



2021 INFRA Virtual Conference

Conference Agenda • August 9–13

Bloom Again... From Reflection to Resilience, a Retailer's Guide to Rejuvenation

Schedule At-A-Glance

MONDAY, AUGUST 9

- Conference Commences
- On-Demand Sessions Open

TUESDAY, AUGUST 10

- Keynote Session with Pat Sheridan
- Live Sessions Open
- On-Demand Sessions

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 11

- Keynote Session with LaDonna Sanders Redmond
- Live Sessions
- On-Demand Sessions

THURSDAY, AUGUST 12

- Keynote Session with Ari Weinzweig
- Live Sessions
- On-Demand Sessions

FRIDAY, AUGUST 13

- On-Demand Sessions
- Conference Closes

Live Session Schedule

TUESDAY, AUGUST 10 • CENTRAL TIME REFLECTION: STATE OF INFRA AND THE INDUSTRY

11:00AM – 11:45AM

Keynote Session: Welcome to the 2021 INFRA Virtual Conference *Pat Sheridan (INFRA)*

As the opening session of the 2021 INFRA Virtual Conference, let's all come together for a moment of reflection upon the past year, its challenges, and successes. Alongside the constantly changing status of the country, independent natural food retailers found themselves evolving to meet the needs of their communities. What is the current state of the industry? How do we need to prepare to find success in the future? Help us kick off the conference in a celebration of all the hard work that has been done, and let's prepare our minds to collaborate, connect, and learn.

11:45AM – 12:30PM

State of the Natural Industry and How It Impacts INFRA Members *Simon Cutts (SPINS)*

After reflecting upon the past year and the developments in the natural foods industry, let's turn our attention to the future. In this session, we will take a detailed look into the post-COVID trends that are shaping our business and how we can leverage these trends for success. Using our collective experiences to our advantage, we can push forward as a stronger and more informed community of natural food retailers.

12:45PM – 1:30PM

MealConnect: Reducing Food Insecurity With Simplified Surplus Food Rescue *Justin Block (Feeding America)*

Approximately 42 million people—one in eight people in America—could experience food insecurity in 2021. With a few, simple actions, you can help feed your neighbors facing hunger. Join Feeding America for a Q&A on food insecurity and an overview of MealConnect, a free, easy-to-use platform connecting food businesses to pantries, shelters, and food banks. Learn how your retail location can support the community by donating your nourishing, surplus food.

1:45PM – 2:30PM

The Importance of Data: How To Integrate Your Data and Your Expertise Into Effective Store Management *Aaron Gottlieb (Native Sun Natural Foods Market & IBIS)*

Your POS provider, key suppliers, and SPINS have critical data about your stores, the products you carry, and other important metrics that point towards your future. Yet, it can be difficult and time-consuming for independent retailers to access the information that they need or want from these sources. Most of the time the data warehouses managed by these business partners were built to inform an outside party (e.g. other suppliers) or to serve their internal purposes, rather than to make critical data easily accessible to retailers.

During this session we will take a look at the resources that offer you the best insights as well the right tools for your business. We will look at how utilizing dashboards, other reporting tools, and Microsoft Excel can bring you the information you need quickly and make it actionable.

2:45PM – 3:30PM

A New Way for Your Store To Achieve Its Full Sales Potential

Debbie Suassuna (Columinate)

Have you wondered if your store is performing as it should? A simple customer address and transaction (CAT) survey at your store can provide you with information regarding your store's trade area extent and its sales performance levels throughout its trade area. This information can identify certain areas within a trade area where your store underperforms and should be targeted with future marketing efforts as a means of improving your store's sales performance (or these areas may represent an opportunity for opening a second store); and it can determine whether your store is well-positioned to serve the "in-profile" residents of its trade area or should be relocated. The CAT survey data is also the foundation for assessing the sales potential for a proposed store expansion, relocation, or second store location within your market. Join our session to learn how to best utilize this great resource!

**WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 11 • CENTRAL TIME
RESILIENCE: BEST PRACTICES FOR TODAY AND TOMORROW**

9:00AM – 10:15AM

Using Negotiation To Positively Impact Your Bottom Line

James Followell (Rainbow Blossom) & Summer Auerbach (Rainbow Blossom)

As independent natural retailers, it is imperative we get the most out of every dollar. To do this, we find ourselves negotiating multiple times a day, whether we know it or not. A great deal of our time is spent trying to reach agreements with others. But are you maximizing your potential in these situations? Think of things that come up in a typical day; you arrive at work to find the vendor for a popular product is changing its payment terms to COD where Net 30 work best for you. They are insistent about this change and ask for your payment information. A large, national vendor offers monthly sales on many products you do not need but will not offer discounts on items you do. You find that a popular local company is selling the same product on their website for substantially less than the product you carry in your store, and they will not offer any discounts. Gaining an understanding of a few effective, yet practical, negotiation tactics will enable you to positively influence the outcome in situations like these, giving you more control over your company's financial success!

10:30AM – 11:30AM

Are You Selling What You're Buying?

Alan Shepherd (Rocket Market), Mari Geier (Nuts 'n Berries Healthy Market), Doug Frank (Rainbow Acres Natural Food), Moderated by Kelly Miles (INFRA)

Quick! Name another retail business that employs "buyers". The term "buyer" is deeply ingrained in the lexicon of INFRA Retailers and many other grocers. But is that truly our role: are we "buyers" or are we "sellers"? While your staff might decide what's available at the shelf, ultimately, it's your shopper who decides what goes home in their shopping bag. How much time does your staff spend helping shoppers with that decision? Join us to hear successful strategies for shifting focus from buying products for the shelf to selling products for the store.

11:45AM – 12:30PM

High-Tech Harvest: Leveraging Technology To Elevate the Produce Department

Chris Kroeger (Cornucopia Natural Foods) & Matt Olson (INFRA)

Produce departments have long been managed with predominantly manual and analog methods while being relegated to the end of the line when it comes to technological upgrades. Part of this is a subconscious connection between fruits, vegetables, agriculture, and the natural world—a place where computers seemingly do not belong. But even those who embrace the interplay between "data-driven success" and "loyal to the soil" oftentimes simply do not know how to make it work in the messy world of volume fills and hand-written invoices from local growers. In this session, we will unlock the secrets behind running an efficient and profitable produce department while offering the freshest items at the best value to your customers, all thanks to the miracles of modern technology.

1:00PM – 2:00PM

Keynote Session: Food + Justice = Democracy 2021

LaDonna Sanders Redmond (Redmond Consulting)

"We are only limited by the things that we allow to limit us. The key to successful equity and inclusion is within your reach. The beginning of that journey is to imagine a future free from all forms of oppression."—LaDonna Sanders Redmond

In LaDonna's keynote session, she will lead us on a journey through the past, present, and future of our food system. We will examine the what and the why of Food Justice. LaDonna states, "While there are plenty of folks growing food, the connections between race, class and gender are not discussed, or ignored." LaDonna will dispel the food desert myth, remind us of the stories the food movement forgot, and bring us on a journey to change our food system to true Food Justice.

2:15PM – 3:00PM

Applying Compensation Basics in Today's Business Environment

Tom Wardrip (Gallagher)

Paying your staff appropriately is essential to keeping them and your company profitable, happy, and healthy. This session will build your understanding of how to work with compensation, including how to find and use data, how an overarching compensation philosophy can help, how to review and address inequity, and strategies to address minimum wage changes.

3:15PM – 4:00PM

Hiring for the Next Normal: Post-COVID Recruitment Best Practices

LaDonna Sanders Redmond (Redmond Consulting)

Your organization needs great people but may be struggling to get them! Reaching, attracting, and successfully hiring great employees is challenging in many ways. The COVID-19 pandemic has shifted the landscape and added complexities, including increased competition, decreased labor market, and new ways of engaging candidates. Join this session to learn tactics and decisions you can make to attract more, hire better, and keep the best staff.

4:15PM – 5:00PM

The Power of Promotions: Innovative Marketing Tactics to Get the Most Out of INFRA Deals

Holly Tyson (Harvest Market Natural Foods), Wayne Isaacson (A Clean Plate Local and Organic Grocery), Kim Prall (Pomegranate Market), Moderated by Meagan Van Beast (INFRA)

INFRA Deals offer a great promotional opportunity and how you market them can be the difference between alright sales totals and awesome ones. In this peer sharing session, we'll examine the innovative marketing strategies that several members have used to increase INFRA Deals sales, including effectively using the INFRA Deals flyer. (No, it's not dead and we'll show you what works!) Join us for a lively discussion, along with an opportunity to share your experiences with INFRA Deals marketing.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 12 • CENTRAL TIME REJUVENATION: YOUR BUSINESS AND YOUR FUTURE

