



-Week Ending 11/27/09-

Below is the list of articles you will find for the week ending 11/27/09 edition of Retail Industry News.

- ▶ **Wegmans To Close One Restaurant, Open Another**
- ▶ **Retail Aromatherapy To Find Home In Some US Malls**
- ▶ **Sansolo Speaks: "Seeing The Forest And The Trees"**
- ▶ **New Whole Foods Health Care Program To Reward Individual Responsibility**
- ▶ **Bi-Lo Files Reorganization Plan That Does Not Include Food Lion**
- ▶ **The MNB Wal-Mart Watch**
- ▶ **The Balance Sheet**
- ▶ **Executive Suite**



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

Wegmans To Close One Restaurant, Open Another

WHEC-TV News in western New York reports that Wegmans plans to close its well-known Tastings restaurant that is adjacent to its Pittsford, NY, store, and will replace it with a new restaurant across the street called the Next Door Bar & Grill.

Initial reports say that the new restaurant will be more casual than Tastings, but further details are sketchy. Speculation is that Tastings may have been a bit upscale for recessionary times.

According to the story, "Wegmans isn't saying why it's closing Tastings, except to say they've learned a lot about the restaurant business since it opened. The new Next Door Bar and Grill will be in its own building. Also, Wegmans hasn't decided yet how to use the Tastings space once it's opened up as part of the Pittsford supermarket.

"Wegmans says the new restaurant will open sometime in December before Christmas. It will be more spacious than Tastings. But there's no word yet about the menu or the food prices."

Retail Aromatherapy To Find Home In Some US Malls

The *Chicago Tribune* carried a story the other day about how the Simon Property Group, the nation's largest mall owner and operator, will give away millions of chocolate chip cookies during the upcoming holiday season, in what the organization refers to as "retail aromatherapy."

"I can't think of anything that can fit into it more — warm cookies in the mall and that type of comfort food feel," says Cathi Weiner, a senior vice president with the mall group.

The giveaway is being done as part of a deal with Nestle, which also will be handing out coupons along with the free cookies.

Sansolo Speaks: "Seeing The Forest *And* The Trees"

by Michael Sansolo

In the universe of MorningNewsBeat columns, it's pretty obvious that we find lessons in nearly everything. Sports, history,





television shows, songs and, of course, movies. The one area that always seems a struggle is politics. Unlike all the other areas, where metaphors and lessons seem to work, politics seems to elicit polarizing views that instantly set off portions of our audience, in the process killing any hope of discussion.

For instance, think about Sarah Palin. At the mere reading of her name, some of you have lost sight of this column through involuntary eye-rolling, while others are waiting to see if I dare take a cheap shot at her. Instead, I want to propose looking at the picture a different way and how that might help us view customers and (at times) politicians.

Smithsonian magazine ran an article last month that should be mandatory reading for business people, politicians and more. Titled "Training Cops to See," it told the story of a training program offered to the New York City Police Department by an art historian at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The historian leads the cops through the galleries with the challenge of looking at paintings for only their details. In short, they are viewing the art as if they are examining a crime scene. The cops are told never to use the words "obviously" or "clearly" because things aren't always that way. In addition, they are forbidden from reading the labels on the pictures.

And it's a real challenge. The cops, like most of us, look at the entire picture too quickly and at times make a judgment too soon. But as they move through the gallery, they start learning the skill and suddenly the works of art provide untold information and perspective.

As the art historian and the cops explain, the exercise pays almost immediate benefits back on the streets. The cops find they become better able to provide precise descriptions of suspects, which helps them and fellow officers in difficult situations. Even the searching of a crime scene improves because of their new perspective. And it is all because they stop making judgments before they look at details.

Now thinking of Sarah Palin (or any politician for that matter) you can do almost the same. Some of you love everything about her; some hate it all. Yet probably very few have actually looked at all the details. We look at the whole picture first and make all our judgments even though we know that in the details we will all probably find things we like and dislike no matter our overall feelings about the former governor. (Sadly, I'd argue, our entire political structure has fallen into this trap.)

