

*CStore Decisions Introduces the C-Store Industry's 2022 Class of 40 Under 40 Leaders to Watch.*

A CStore Decisions Staff Report

**C-store retailers have faced** several challenges in 2022, from labor shortages, continued supply chain issues, a lingering pandemic, mounting inflation, a gas price surge in summer, tobacco and vape regulations, and ongoing digital disruption. Headwinds, including a potential recession, the rise of electric vehicle charging, fast-moving technological changes and a growing customer demand for foodservice fare, are requiring c-store leaders to consider new strategies to stay competitive in the future.

Next-generation leaders are crucial for helping convenience store businesses evolve, address challenges in new ways and modernize for tomorrow.

On the following pages, CStore Decisions introduces the 2022 class of 40 Under 40 Leaders to Watch. The 40 Under 40 is an annual list of the convenience store industry's young executive leaders, who have been responsible for helping to advance their business within the last 12 months. This year we received more than 100 nominations for this prestigious list.

The 40 young executive retailers that follow represent some of the most promising young executives in the industry today, selected from chains of all sizes across the country. They include a range of titles, from director of operations to category manager to chief financial officer, to name a few. This year's 40 Under 40 were honored in a virtual gala on Dec. 1, which can be viewed on demand at [Wtwh.me/40under402022](https://Wtwh.me/40under402022).

Among the 40 Under 40 are members of The National Advisory Group's (NAG) Young Executives Organization (YEO), a group for young executives that provides an opportunity for education and networking with other young executives in the competitive c-store channel.

The official nomination period for the 40 Under 40 runs from early August to late September. Watch for e-blasts from CStore Decisions requesting nominations. Those interested in nominating young leaders for next year's 40 Under 40 or joining YEO can also contact CStore Decisions' Editor-in-Chief and NAG Executive Director John Lofstock at [jllofstock@wtwhmedia.com](mailto:jllofstock@wtwhmedia.com).

**KRISTINA ANDERSON, 37**

Chief Service Officer

**Company:**

Midwest Petroleum Co.

**C-Store Chain Name:**

Midwest Petroleum Co.

**Headquarters:**

St. Louis

**Number of Stores: 59**

**Years With the Company: 5**



Kristina Anderson began her career path at age 15 by working for a fast-food chain. She was promoted to manager while in college at age 19. After time spent as a stay-at-home mom, Anderson took on a human resources (HR) role and was promoted to operations manager where she was able to tie her past operational knowledge from the quick-service industry to her growing HR knowledge. She took on various HR roles before joining Midwest Petroleum Co. and growing into the HR director role. She was honored to continue to grow into the chief service officer role last year, where she manages the internal shared services of the company, including the HR, information technology (IT), maintenance, construction, transportation and petroleum construction departments.

**In your opinion, what is the biggest issue facing convenience stores today?** "I believe the biggest issue facing the c-store industry today is finding and retaining qualified retail team members that are intentional about delivering excellent customer service."



**RYAN ARNOLD, 36**

Vice President of Marketing

**Company:** Road Ranger  
**C-Store Chain Name:** Road Ranger  
**Headquarters:** Schaumburg, Ill.  
**Number of Stores:** 44  
**Years With the Company:** 11

Right out of college Ryan Arnold joined the c-store industry working as a category manager in foodservice for Road Ranger. In this role, he was in charge of developing and rolling out Dan’s Big Slice Pizza Program, which is still in place today and the staple for Road Ranger’s foodservice offerings. After the success of the pizza program, he was given the opportunity to manage all foodservice for the company. To gain more experience managing the rest of the categories he spent time in center store, cigarettes and other tobacco products, trucker merchandise, general merchandise and electronics.



In 2018 he accepted the role of vice president of marketing. His role spans many areas inside marketing and merchandising from store design and layout to merchandising tactics to loyalty-related programs, just to name a few.

**What do you think today’s young executives bring to the table?**

“I think young professionals provide a fresh take on old practices, innovative strategies and bring a creative energy to the industry.”

**JOE BORTNER, 33**

Senior Category Manager

**Company:** Rutter’s  
**C-Store Chain Name:** Rutter’s  
**Headquarters:** York, Pa.  
**Number of Stores:** 82  
**Years With the Company:** 7

Joe Bortner joined Rutter’s in 2016 as the category manager for candy and snacks. Over the years, he expanded the categories he managed to include all center store categories and bakery. Once he was promoted to his current role as senior category manager, he also added packaged beverages to his portfolio. He also oversees the merchandising team for all Rutter’s stores.



**What do you think today’s young executives bring to the table?** “Young executives bring a fresh perspective to an ever-evolving industry.”



