

HOMEWORLD[®] BUSINESS

INSIDE



Supermarket Report

According to a recent Harris Poll, Publix is the number one supermarket chain in its southern region. Find out how the company's customer service philosophy has kept it a key supermarket player in its region despite growing competition, and has helped to drive its successful growth strategies.

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“Publix is the store that knows the most and cares the most about the products we sell and the people we serve. Knowing and caring is the essence of the Publix brand.”

—Ed Crenshaw,
Publix

The **PLAYERS**

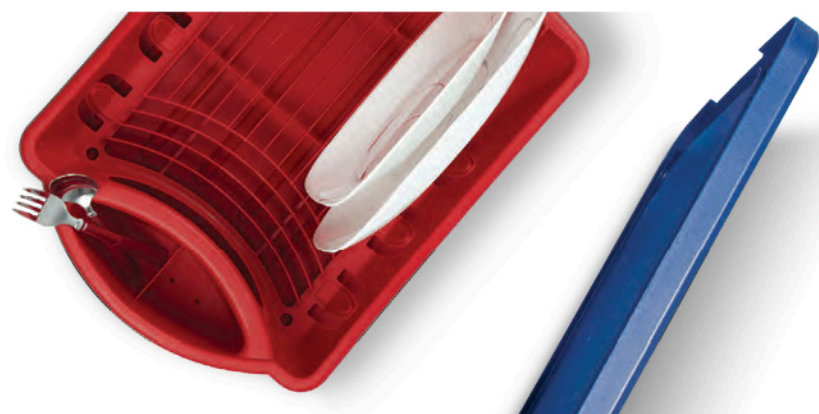
People to Watch in 2015

The figures in the HOMEWORLD BUSINESS[®] ninth annual “The Players” issue are expected to have a significant impact on the housewares industry going forward. See inside for this year’s diverse housewares all-star team.

PROFILES BEGIN ON PAGE 11



★★★★★
“I was thrilled to read they are American made.”



75
YEARS



Made In USA





Lina Hu
Clipper Corp.
Founder and CEO

PLAYER'S CREDENTIALS: When Clipper Corp. founder and CEO Lina Hu arrived in the United States in 1994, she barely spoke English. The language barrier prevented her from getting waitressing or even dishwasher jobs in U.S. restaurants. However, going from restaurant to restaurant in her "dream country," she saw an opportunity, and acted on that, Hu told HOMEWORLD BUSINESS®. These restaurants needed cookware and supplies. "I'm going to start my own company to provide cookware for restaurants," Hu decided.

Clipper Corp. quickly became a staple commercial kitchenware supplier, with success spurred on by the company's high-quality products and exemplary customer service, she said. "One of the things I'm most proud of is our long-term relationships with clients," Hu said.

Knowing she could leverage that level of customer service and quality in the retail market, Hu launched Clipper-branded cookware in 2013, and entered a licensing agreement with high-end appliance company Viking to bring cookware, bakeware and cutlery back under that brand in early 2014. "It is very exciting to expand on a brand like Viking. It has the benefit of brand recognition," Hu said.

WHAT TO WATCH: With Viking branded cookware and bakeware just now reaching retail shelves, Clipper's goal is to become a kitchenware brand leader. With the next licensing agreement already underway, Hu said her goal for the company is to build a "cohesive family of brands" covering everything in the kitchen. "Clipper brings commercial quality to the consumer kitchen," Hu said. "Viking gave us the license because of Clipper's reputation for a high-quality product." Hu is now working to expand that "high quality" to other brands and other areas of the kitchen.

PERSPECTIVE: From the founding of Clipper Corp. to the company's ambitious plans to be a retail kitchenware brand leader, Hu believes in setting her goals and then working toward them. "If you try, you will have a 50% chance of success but if you don't try, you will have a 100% chance of failure," Hu said. "If you have a goal and believe in yourself and are passionate, persistent, committed and dedicated, you can achieve anything and you will be successful."

—Diane Falvey



Paula Deen
Celebrity Chef

PLAYER'S CREDENTIALS: Celebrity chef Paula Deen had been heating up TV airwaves and retail store shelves with a lineup of kitchenware, foods and cookbooks through much of the last decade. Then, in 2013, during a lawsuit deposition, Deen admitted to using a racial slur. The information went public and cost Deen her Food Network show, some of her endorsement deals and placement on retail shelves. However, for the fans and the companies that stuck with Deen, it appears that loyalty is about to be rewarded.

Earlier this year, Deen struck a \$75 million deal with Najafi Media, to develop her own company, Paula Deen Ventures. Through the new venture, the Southern chef has developed an online subscriber-based network to deliver programming, recipes and exclusive video and content to her followers. In addition, Paula Deen Live!, a cross-country live tour, which kicked off in July, is putting Deen back in front of fans prior to the network launch late next month.

WHAT TO WATCH: Deen's new venture appears to have been met with enthusiasm from her fans. "The fans' reactions to both Paula Deen Live! and the Paula Deen Network have been just fantastic. We sold out our first two shows," Deen said. She added that fans have expressed enthusiasm for the upcoming network format on social media as well. The Paula Deen Network makes its official launch on September 24.

Deen's return to the stage and airwaves features an online shopping component and will likely be followed by additional licensed products from the companies that have continued to support Deen, such as Meyer Corp. Meyer has developed a comprehensive cookware, kitchenware and tabletop program under the Paula Deen brand.

PERSPECTIVE: Deen is moving forward on her own terms, she said, utilizing programming that has been designed as an on-demand and interactive platform that connects her with her fan base and provides an outlet for her particular cooking expertise and personality. "I can't wait to crank up the oven and get cooking for the people I love: my family, my friends and my fans," Deen said.

—Diane Falvey



Craig Menear
The Home Depot
President, U.S. Retail

PLAYER'S CREDENTIALS: Craig Menear is a 34-year retail veteran who has steadily risen through The Home Depot's merchandising ranks to his current position as president of U.S. retail, a promotion announced earlier this year, from evp/merchandising. Analysts have speculated that Menear could be one possible successor to Home Depot chairman and CEO, Frank Blake, when he retires. Prior to joining Home Depot in 1997 as a merchandising manager, Menear held various merchandising posts at Ikea and other retailers. In his new role, Menear will add responsibility for all U.S. store operations, along with his leadership in merchandising departments, services and strategy, the supply chain, global sourcing, vendor management, marketing and online sales.

WHAT TO WATCH: Home Depot has continued to boost sales as the housing market has rebounded. In addition to its established base of professional customers, the retailer has shown a renewed do-it-yourself spirit with the home consumer. Watch for a reenergized emphasis on housewares and home décor, as well as merchandising that is geared toward female purchasers. Menear has played a key role in the expansion of portable lighting resources. Housewares merchandising also stands to benefit from an expanded showroom of appliances, including KitchenAid, and design innovation, such as an assortment of smart home connected products launched in partnership with Wink.

Connecting with the consumer through improved service, developing vendor partnerships and working closely with brands has been a key emphasis for Menear. Home Depot has also expanded its e-commerce, delivery services and order management systems, efforts that aim to reinforce its interconnected retail platforms.

PERSPECTIVE: "We continue to invest in our stores, and our new customer order management system will be rolled out to all U.S. stores by the end of the year," said Menear. "We continue to bring new and innovative products to market, and we are adding KitchenAid to our appliance assortment, which will be available in select stores and online by the end of the second quarter."

—Matthew Kramer