

## Brooks Speaks at FAPC Marketing Workshop

STILLWATER, Okla.—A sales manager was one of nine presenters during the Food & Agricultural Products Center's second annual “Real World” Marketing Workshop held recently.

David Brooks, regional sales manager for Shawnee Milling Co., spoke to approximately 40 participants regarding retail manufacturing during the workshop.

David is the regional sales manager for Shawnee Milling Co. for the western half of the United States and has been with the company for six years. Prior to working at Shawnee Mills, he was vice president of Brown Brokerage Co. and department manager for W. J. Jones Brokerage Company both located in Oklahoma City. David has been working in the food business for more than 27 years.

Shawnee Milling Co. began in 1906 as a flour and corn mill. The company is currently the second largest independently owned mill in American and currently serves industrial, institutional, retail and food service accounts in more than 15 states.

David began his presentation by explaining the tools of the trade, which include the products, marketing, retail support and customer service.

The products need to be wanted by the customer, be appropriate for the wholesaler and have proper packaging and a proper price.

“The price doesn’t need to be too high, but it doesn’t need to be too low,” David said. “You want it to be in the middle.”

For a product to be wanted by the customer, it should be a staple and packaged conveniently. Also, it should be trendy, in a proper size and proven in other markets.

For the product to be appropriate for the wholesaler, it should be shipped by a truck and on pallets or in boxes. Other important areas for the wholesaler include the products' UPC codes, readable dates, insurance and quality control.

David said the marketing aspect of the industry is what allures customers to the product. Packaging plays apart in this, and the package should have eye appeal.

“Companies change packages because people buy new, pretty packages,” David said.

The ultimate customer is not the wholesaler but the consumer, he said. Several factors affect whether a consumer is going to buy a product.

Displays and how they appear to the consumer influence buying decision, David said. New item distribution is another key factor when determining if the product is a sellable. Removing discontinued items assists in the promotion of the new products.

David concluded his presentation by discussing customer service for the wholesaler and consumer.

Trucks delivering on time, proper invoicing, prior notice of promotional events and timely information are a few areas where customer service can be provided to the wholesaler, David said. Fresh product, coupons, promotional dollars, ads, recipes and affordable price are important in pleasing the consumer.

The purpose for the marketing workshop was to help participants address marketing issues such as market identification, market research and market planning, said Jim Brooks, FAPC business planning and marketing specialist and chair of the workshop.

"The fact is a good marketing program is essential to survive and succeed in the highly competitive food-marketing arena," Jim said. "Marketing is not just radio, television and other advertising. It's not just knocking on doors of prospective buyers and attending trade shows. It's critical for success."

Other speakers during the workshop included Del Van Horn, Advance Food Co.; Steve Long, Food Marketing Specialists; Bob Johnson, Sysco Food Services; Vince Orza, Eateries, Inc.; Randy Earhart, Taco Mayo; Gerald Cockerham, Associate Wholesale Grocers; Mark Harsha, Harsha & Associates; and Lee Ann Potter, Oklahoma Restaurant Association.

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