**JEFFREY CARPENTER, 36**

Director of Education and Training

**Company:** Clifford’s Sunrise to Sunset Markets Inc.  
**C-Store Chain Name:** Cliff’s Local Market  
**Headquarters:** Marcy, N.Y.  
**Number of Stores:** 20  
**Years With the Company:** 4

As the director of education and training for Cliff’s Local Market, Jeff Carpenter oversees training and education, oversight and support of human resources (HR), program development for stores and project management. Carpenter’s parents owned c-stores, and he held a store-level position with Nice N Easy Grocery Shoppes while attending Syracuse University. He holds a master’s in education and started his career as a high school science teacher. Carpenter wanted to teach within the c-store industry and was offered a training position at Nice N Easy by Founder John MacDougall. He went on to oversee HR and transitioned to similar roles with the CST Brands and Circle K acquisitions. Carpenter was then recruited to further develop the Cliff’s organization.



**What is the biggest challenge for young executives today?**

“Staying ahead of remnant impacts of COVID-19, such as supply and staffing, in addition to operation-/industry-altering decision-making with both state and federal government.”

**HUNTER CLEMONS, 27**

Senior Category Manager

**Company:** Refuel Operating Co. LLC**C-Store Chain Name:**

Refuel Market / Double Quick

**Headquarters:** Charleston, S.C.**Number of Stores:** 195**Years With the Company:** 1.5

As a senior category manager for Refuel Operating Co. LLC, Hunter Clemons manages packaged beverages, candy and snacks for the chain. He's also active with acquisitions and bringing new stores into Refuel. Clemons began his career in the convenience store industry after he graduated from college, and over the years he's learned and gained experience from seasoned industry experts in packaged beverages and beer. He started as a category analyst in packaged beverages and beer for a large convenience retailer. From there, he moved to another large retailer, where he focused on packaged beverages and was quickly promoted to a category manager position. He went on to serve as category manager for another chain, and after a year he joined the Refuel team.

**What do you think today's young executives bring to the table?** "Today's young executives can help to transform company policies, culture and ideas in an ever-changing industry, while maintaining and cultivating what works well today from existing executives."

**BILLY COLEMIRE, 35**

Director of Marketing

**Company:** Stinker**C-Store Chain Name:** Stinker**Headquarters:** Boise, Idaho**Number of Stores:** 110**Years With the Company:** 2

Billy Colemire started his career as a district manager for Speedway after graduating from college during the Great Recession. Fairly quickly, he moved into a category management role helping build Speedway's Made-to-Order Fresh Food and Beverage Program. That experience led him to his current marketing director role, where he leads the brand design, category management, field merchandising and pricing team at Stinker. He also directly manages the fresh food and dispensed beverage categories. Further, he works very closely with all levels of senior leadership on store design.

**What do you think today's young executives bring to the table?**

"Disruption: Young executives today have a unique predilection for being bold and trying new things, which has become increasingly important in an ever-changing industry and world."

**KRISTIN CONGELLI, 33**

Chief Human Resource Officer

**Company:** COC Properties Inc.**C-Store Chain Name:** Breeze Thru Markets LLC**Headquarters:** Cary, N.C.**Number of Stores:** 18**Years With the Company:** 6

Kristin Congelli began her career in the c-store industry as a human resources (HR) coordinator, creating and implementing all aspects of HR for a small and growing chain. Her passion for people and the c-store industry motivated her to progress her career to HR manager in 2016 and director of HR in 2019. The impact she made was valued and recognized by top leaders of COC Properties Inc., the holding company of Breeze Thru Markets, and in 2022 she became the chief human resource officer (CHRO) for COC Properties Inc. As CHRO she serves as a strategic architect for talent within the company's businesses — aggregating, analyzing and reporting on talent development within business units, among other responsibilities. In 2023 she looks forward to supporting a consistent culture throughout all entities of the business.

**What is the most challenging issue facing young executives today?** "The most challenging issue facing young executives today is managing their work-life fulfillment to ensure both the passion for their career and commitment to building their family are being achieved."



## JESSE DIX, 39

Category Manager

**Company:** Dandy Mini Marts Inc.

**C-Store Chain Name:**

Dandy Mini Marts

**Headquarters:** Sayre, Pa.

**Number of Stores:** 65

**Years With the Company:** 6

While attending college at Penn State, Jesse Dix began working in the tobacco business as a part-time field coordinator for U.S. Smokeless Tobacco, handing out samples to adult consumers at large-scale events such as concerts and sporting events. Next, Dix worked for Swisher Sweets for just under 10 years as a territory manager covering 11 counties in Pennsylvania, before joining Dandy Mini Marts as category manager in 2016. As category manager, Dix handles all the new products, resets and planograms for a number of categories including cigarettes and tobacco, beer and wine, beef jerky, chips, health and beauty, and general merchandise.

**What project or innovation are you most looking forward to in 2023?**

"The continued evolution of the alternative nicotine category, especially with products like Black Buffalo. (It) has been quite exciting to see this category grow and expand over the past few years."

