



**-Week Ending 1/15/10-**

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**Thanks to MNB  
for this selection of  
articles.**

## ***Sansolo Speaks: "Too Much Information...or Not"***

***by Michael Sansolo***

Some days, I feel like the little kid in the movie *The Sixth Sense*. Only I don't see dead people. I see irony and contradictions everywhere.

Consider the issue of privacy. We all know what a big topic it is and how widely concerns range about what people do and don't know about us. And at the same time, we willingly give up information that frankly, no one has a right to know.

Over the past week there has been a huge amount of discussion about the new full-body scanners that will be employed at airports and each report talks about all the methods that will be used to conceal the identity of those being scanned. Some welcomed the news while others decried the notion of strangers looking under their clothes.

And then something happened on Facebook.

On January 7th I noticed that many of the women who are listed as my "friends" were identifying themselves by a color. I had no idea why. It's important to point out this time that neither did my wife or my daughter.

It turns out that the colors on Facebook referred to the color bra the user was wearing that day, information I never, ever expected to run across quite so easily. Apparently it was part of an idea to emphasize breast cancer awareness and the importance of self-exams. Now this might have been my favorite day ever if I were back in school. Instead I was left asking: "Did I really want to know?"

The answer is an emphatic *yes* and for all the right reasons. Getting the enormous population of Facebook to suddenly stand up and take notice of an important issue like breast cancer exams is possibly the best possible use we are ever going to hear from Facebook. I have to imagine that somewhere in that universe of 300 million-plus people there were thousands who actually learned something valuable. No doubt there were mothers, daughters, sisters, friends and more who discussed a topic they usually avoided. In fact, the *Washington Post* reported two days later that some cancer foundations said donations went up and clearly their topic got a lot of focus...and all without any official effort.

(There might have even been some guys who got into a discussion they needed to know about, although I am proud to say that none of my male friends showed up with a color next to their names.)





Right there is a sign of the power of social networking and a strange look into the crux and contradiction of the privacy debate. When information is collected and distributed for no discernible gain to the shopper, the individual or the general population, people get wary and angry. They question why anyone needs to know anything. Yet, when the benefit is clearly demonstrated, things change and suddenly we witness a very open public discussion.

Years ago I had a radio debate with a privacy advocate who summarized her fear of RFID (radio frequency identification device) chips as allowing someone to scan her from a distance and know the color of her bra under her clothes. I could understand someone not wanting to share that information, but when that exact same information was linked to the cause of disease prevention, the information flowed without hesitation. Sure that seems both contradictory and ironic, but it isn't.

The privacy advocate's complaint was that information could be taken without her consent and without benefit. Likewise, I don't want naked pictures of me showing up anywhere (even in the mirror), but I feel completely fine as a frequent flyer if airports do full-body scans and it keeps me safer when flying. In short, I get the benefit. (In fact, a new Gallup poll shows that 78 percent of Americans feel the same way, approving of the use of full body scans as a way of keeping airline travel safer.)

Here's hoping that this also triggers some thinking in the food industry about all the data we've been collecting and using primarily to drive coupons, inventory management and specials. Is it possible that the same shoppers walking our aisles in multi-colored bras might be willing to engage in meaningful exchanges of recipes for health issues, menu ideas, budget stretcher and more if they see the benefit? I'm betting they would.

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## Supervalu CEO Outlines Plans To Edit Grocery Selection

The *Wall Street Journal* reports that Supervalu CEO Craig Herkert told analysts yesterday that the company plans to edit the grocery selection in its stores, in some cases by as much as 25 percent, with a focus on reducing package sizes rather than entire brands or lines of products.

"I don't think the consumer will say we took any choices away, but the consumer will look and say we have better choices," Herkert said in the conference call.

However, Herkert also said that the company plans to use the strategy to drive supplier costs lower, and will look to do a better job featuring private brands that give the company higher margins.

## Retailers Respond To Haiti Earthquake Disaster

Several retailers have gotten out front on relief efforts to responds to the 7.0 magnitude earthquake that struck Haiti on Tuesday, causing untold human and infrastructure damage.

- Walmart announced that a \$500,000 monetary donation to Red Cross emergency relief efforts in Haiti. The company is also sending pre-packaged food kits valued at \$100,000 to Haiti at the request of the Red Cross. And, the company is providing a place on its website through which customers and associates can make donations to nonprofits that are also supporting relief efforts in Haiti.
- *Business Week* reports that "Publix Super Markets said Wednesday it will accept donations from customers and employees in Florida to help victims of the earthquake that struck Haiti Tuesday. The company also said Publix Super Markets Charities will give \$100,000 to the relief efforts. The money will be sent to the American Red Cross for the Haiti Relief & Development Fund."
- The *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* reports that Amazon.com has placed a box on its home page that gives its shoppers the ability to donate money to Haiti relief efforts through charity Mercy Corps.



