

1to1[®] magazine

Maximizing Value Through Customer Relationships

April 2006

2006

Customer Champions Revealed

1to1 magazine honors
13 executives whose
dedication to customers
delivers bottom-line results.



Without customers you don't have a business, you have a hobby."

This quote from Martha Rogers, Ph.D., and Don Peppers' book *Return on Customer* captures the essence of customer centricity, and validates every organization's need for an executive whose primary focus is to champion the customer cause. But because it is business we're talking about, this customer focus can't operate in a vacuum. It must link tightly with overall business goals—profitable growth being chief among them. And this leader must guide his or her organization's customer strategy to do so.

1to1 magazine recognizes the tremendous effort it takes to align customer and company goals, to serve the customer while serving the bottom line. We also know that behind virtually every successful enterprisewide customer strategy is that Customer Champion—an individual who tirelessly evangelizes the customer cause, who reminds associates that customers are the business. In this annual salute to those dedicated, stalwart executives, *1to1 magazine* honors the achievements, strategies, and approaches of 13 leaders whose efforts have commanded attention—and garnered results—this past year.

We unveil these leaders within the following gatefold. Unfurl it to learn the secrets of their success.

Todd Woloson CEO



IZZE BEVERAGES

I always tell my staff:
"Focus on how a brand
interacts with people's
intelligence. Most
brands talk down to
people, but people
are not dumb."

Todd Woloson's approach to business is grounded in the belief that taking care of employees brings a company closer to its customers. Internally, every Izze employee has stock options. He also encourages the kind of conservation and social responsiveness that the brand stands for. According to Drew Grumhaus, vice president of operations, Woloson identifies with people who "appreciate, enjoy, and preserve the environment." That sentiment is expressed consistently by Izze employees, as well. Also, Izze has taken social responsibility to the employee and local level, redefining *employee* to include the people who grow its raw materials. Through its Project Reach program the company supports education efforts in geographic areas that produce the fruit used in its products. Izze also supports the Healthy Start Day Care Center, based in Parlier, CA, one of the largest white grape-growing regions in the country. Healthy Start exists solely to provide services for teenage mothers who want to complete their high-school educations; the mothers who use it primarily are daughters of local farm workers.

These programs increase the company's appeal among customers with a strong sense of environmental and social responsibility—and help create the buzz that drives its business. In fact, Izze's marketing campaigns rely almost exclusively on grassroots, word-of-mouth efforts.

Woloson's efforts have brought him his share of kudos lately. *Entrepreneur* magazine's readers named him Entrepreneur of the Year in December 2005. And he was the subject of a recent *Wall Street Journal* article that called Izze's growth so spectacular—it topped \$20 million in annual revenues within four years of its launch—that it would

merit a close look from Pepsi or Coke as a takeover target.

The best thing a customer ever said to me:

(From a Southern supermarket executive)
"Izze puts me in a mood to support my community because I know [it] supports [its] community."

My mentor's insight:

Woloson is a huge fan of mentors, and has sought them out at all points of his career. He points to Ben Cohen and Jerry Greenfield of Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream as examples of executives whose company maintained social awareness, even after selling out to a large corporation (Unilever). His current mentors are on his board of directors: John Bello, former CEO of SoBe, which sold to PepsiCo five years ago; and S.M. "Hass" Hassan, cofounder of Alfalfa's Market, now part of Wild Oats Markets. Bello advises him on how to manage his business in the face of the Coke-Pepsi monolith. Hassan counsels him on the importance of keeping the holistic approach to the product and marketing. ■

"a gift of free consulting," as he puts it.

Much of the customer experience hinges on attitudes and vocabulary, according to Winemiller, hence his emphasis on *guest over customer* and *conversations* instead of *training*. By pushing these positive images, and slogans, such as "RAVE: Respect and Value Everyone," he believes he is bringing a consistently positive experience to the inherently unpredictable basketball event, as evidenced by the organization's high season-ticket renewal rate.

The best thing a customer ever said to me:

"The treatment I and my three-year-old daughter received tonight was excellent. Keep up the good work."

My mentor's insight: "Howard Schultz, chairman of Starbucks and chairman of our company, has shared with me more than once, 'You can't build loyalty on the outside with guests until you build it on the inside.'"