## TESSA FAHEY, 27

Director of Operations

**Company:** Rainbo Oil Co.

**C-Store Chain Name:** Kwik Stop

**Headquarters:** Dubuque, Iowa

**Number of Stores:** 12

**Years With the Company:** 6



Tessa Fahey is a third-generation member of the family business. Her father, Paul Fahey, is currently the president and owner of Rainbo Oil Co. As a young girl, Fahey knew she wanted to be a part of her family business. At the age of 14 she worked at one of the company's Dairy Queens connected to Kwik Stop. During the summers in college, she rotated around to different positions within the company. Now as the director of operations, she oversees inventory management, route management, vendor relations and warehouse management, along with fuel inventory and the fuel delivery systems. The last piece she is directly responsible for is overseeing the six fast-casual restaurants Rainbo Oil owns.

Rainbo Oil is celebrating its 100th year in business in 2023. Fahey noted she's honored to be a part of the continuing legacy her grandfather and father have built.

**What do you think today's young executives bring to the table?**

"I think today's young executives are passionate about challenging assumptions that have been held for a long time."



## MARIO FERRISE JR., 35

Director of Integration

**Company:** Parkland USA

**C-Store Chain Name:** On the Run

**Headquarters:** Charleston, S.C.

**Number of Stores:** 213

**Years With the Company:** 4

As director of integration, Mario Ferrise Jr. onboards acquisitions into Parkland's enterprise resource planning (ERP) system as well as any ancillary software. Additionally, he manages the master data management team and assists in any supplementary software systems as well as process changes. Ferrise started his career path with Craft Oil, a family-owned lubricant distributor. He enjoyed the fast-paced environment and took on many roles before moving to a position at Rhinehart Oil, which allowed him to develop in the c-store space. He landed his current role after a stint as a business development manager and Parkland USA acquiring Rhinehart.

**In your opinion, what is the biggest issue facing convenience stores today?** "The ever-changing technology landscape — retailers must be consistently looking toward the future to maximize their investments and run as efficiently as possible."





## BECKA FRIESSEN, 25

Director of Human Resources and Marketing

**Company:** Corner Store

**C-Store Chain Name:** Corner Store

**Headquarters:** Seminole, Texas

**Number of Stores:** 3

**Years With the Company:** 1



Becka Friessen oversees the human resources and marketing departments at Corner Store. She is charged with staffing the stores, which includes everything from posting job openings to setting up the interviews and going through the onboarding and off-boarding processes to making sure employees feel welcome and have a safe workplace. Her marketing responsibilities include creating content for Corner Store's social media platforms and leading monthly leadership meetings for store managers. Over the past two years, Friessen has become active in the Young Executives Organization to network with other industry leaders 40 and under. Friessen started her career in finance. After five years in the finance industry, she received the offer to step into an official leadership role at Corner Store.

### What is the biggest challenge for young executives today?

"Proving competence and skill; talent knows no age."



## JON GALLAGHER, 36

Assistant Controller

**Company:**

The Cigarette Store LLC

**C-Store Chain Name:**

Smoker Friendly

**Headquarters:** Boulder, Colo.

**Number of Stores:** 260

**Years With the Company:** 14

Jon Gallagher is a third-generation member of his family business. Still, Gallagher had to work hard to earn his current title as assistant controller. He graduated from the University of San Diego in 2007 and started working full time for the company as an accounting staffer in early 2008, after having worked part time in various roles for the company throughout college. In 2016, he received a master's degree in accounting from the University of Colorado — Denver, which helped develop his technical accounting skills. Today, he helps manage all financials for the main retail operations and auxiliary companies with the company's controller and chief financial officer.

Smoker Friendly added 79 stores in 2022 so far and has more acquisitions lined up. Gallagher noted that the team continues to overcome new challenges with each acquisition.

**What do you think today's young executives bring to the table?** "The ability to leverage technology and modern skills and integrate them into an existing strong foundation to improve efficiency, drive growth and increase profitability."

## GEOFF GIVEN, 38

Vice President of Operations

**Company:** ATCO Inc.

**C-Store Chain Name:** Rogers Market

**Headquarters:** Sarasota, Fla.

**Number of Stores:** 7 company-operated sites and 23 dealer sites

**Years With the Company:** 1.5



Geoff Given has plenty of experience in the convenience store industry. He spent 12 years with RaceTrac Petroleum in multiple roles, from entry-level management to marketing. He was then recruited to Good 2 Go stores, where he spent three years as the chief operating officer and vice president of operations. All of those years of c-store experience landed him in his current role as president of operations at ATCO. Now he oversees the day-to-day operations of the company-operated stores and consults dealers on a limited basis.

**What do you think today's young executives bring to the table?** "I believe we are helping to navigate the way in a less loyal employment environment than ever before by relating to all generations and being people-focused leaders."



## JESSICA GREENO, 29

Food Safety Specialist

**Company:** Global Partners  
**C-Store Chain Name:** Alltown, Alltown Fresh, Xtramart, Jiffy Mart, et al.  
**Headquarters:** Waltham, Mass.  
**Number of Stores:** 535  
**Years With the Company:** 3

Jessica Greeno started her career working in a meat manufacturing facility, which involved a high level of food safety. She went on to get a Bachelor of Science degree at the University of Vermont, focusing on food safety. After graduation, Greeno worked for a third-party food safety auditing company for four years before transitioning to Global Partners for an internal, hands-on approach to championing food safety culture in a growing company. Today, her role is ever-evolving and includes visiting stores to assess food safety standards; proctoring food safety courses; creating and distributing food safety materials; working together with local and state regulatory authorities to ensure standards are met; and answering questions for team members as Global grows its store reach beyond the Northeast.