## Fresh & Easy Opens Three New California Stores

Tesco-owned Fresh & Easy Neighborhood Markets has opened three new stores in Fresno, including what it says is the first new grocery store in the downtown area.

"Fresh & Easy is excited to be a part of the revitalization of downtown Fresno because everyone deserves access to fresh, wholesome food at affordable prices," said Tim Mason, Fresh & Easy's CEO, at the opening of the downtown location. "We are thrilled at the wonderful reception we have received from our new neighbors in this wonderful community."

The company emphasized that it has created 125 jobs in the Fresno area with its recent efforts there.

## Walgreen Buys Minnesota Drug Chain

Walgreen Co. said yesterday that it is acquiring the company-owned Snyder's Drug Stores in Minnesota. Terms of the deal were not disclosed.

Twenty-five locations are affected by the sale. According to the announcement, "Walgreens will acquire and continue to operate certain locations and anticipates staffing most of these store positions with Snyder's employees. At other locations, Walgreens will purchase the prescription files and transfer them to nearby Walgreens pharmacies."

## Hy-Vee Takes Major Step In Pharmacy Services Segment

Hy-Vee announced that it has created a new joint venture with Amber Pharmacy of Omaha, Nebraska, to offer specialty pharmacy services through Hy-Vee's retail stores. Hy-Vee and Amber officials say the collaboration is the first of its kind in the industry.

"Hy-Vee Pharmacy Solutions builds a bridge between two different segments of the pharmacy business," said Bob Egeland, vice president of pharmacy operations for Hy-Vee. "We're bringing together experts from retail pharmacy and specialty pharmacy to offer more convenient, more personalized service for patients with complex health care needs."

According to the announcement, "Hy-Vee Pharmacy Solutions will support a wide range of complex, chronic conditions including oncology, blood disorders, Crohn's disease, growth hormone, hemophilia, hepatitis, multiple sclerosis, psoriasis, rheumatoid arthritis, and other chronic conditions. Because medications for these conditions are injected, infused, high-cost, or otherwise difficult to manage, most retail pharmacies refer patients to one of a few specialty pharmacy providers that have expertise in this area. Hy-Vee Pharmacy Solutions will help patients manage these conditions by assigning a health care team – an enrollment specialist, pharmacist, patient care coordinator, and billing coordinator – to develop an individualized plan for the patient's clinical care, insurance and financial administrative assistance, educational materials and resources, and follow-up care. This comprehensive approach allows patients to obtain all their medications and services from one source, resulting in greater adherence to the prescribed therapy, improved health, and faster recovery."

## FastNewsBeat

- The *Sacramento Business Journal* reports that Target Corp. has launched a new and exclusive line of cookware and specialty foods branded with the name of Giada De Laurentiis, the cookbook author and Food Network star. De Laurentiis also will serve as a commercial spokesperson for the company - a move designed to bolster its food store credibility.
- The *Chicago Tribune* reports that Walgreen is rolling out a new initiative called Walgreens Optimal Wellness that "will involve pharmacists working as coaches to consult with and educate customers with Type 2 diabetes on how to manage their disease."

The program is being tested in Phoenix, Oklahoma City and Albuquerque, N.M., with a goal of a national roll out. Walgreen also reportedly wants to add to consultations for other chronic diseases.



## The MNB Wal-Mart Watch

- *BusinessInsider.com* reports that Walmart is in “meaningful” negotiations to acquire Vudu, an internet video-on-demand business, a deal that would allow it to compete more effectively with Apple’s iTunes business.

## Executive Suite

- Supervalu announced that it has hired Steve Jungmann, senior vice president of consumer sales and marketing at the Solo Cup Company, to be its new executive vice president, merchandising. Jungmann will lead all of the company’s merchandising activities for its retail banners (excluding Save-A-Lot), including the Own Brands (private label) program.
- Family Dollar Stores said yesterday that it has hired Don Hamblen, the former chief marketing officer at Sears, to be its new senior vice president of customer marketing.
- Supervalu announced that Chuck Elias, a former Home Depot executive, has been hired as the company’s new group vice president of strategy planning.
- Carrefour said yesterday that it has hired James McCann, who previously ran Tesco’s operations in Malaysia and Hungary, to head up its French business and be part of its top corporate management team.