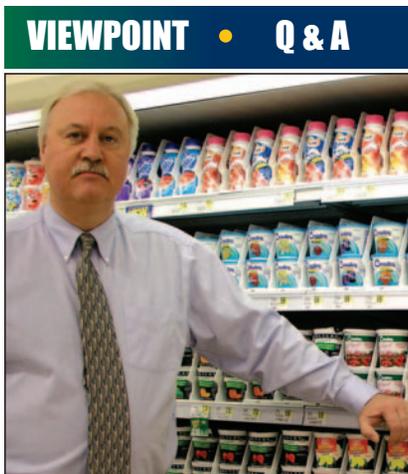




Interview with **Ron Godowski**, of **Gerrity's Supermarkets**

Creating the fixtures that make retail store operations efficient and profitable



Over a century ago, in 1895, William Gerrity opened a small meat shop in Scranton, PA, and he called it "Gerrity's Market." Today, that business is a thriving eight-store supermarket chain and, while the scope has broadened from selling meat, its reputation for excellence continues.

"Where MOM'S Always in Charge!" is the advertising slogan for Gerrity's, and that's because the company is run by Joyce Fasula, whose husband, Neal, operated the business from the 1970s until passing away in 1997. Neal, who started at Gerrity's in 1964 as a delivery boy, eventually became a partner and took over after William Gerrity's son, Joseph, retired.

Joyce and her oldest son, Joseph, are now in charge of a business that's thrived over the years because local people know they can count on it for good quality, fair prices, and most of all, freshness.

"We're known for our perishables and our in-store bakeries, and we have an extensive deli," said Ron Godowski, the company's grocery, dairy and frozen food supervisor, buyer and merchandiser. To learn even more, Progressive Grocer interviewed Godowski at length.

To learn more about Gerrity's Supermarkets, visit www.gerritys.com.
To learn more about Trion Industries,
Visit www.triononline.com or call 800-444-4665.

Q. What is Gerrity's doing to build on its strengths and better merchandise to its customer base?

A. "We have a rationale for what we do and how we market. Our history is based on quality and freshness, starting first with meat, and now with all of our perishable products—and that includes dairy."

"And disheveled displays in fresh, meat and perishables just don't sell." Godowski said, "That's not the kind of impression we want to make with our customers. So we strive to implement an attractive, clean, shopable approach to product presentation. In Dairy this has included new installations of Trion's Adjustable Merchandising Tray™ (AMT™). These AMTs help promote sales and are a real time-saver for us with labor."

According to Trion Industries, AMT's come in two adjustable-width sizes designed for yogurts, tubs, bottles, ice cream, and other difficult to organize products including items like instant soup cups in center store. There is built-in manual feed for trouble-free forwarding and facing and molded in handles allow trays to lift out easily for cleaning and restocking.

Q. What are the advantages of the Adjustable Merchandising Tray?

A. It is certainly customer friendly because of the way it divides and contains the yogurt. It makes it easy for our customers to find what they want as they shop the case. It automatically billboards flavors across the shelf for easy selection. Our customers love it.

Q. Have you found the Adjustable Merchandising Tray solution to be efficient?

A. Stocking the case is much faster with AMT. I believe we will see substantial savings in labor. It allows us to do a better job of rotating the product, which means there will be less waste, less out-of-date product, fresher purchases and happier customers.

We don't have to empty the case, then put in new product, and then place the older product in front anymore. That's over. AMT allows us to automatically stock new product at the rear, and forward dated product automatically for immediate sale.

Plus AMT corrals the stock, so customers cannot easily grab items from the rear messing up displays and short-circuiting stock rotation.

Q. Do you like the appearance that the AMT provides in the case?

A. The case always looks full because AMT is so easy to use—you simply walk by and pull the slide forward to give the case a full-faced "wall" effect. The customers can even pull the manual feed and face the product themselves.

You save an incredible amount of time in managing the case. When you have well-faced, highly visible product presentation that capitalizes on an item's appeal to the consumer, that can't help but increase sales.

Q. Have you actually seen increases in yogurt sales?

A. Absolutely. My dairy man tells me that he's having a tough time keeping the case filled because of sales

increases. Even though because of the individual dividers, we lose a few facings – maybe 2 or 3 facings over a 12-foot section—the increased sales have more than made up for that.

Q. Why did Gerrity's decide to use the AMTs?

A. We like to be a leader. Yes, we are a small, family owned-and operated chain—just eight stores. But we like to get the upper hand over our competitors whenever that is possible, and we believe the AMT gives us that little bit of an edge. In our market we must compete against a full range of competitors from deep-discount warehouse clubs to super-premium gourmet-like groceries. So we leverage any advantage we can to better serve and appeal to customers while increasing our own efficiencies. We are always eager for new ideas that hold promise.

Q. Do you feel there is a good return on investment?

A. Absolutely. The savings involve less labor expense for keeping shelves properly stocked, less spoilage because of reduced out-of-date product, and on top of that, we are experiencing higher sales.

Q. So what's your conclusion?

A. We are very happy with the AMT. It's providing all of the benefits that were promised, both in terms of cost savings, as well as providing significant advantages for promotions and merchandising. Plus, it is easy to use and maintain. And, we like the idea of having that little bit of an edge that we think the AMT provides."