**What project or innovation are you most looking forward to in 2023?** "In 2023 I'm looking forward to connecting with team members in stores across eight states, — and growing! — harnessing the momentum brought to food safety by pandemic protocols to build a more robust food safety culture."

## TYLER GRUBBS, 33

Executive Director Store Systems & Technology

**Company:** RaceTrac Inc.  
**C-Store Chain Name:** RaceTrac, RaceWay  
**Headquarters:** Atlanta  
**Number of Stores:** 780  
**Years With the Company:** 12

Tyler Grubbs held a role in project management in the RaceTrac organization and then moved to finance, working directly with the wholesale fuel division. He had the opportunity to lead the merchandising and marketing analytics function, which led into managing the food programs and offers team. Finally, Grubbs made his way to his current information technology (IT) role. His teams have accountability for the full lifecycle of technology in each retail location, from point-of-sale (POS) to pin pads, digital menu boards, inventory management, network equipment, etc.

**In your opinion, what is the biggest issue facing convenience stores today?** "The most impactful issue facing convenience in the short term is staffing retail stores with the best talent and tools needed to enable our teams to meet our ever-changing guests' needs."



## TIENNA HALFORD, 39

Risk Manager

**Company:** OnCue Marketing LLC, dba OnCue  
**C-Store Chain Name:** OnCue  
**Headquarters:** Stillwater, Okla.  
**Number of Stores:** 75  
**Years With the Company:** 14



Tienna Halford grew her position at OnCue as the chain expanded. She assisted with the administration of property and general liability claims before her role required needing to have a strict focus on a safety culture and better management of claims overall. As risk manager, Halford oversees all commercial insurance processes, customer- and employee-related claims and safety. She manages every aspect of the safety culture, including ways to strategically reduce risk in all areas of the company.

**In your opinion, what is the biggest issue facing convenience stores today?** "Managing ever-changing customer expectations."





## DAVID HALL, 33

Director of Category Management

**Company:** Colbea

**C-Store Chain Name:** Seasons Corner Market

**Headquarters:** Lincoln, R.I.

**Number of Stores:** 70

**Years With the Company:** 9



David Hall graduated from the University of Massachusetts with a finance degree and joined Colbea as a category analyst. Nine years later Hall is the director of category management with eight direct reports in the marketing department. Hall manages all the category managers as they accomplish a wide range of tasks from planogram creation/edits, sourcing new items, following trends, understanding sales data, maximizing contracts, efficiently filling space in stores to meet sales demand and so on. Hall also completed an MBA, which he finds valuable and applicable to creating success in the c-store industry.

**What project or innovation are you most looking forward to in 2023?** "The project I am most looking forward to is utilizing our new back-office system to improve the review of data and analytics, which in turn will continue to grow sales."

## MEREDITH HARRIS, 34

Vice President

**Company:** The Reid Group

**C-Store Chain Name:** Reid Stores Inc., dba Crosby's

**Headquarters:** Lockport, N.Y.

**Number of Stores:** 85

**Years With the Company:** 5



Even though Meredith Harris is a part of The Reid Group's fourth generation, she did not formally commence her career with the company until early 2017. She started working throughout college in various support capacities for Reid Petroleum and Crosby's. However, since joining The Reid Group, she has gained cross-departmental insights through opportunities in her fuel marketing and loyalty program manager roles. Harris was promoted to vice president of Reid Cos. this year as The Reid Group celebrates its 100-year anniversary. As vice president, Harris has been organizing the evolution of the marketing department and structuring the company's loyalty program. Harris noted she is constantly inspired by The Reid Group's incredible team and is excited for the continued growth ahead of the company.

**What do you think today's young executives bring to the table?** "Courageous leadership and the ability to leverage versatility to challenge the status quo."

## KURTIS HUTCHINSON, 34

Vice President of Fuels

**Company:** Hutchinson Oil Co. LLC

**C-Store Chain Name:** Hutch's

**Headquarters:** Elk City, Okla.

**Number of Stores:** 21

**Years With the Company:** 10

Kurtis Hutchinson is a third-generation member of the family business. He started in the fuel department and grew into the vice president role. Outside of the fuel department he's taken on roles in construction/development, maintenance, distribution, etc. As vice president of fuels, Hutchinson manages fuel supply and delivery to all 21 locations and the wholesale business, utilizing the chain's internal fleet of trucks along with outside carriers. He also oversees ground-up construction and the remodels of sites.



