Each of these companies' presidents is at the W AFC board table to make key decisions regarding the program, knowing Arizona's future industry talent is directly affected.

ALBERTSONS: Education is the Basis for Success

Albertsons recognizes the challenges that face their company in today's market, and knows that to be successful, associates must be prepared for the current and future demands of the job. Their answer to the dilemma of best equipping associates and future leaders is education. "Education is the backbone of business," states Shane Dorcheus, President of Albertsons Southwest Division. "Without the knowledge required to move forward as an industry, it's difficult to understand or act on our customers' needs." Albertsons benefits from the W AFC's Retail Management Certificate program as it provides the insight and expertise their employees need to become better associates and managers for the company. According to Natalie Murphy, Education Manager for Albertsons' Phoenix Division, "Participants in the Certificate Program come away with a detailed knowledge of business and greater self confidence that leads to promotion opportunities."

This year, Albertsons aims to more than double the number of associates involved in the program. In an

innovative move to do just that, this company has selected a Retail Management Certificate graduate to become their "Champion" for the program. This champion's focus is guiding, encouraging, and mentoring those employees pursuing the certificate. With several employees just courses away from completion, Albertsons looks forward to the increased knowledge and skill these students will contribute to their success.

FRY'S: Focused Education Cultivates Leadership

Creating strong leaders is key for Fry's, and in seeking to find educational opportunities that offer associates career development in leadership, "we have found the W AFC Retail Management Certificate Program to be an invaluable resource," asserts Fry's President, Steve McKinney. Under McKinney's leadership and with the support of parent company, Kroger; Fry's employees are encouraged to take advantage of this industry-focused education which gives them an edge in the opportunities for success within the company. "Specific emphasis on our industry is hard to find," adds Joe Bands, Talent Manager for Fry's, "yet this program exemplifies the qualities and skills we want our leaders to have."

Because Fry's so fully believes in the professional benefits employees receive upon completing the Retail Management program, it now scholarships program courses for any employee with six or more months of service. Together with the constant exposure employees receive through internal TV, newsletters, texts, and associate activities, Fry's expects to add 50 employees to the program by the end of the year from which they expect to develop and replenish their candidate pool of future leaders.

BASHAS': Investing in Our People Pays Dividends

"Our employees are our biggest asset," maintains Edward "Trey" Basha, President and CEO of Bashas' Family of Stores. "Not only do we see the value of the W AFC Retail Management program, but they do as well," he adds. According to Don Adams, Human Resource Director, the education employees receive through the program enhances their professional prospects at Bashas'. This company wants well-rounded managers. "The curriculum provides breadth, helping managers who gravitate toward merchandising to also develop leadership, human resources and communication skills," states Adams in explanation and support of the program's comprehensive coursework. "And those who tend to delegate computer work are learning how to independently and successfully use computer applications." Adam's also points out that the classes allow associates to experience the benefits of working together to meet goals, pushing each other to excel.

Recognizing the value of this education for their

employees, Bashas'—like Fry's and Albertsons—offers scholarships to associates pursuing the W AFC-endorsed Retail Management Certificate. One of Bashas' 64 graduates, Matt Ullman, is now a Store Director in Surprise, Arizona. Matt feels very fortunate to work for a company that truly invests in its members. "The company obviously benefits with higher skilled employees, but their investment also creates a loyalty that is very hard to come by in today's environment."

Success starts with people. Education fosters success. Get started today! For more information about the W AFC-endorsed Retail Management Program, go to www.retailmanagementcertificate.com.

"The W AFC-endorsed Retail Management Certificate is a great way to help our employees at Albertsons reach and maintain their career objectives while also bringing new insights to our company."



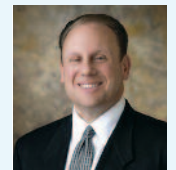
—Shane Dorcheus,
President, Albertsons Southwest
Division

"At Fry's, we believe strongly in the value of continuing education. We encourage our members to take advantage of the education they receive through the W AFC's excellent Retail Management Certificate program. For many it becomes a life-changing experience."



—Steve McKinney,
President, Fry's Food Stores

"We're proud that so many Bashas' members have taken advantage of the Retail Management program. We have seen it help our workforce become more successful on the job, providing the skills that a career in retail demands."



—Edward "Trey" Basha,
President and CEO of Bashas' Family of
Stores.