That's a long metaphorical trip to finding a new way to look at shoppers, at stores and products. So much of our viewpoint is based on experience, just like the cops on the street or in the museum. But at times that view can obscure the details in which we might find opportunities or mistakes. It might blind us to details that need attention and rethinking because we can't even see them.

One last question: when I mentioned Sarah Palin how many of you thought: working woman, five kids, one grandkid - great sales potential on convenience items and bulk products? I'm betting not many did that.

Sometimes you need to see forests and sometimes you need to see trees. Either way, you need to be looking.

Happy Thanksgiving.

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New Whole Foods Health Care Program To Reward Individual Responsibility

Bloomberg reports that Whole Foods is adjusting its employee health care program, offering premium discounts ranging from 20 to 30 percent depending on people's blood pressure, cholesterol levels, body-mass index and whether they smoke or not.

CEO John Mackey, who has been a public advocate of a health care system that rewards individual responsibility, says that the program is voluntary and will begin in January 2010.

According to the story, "For employees considered high-risk because of obesity, type 2 diabetes or other health issues, Whole Foods already offers a retreat-style immersion program ... Whole Foods pays health care premiums for its 40,000 full-time employees, or more than 75 percent of its work force ... Part-time employees pay their own premiums."





Bi-Lo Files Reorganization Plan That Does Not Include Food Lion

The *Charlotte Business Journal* reports that Bi-Lo has filed a reorganization plan that will allow it to emerge from bankruptcy without having its assets being acquired by Food Lion.

However, Food Lion says it is still interested "in acquiring certain Bi-Lo assets if an opportunity." Its original bid for Bi-Lo assets was valued at about \$425 million.

"Food Lion is not part of the reorganization plans filed with the court," Food Lion says in a written statement. "We had a non-binding agreement with the debtor to acquire certain assets of Bi-Lo, but this agreement is no longer valid."

According to the story, Bi-Lo - which filed for Chapter 11 protection last March - "includes a \$350 million cash infusion funded by a \$150 million equity investment and \$200 million in term-loan financing."

The MNB Wal-Mart Watch

- There continues to be significant coverage of Walmart's online plans, as *Dow Jones* carries an interview with Walmart.com CEO Raul Vazquez, who says that the company is getting much more serious about multichannel selling, "saying that it not only wants to be dominant among brick-and-mortar retailers, but that it also wants to take out online titan Amazon.com."

According to the story, "Vazquez said Walmart.com is already making great strides, growing at two to three times the rate of the overall e-commerce industry and expecting a 'very good holiday season' coming off the record sales and volume it has seen all year. Vazquez declined to provide precise figures.

"Walmart.com has typically more than 10 million visits on Thanksgiving, its highest traffic day of the year, as consumers' thoughts turn to Black Friday sales and overall Christmas buying after their turkey dinners. CyberMonday, the Monday after Thanksgiving, is the top five among Walmart.com's busiest days of the year, in line with other sites that tend to see more business closer to Christmas, or even on Black Friday."

The Balance Sheet

- Dollar Tree said that its third quarter net profit rose to \$68.2 million, compared with \$43.1 million during the same period a year ago. Q3 sales rose more than 12 percent to \$1.25 billion, on same-store sales that were up 6.5 percent.

Executive Suite

- The *Times* of London speculates that Mark Price, CEO of Waitrose in the UK, may be the leading contender to replace Marc Bolland as CEO of William Morrison Supermarkets.

It was announced late last week that Bolland is moving over to be the new CEO of Marks & Spencer.

According to the *Times*, "City sources said that the man nicknamed the Chubby Grocer could be tempted into swapping his role as managing director at Waitrose for an estimated £2m-a-year pay package at the Bradford-based chain. It is likely that any pay deal offered by Morrison would dwarf the salary and bonus he could earn at Waitrose, whose parent company is the employee-owned John Lewis Partnership."