**In your opinion, what is the biggest issue facing convenience stores today?** "Labor rates/labor shortage."

**LEAH IDRIS, 28**

Category Manager — Cold Dispensed Beverage



**Company:** 7-Eleven  
**C-Store Chain Name:** 7-Eleven  
**Headquarters:** Irving, Texas  
**Number of Stores:** 7-Eleven currently operates, franchises and/or licenses around 12,400 stores in the U.S.  
**Years With the Company:** 4

After graduating from the University of North Texas with a degree in merchandising, Leah Idris joined 7-Eleven as a category support coordinator, where she learned the ins and outs of product management, executing projects at store level, and vendor and cross-functional business relationship building. Today, Idris serves as category manager of cold dispensed beverages. In her current role she works closely with multiple business units on product innovation and equipment upgrades to bring best in-class programs to 7-Eleven convenience stores.

**What is the most challenging issue facing young executives today?**

“With so many choices and constant information overload, consumers have more options than ever before. This results in a constantly changing consumer demand, which can be incredibly challenging when trying to anticipate and develop the next big thing that will grow the business.”

**SAM JAMES, 39**

Vice President, Finance



**Company:** Casey’s General Stores Inc.  
**C-Store Chain Name:** Casey’s  
**Headquarters:** Ankeny, Iowa  
**Number of Stores:** 2,454  
**Years With the Company:** 10

During his 10 years with Casey’s, Sam James has gained experience leading annual operating plans, long-term strategic plans, mergers and acquisitions valuation, new financing, capital allocation decisions and financial reporting to the senior leadership team and board of directors. As the vice president of finance James leads financial planning and analysis and the strategic planning process for the company. Before joining Casey’s, James spent five years with KPMG LLP serving in its audit practice. He noted that one of the most challenging issues facing young executives today is balancing the competing priorities of all stakeholders.

**What project or innovation are you most looking forward to in 2023?** “Refreshing the company’s strategic growth plan.”



**MATTHEW JARVIS, 38**

Maintenance Coordinator

**Company:** Beck Suppliers  
**C-Store Chain Name:** FriendShip Kitchen  
**Headquarters:** Fremont, Ohio  
**Number of Stores:** 30  
**Years With the Company:** 7

When growing a convenience store chain, keeping equipment up and running efficiently is of paramount importance. At FriendShip Kitchen that task falls to Matt Jarvis, who oversees all fuel system repairs and replacements; heating, ventilation, air conditioner and refrigeration (HVAC/R) repairs; and all other repairs at FriendShip Kitchen locations. He also handles all subcontractor invoicing and maintains inventory for the FriendShip maintenance division.

Jarvis started as a fuel technician for Beck Suppliers and was later promoted to fuel system supervisor before taking on the role of maintenance coordinator.

**What is the biggest challenge for young executives today?** “Learning to use culture to retain and recruit employees in a very challenging economic environment.”



## ROB JORDAN, 33

Marketing Specialist

**Company:** Jordan Oil Co.

**C-Store Chain Name:** Hot Spot

**Headquarters:** Spartanburg, S.C.

**Number of Stores:** 41

**Years With the Company:** 2



Rob Jordan is part of the third generation of the family business. Jordan Oil Co. was founded by his grandfather R.L. Jordan, who was the first to add self-serve gasoline in Georgia, as well as parts of North Carolina and South Carolina.

When R.L. passed away, he left the direction of the company to his five children. Before Rob began working with his family, he worked in the beer industry for several years. Today, as the marketing specialist for Jordan Oil Co., Rob manages vendors.

**In your opinion, what is the biggest issue facing convenience stores today?** "Finding people to buy into customer service."

## JON MANUYAG, 39

Director Of Marketing

**Company:** Plaid Pantries Inc.

**C-Store Chain Name:** Plaid Pantry

**Headquarters:** Beaverton, Ore.

**Number of Stores:** 106

**Years With the Company:** 3



Jon Manuyag started his career in grocery store retail working for a local Northwest retailer, Fred Meyer, a division of Kroger, where he worked his way up the ladder to the corporate office.

By 36, he already had 20 years of retail experience before joining Plaid Pantries in 2019. Today, as the director of marketing for Plaid Pantries, he manages all aspects of merchandising and marketing for the chain, including joint profit and loss (P&L) ownership for sales and profits. His role includes overseeing category management, Pricebook, direct store delivery and vendor relationships, and digital marketing strategies and content.

**What advice do you have for other young executives today?** "Set aside your feelings, be passionate (about) what you are doing, provide the whys behind your decisions and create a plan and execute. Staying humble and teachable is also very important for any young executive today."

## JESSE MARTIN, 39

Vice President

**Company:** Quality Dairy Co.

**C-Store Chain Name:** Quality Dairy

**Headquarters:** Lansing, Mich.

**Number of Stores:** 27

**Years With the Company:** 15



Since his early teens, Jesse Martin has worked on and off for different departments in the company as a member of the third generation. After completing college, he worked in the dairy plant in distribution, followed by working in the store maintenance department. Martin eventually became the fleet manager and then the project manager before taking on the vice president role. In this position he manages different projects within the company, oversees all maintenance operations, manages the laundromat and sits on the board of directors for Quality Dairy Co.

**In your opinion, what is the biggest issue facing convenience stores today?** "Staffing."





**JAIRO MOTINO, 28**

Foodservice Manager

**Company:** Cubby's Inc  
**C-Store Chain Name:** Cubby's Convenience Stores  
**Headquarters:** Omaha, Neb.  
**Number of Stores:** 37  
**Years With the Company:** 10

Jairo Motino started working for Cubby's in April of 2013 as a part-time cashier in Wakefield, Neb. Two-and-a-half years later he was promoted to assistant manager. After seven years as an assistant manager, Motino went on to become a store manager — first at a store in Yutan, Neb., and then at a newer site in Blair, Neb. A year later he was offered a position at the corporate office as the foodservice manager. As the foodservice manager, Motino provides the necessary tools to all deli employees, analyzes food costs and calculates the appropriate retail margin for the company's success in the food industry.

**What project or innovation are you most looking forward to in 2023?**

"What I am most looking forward to in 2023 is my continuous growth in the convenience store industry and the overall growth of Cubby's."



**BETTY SAYLOR, 27**

Assistant Marketing Director

**Company:** Go Time  
**C-Store Chain Name:** Go Time  
**Headquarters:** Jackson, Ky.  
**Number of Stores:** 8  
**Years With the Company:** 5

As assistant marketing director, Betty Saylor's jobs include social media marketing, in-store promotional marketing and assisting in the development and growth of the loyalty program. She also assists with store openings and operations as well as reporting and auditing. Saylor came into her current role from a position at the original store that Owners Kim and Scott King purchased. She grew into a management role and was eager to learn what made the business successful. Two years later she was offered a position in the corporate office working with the marketing director, Lacey Dixon, and loves every aspect of it.

**In your opinion, what is the biggest issue facing convenience stores today?** "The biggest issue convenience stores are facing today, in my opinion, is the rising cost of goods and finding a balance in retails to provide customers with not only a convenient experience, but an affordable one as well."



**DYLAN SCHWARZ, 32**

Supervisor of Petroleum Services

**Company:** Love's Travel Stops  
**C-Store Chain Name:** Love's Travel Stops  
**Headquarters:** Oklahoma City  
**Number of Stores:** 600  
**Years With the Company:** 6

During his first six years in the industry, Dylan Schwarz worked in the field doing hands-on maintenance. Once he moved into a corporate role, he accepted his current managerial position as supervisor of petroleum services. In this role he manages the maintenance and construction of all petroleum equipment for Love's. He has also spear-headed training activities to help store managers gain an in-depth understanding of petroleum equipment.

**In your opinion, what is the biggest issue facing convenience stores today?** "Adapting to a rapidly changing industry, from changes in consumer demands to new compliance regulations and technological advances."



## AMAR SIDHU, 22

District Manager

**Company:** Sidhu Group  
**C-Store Chain Name:** US Market  
**Headquarters:** Salem, Ore.  
**Number of Stores:** 45  
**Years With the Company:** 4

Amar Sidhu is the second generation of Sidhu Group, which was started by his father, Lal Sidhu and his uncle, Don Sidhu. Amar Sidhu showed interest in the company at a young age. He started off as the store janitor, showing improvements and demonstrating that he could handle managing the store on his own. He slowly transitioned to business development, which led him to his current role. As district manager, Sidhu is responsible for business development, marketing and overseeing the company.

### What do you think today's young executives bring to the table?

"Young executives bring creativity and company culture to the table."



## KURT SIMENDINGER, 29

General Manager

**Company:** Wesco Inc.  
**C-Store Chain Name:** Champlain Farms  
**Headquarters:** South Burlington, Vt.  
**Number of Stores:** 39  
**Years With the Company:** 7 (full time)



Kurt Simendinger is a third-generation member of the family business. Joining the family business and working alongside his father, Champlain Farms President Dave Simendinger, every day was something he always aspired to do. Growing up, his dad would bring him to the stores each day before school, and in high school he began working at Champlain Farms in the summers. Simendinger joined the business full time after graduating from the University of Vermont. From installing underground tanks to working nights behind the register and building customer and vendor relationships, he's learned all aspects of the business. As a general manager Simendinger identifies new upgrades needed at store level, assists stores and identifies out of stocks, maintains the company website, and handles emergencies, such as if a store has no heat or no gas.

**What is it like being a member of a family business?** "Being a part of a family business is not an 8 a.m.-5 p.m., 40-hour week job. It's a seven-days-a-week, day-and-night, incredible opportunity to carry on our family's life work. ... My father has been the greatest mentor to my success with my career. Being able to diversify yourself and becoming prepared to handle every kind of scenario thrown at you is vital to becoming a leader in any company."

## ASHLEY SLAUGHTER, 36

Controller

**Company:** PetroSouth Inc.  
**C-Store Chain Name:** Petro and Big Cat  
**Headquarters:** Griffin, Ga.  
**Number of Stores:** 266  
**Years With the Company:** 10

Ashley Slaughter took a job as a data entry specialist at PetroSouth in 2012 and fell in love with the industry. She went back to school to pursue a degree in business focusing on accounting and finance, an additional degree to her fashion merchandising degree she received in 2008. Slaughter soon became an account manager over the wholesale division and the controller in 2020. She oversees the accounting division, verifies everything is wrapped up at month's end and puts together the financials. She also takes care of any technology or software issues that may arise.



**In your opinion, what is the biggest issue facing convenience stores today?** "C-stores face many challenges on a daily basis, with the top three issues being changing technology, supply chain issues and labor shortages."

**SCOTT SMITH, 35**

Senior Director of IT

**Company:** The Parker Cos.**C-Store Chain Name:** Parker's Kitchen**Headquarters:** Savannah, Ga.**Number of Stores:** 70**Years With the Company:** 1.5

Scott Smith joined Parker's in 2021, where he leads the company's information technology (IT) operations. His team manages the efficiency of its payment systems. Smith ensures that the Parker's Rewards app is up-to-date

and manages the company's round-up

for charity technology, self-checkout systems, cloud infrastructure and servers. Prior to his time at Parker's, Smith worked at Royal Farms as the director of IT and as a systems and network administrator as well as project manager.

**Why are you nominating Smith for 40 Under 40?**

"Scott is passionate, energetic and desires to make an impact and drive change in his organization. He's a hard worker and always wants to grow and find ways to impact his organization beyond the IT department."

**TONY SPUZELLO, 35**

Director of Commercial Fuels

**Company:** Casey's General Stores Inc.**C-Store Chain Name:** Casey's**Headquarters:** Ankeny, Iowa**Number of Stores:** 2,454**Years With the Company:** 3

Tony Spuzello spent 10 years in the renewable fuel industry, growing acceptance and usage of biodiesel and renewable diesel. He looked to broaden his knowledge of the fuel space by joining Casey's in September 2019. At the time, Casey's was growing its fuel leadership team by adding positions and focus to areas of the fuel department not previously in place. Spuzello now oversees the commercial fuel sales effort, dealer/wholesale business and the procurement of Casey's biodiesel and diesel exhaust fluid. These tasks include collaboration with the fuel sales representative to build a sales pipeline focused on fleet fuel discounts. In fiscal year 2022, Spuzello led the successful integration of three sizable acquisitions. One of these acquisitions included a new wholesale and dealer business.

**What do you think today's young executives bring to the table?** "Today's young executives bring a renewed sense of energy to a tenured but transitioning c-store and fuel industry."

**LAYNE STUCKEY, 35**

Division Director

**Company:** Giant Oil Inc.**C-Store Chain Name:** Chuckles and On the Fly**Headquarters:** Tampa, Fla., and Evansville, Ind.**Number of Stores:** 36 company-operated sites**Years With the Company:** 1.5

Layne Stuckey grew up in the c-store business as the third-generation member of C.E. Taylor Oil Inc., which operated Chuckles convenience stores. She began working summers as a store associate, then learning manager duties to help cover vacations, followed by accounting and the back end of the business. After college she became a direct contact and buyer, and from there she took on an operations role, managing the operations director, district managers and store staff. In the summer of 2020, her family sold Chuckles, which they had operated for more than 50 years, to Giant Oil. Giant Oil asked Stuckey to stay on as the division director of the company-operated sites. Today, she oversees a team of operators, marketing and category managers, and Pricebook staff of company-operated sites in four states.

**What project or innovation are you most looking forward to in 2023?** "The industry is adapting faster than I've seen in the last 12 years. I'm looking forward to seeing more in terms of customer experience, speedier service and enhanced frictionless pay. I want to be a part of bringing more convenience to our customers; the easier for them the better."



**NICK TRIANTAFELLOU, 38**

Director of Marketing and Merchandising

**Company:** Weigel's Inc.  
**C-Store Chain Name:** Weigel's  
**Headquarters:** Powell, Tenn.  
**Number of Stores:** 72  
**Years With the Company:** 2

Nick Triantafellou graduated from Texas Tech University with a degree in economics. Having grown up in the industry, Triantafellou started his career on the sales side with Altria before moving to 7-Eleven as a national category manager. He was also a business owner and consultant for six years before moving to Knoxville, Tenn., to escape the Texas heat. Triantafellou joined Weigel's as director of marketing in 2020. Today, Triantafellou is responsible for all business decisions outside of food and fuel inside the store. His department handles social media, traditional media, company events and community service projects.

**What is the biggest challenge for young executives today?**

"The challenge (is) launching and maintaining a high-quality, consistent food program that changes the entire expectation of consumers on what to expect from a gas station and their food program."

**DAVID TUCKER JR., 30**

Vice President of Wholesale

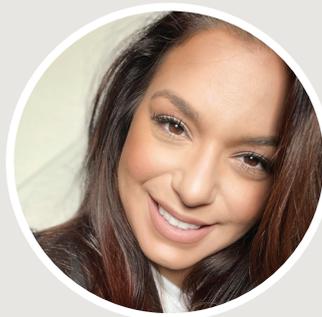
**Company:** Tucker Oil Co.  
**C-Store Chain Name:** Corner Pantry  
**Headquarters:** Columbia, S.C.  
**Number of Stores:** 22 retail locations, 130 wholesale locations  
**Years With the Company:** 7



David Tucker Jr. is a second-generation member of the family business. His father started Tucker Oil Co. in 1984 and is the sole owner. Tucker's younger brother works in the family business as well. Tucker started out as a dealer representative for the wholesale division, working with about 70 dealers. He was primarily focused on developing the brand and mystery shop standards. Next, he moved into a sales role with the company and worked on expanding the dealer and wholesale business. A few years later he transitioned into his current role of vice president of wholesale, which entails overseeing dealer and transportation operations.

**What project or innovation are you most looking forward to in 2023?**

"I think the innovation that I am most excited about is the implementation of self-checkout at some select sites. We just implemented our first dual self-checkout unit back in July and have received positive feedback on it."



**JASMYN TURNER, 34**

U.S. Dispensed Beverage Director

**Company:** Alimentation Couche-Tard  
**C-Store Chain Name:** Circle K  
**Headquarters:** Tempe, Ariz.  
**Number of Stores:** 14,000 globally  
**Years With the Company:** 1

Convenience retail has been a passion for Jasmyn Turner since she was a young child. Her father owned a convenience store, and he would bring Turner to work with him and teach her how to count inventory and clean shelves. When Turner reached a point in her career where she was ready to choose her own path, she knew she wanted to stay in convenience. She began working with a nationally recognized marketing firm partnered with R.J. Reynolds. Next, she held a senior field consultant position at 7-Eleven. From there she accepted a role at Monster Energy that was heavily focused on sales growth. Today, as U.S. dispensed beverage director, she is responsible for driving success within the dispensed beverage categories through strong collaboration and communication especially with business unit partners.

**What project or innovation are you most looking forward to in 2023?**

"Those are top secret but keep your eyes peeled for new things coming soon."



## JOSHUA WOLFE, 36

Chief Financial Officer

**Company:** Two Farms Inc.  
**C-Store Chain Name:** Royal Farms  
**Headquarters:** Baltimore  
**Number of Stores:** 260  
**Years With the Company:** 8



Joshua Wolfe has spent the past eight years with Royal Farms. He is responsible for the accounting and finance department at the Baltimore-based company.

After graduating from Elizabethtown College, Wolfe began his career in assurance services at Ernst & Young and obtained his CPA license. Six years later he left the firm as an audit manager and became the director of finance at Royal Farms. He was promoted to chief financial officer in 2019. He has enjoyed building and working with a team of talented people over the last several years.

### What is the biggest challenge for young executives today?

"One of the biggest challenges of the last year or two involves finding and retaining talent while adapting to the new post-COVID normal of hybrid and remote work. Everyone has different perspectives, preferences and expectations when it comes to finding the right balance of flexibility while maintaining a productive and efficient team."

## HUSSEIN YATIM, 31

Vice President

**Company:** Yatco  
**C-Store Chain Name:** Yatco  
**Headquarters:** Marlborough, Mass.  
**Number of Stores:** 20  
**Years With the Company:** 2



Hussein Yatim is a second-generation member of his family business. As a teenager, he worked in the stores doing everything from mopping floors to running the cash register. However, once he graduated from college, Yatim did not begin his career in convenience stores. Instead, he became an engineer and worked in the medical device industry for a decade. His career as an engineer enabled him to bring a variety of skills to Yatco in terms of problem solving, innovating and thinking outside the box. Today he's the vice president of Yatco.

**What does your current role entail?** "As vice president of Yatco my role entails overseeing our marketing initiatives, including our Yatco Reward loyalty program. I also lead efforts for the company's strategic growth; this includes new-to-industry store design concepts and new store builds. I work with our operations team to help bring new technologies to our sites."

## MARAT YESHCHIN, 38

Category Manager, Packaged Beverages & Alcohol

**Company:** Vintners Distributors  
**C-Store Chain Name:** Loop Neighborhood Markets  
**Headquarters:** Fremont, Calif.  
**Number of Stores:** 132  
**Years With the Company:** 9



Marat Yeshchin began his career in the c-store industry in corporate operations with 7-Eleven Inc. Shortly after, he took a position as district manager with Loop Neighborhood as the company was opening its third location. After four years in operations, Yeshchin was promoted to category management and has been responsible for various categories. Today as category manager, packaged beverages and alcohol, he is responsible for keeping up with category innovation, assortment and trends through market research and data analytics. In addition, strategic promotional planning, contract negotiations and brand partnerships are crucial to maintaining and increasing profits. In 2023, Yeshchin looks forward to the chain expanding its private-label options.

**What is the most challenging issue facing young executives today?** "The most challenging issues facing young executives today are the frequent changes in costs due to supply chain constraints, raw material shortages and overall inflation."