10:00AM – 11:00AM

Live Breakout Session: Charting a Path Forward With SPINS Data

Jim Olson (SPINS)

Join INFRA's own SPINS representative Jim Olson as he showcases the breadth of SPINS market research capabilities. He'll review the current state of the Natural Products Industry in a post-pandemic world and highlight INFRA's place within it. Also included is a preview of new enhancements coming to SPINS' reporting platform designed to magnify retailers' access to valuable product mix analysis. If you're looking to better capitalize on your SPINS access, or you simply want to learn more, this session is for you!

11:00AM – 11:45AM

The Process of Expansion

Don Moffitt (Columinate)

Opening a new store is a natural step in growing your business and it will put your company at risk. You can mitigate that risk by knowing and following logical sequential stages and steps to expanding your business. (Hint: Signing a lease is not first!) Come spend an hour talking about the four key stages of development and leave with a new understanding of the path forward. Bring your questions!

11:00AM – 11:45AM

Live Breakout Session: Continuing to Engage with Catapult

Susan Daniel (ECRS)

Grocery has been through a year of lightning speed growth and change. As customer shopping patterns changed, natural food retailers rose to the challenge to meet their needs. ECRS worked with our customers to help you serve yours. We strive to improve our product and grow with you. This session will highlight some of the improvements that have happened in Catapult over the last year, including stacking levels on item promotions, the long-awaited inventory maintenance worksheet in Web Office, simple item lists on dynamic promotions, and more.

12:00PM – 12:45PM

Funding Capital Projects & The Finance of Expansion

Don Moffitt (Columinate)

If you're considering a major capital project (a new store or perhaps enlarging your current store), there are a lot of variables for you to consider. In this session we'll look at pro forma financial statements for a new store—what the inputs are, how to identify the best input, how the financial statements are built, and what predicted outcomes you'll need. The project may require you to borrow funds. We'll look at the long-term impact of borrowing and the specific metrics that potential lenders are likely to evaluate.

12:00PM – 12:45PM

Live Breakout Session: Bulk Roundtable

River Cook (Equal Exchange), Thomas Barstow (Guido's Fresh Marketplace), Sam Jones (Good Foods Grocery), Debra Stark (Debra's Natural Gourmet), Moderated by Jesse Roque (INFRA)

This past year has been a rough one for bulk departments. At a time when sustainability is at the forefront of many people's minds, the realities of operating a store through a global pandemic have shown us there are some areas that may need to be re-examined as we move tentatively into the future. How do we run smart bulk departments that are sustainable for our stores and for the planet in a way that is efficient, profitable, and safe? For this conference breakout, we'll gather some innovative people from around the industry to discuss how bulk departments can thrive today and into the future—from operations to fixtures to the brands that fill the bins, let's get together and do what INFRA does best: discuss, explore, and learn from one another.

1:00PM – 1:45PM

What Direction Does the Business Valuation Take You?

Catherine Hoffman (Castle Valuation + Creative Planning) & John Wheeler (Castle Valuation + Creative Planning)

Join Catherine Hoffman and John Wheeler for an overview of concepts and recommendations for INFRA business owners who are considering the sale or transfer of their business. We will discuss business valuations, transition planning strategies, and the personal and business documentation needed to protect the exit plan and the business itself before, during and after the transition/sale.

2:00PM – 3:30PM

Keynote Session: A Conversation With Ari Weinzweig

Ari Weinzweig (Zingerman's Community of Business), Interviewed by Pat Sheridan (INFRA)

What does success look like? What failures can you expect along the way? INFRA is excited to host a conversation with CEO and Co-Founding Partner of Zingerman's Community of Business, Ari Weinzweig. Zingerman's Community of Businesses is a "family of small food-related companies and entrepreneurial ventures" that has found great success— and you can find out why! Attend this session and learn from Ari's story and experiences, and share in the wisdom that can only be acquired through trial and error. Come for inspiration, come for direction, or come for answers to your questions. You will not walk away empty-handed!

On-Demand Sessions

Consistency is Key: Creating Your Department Audit Form

Matt Olson (INFRA)

Create an easy to use and informative audit form for your store broken down by department! This department audit form will provide concrete areas of focus for the auditor to look for and rate while also providing an opportunity for informed comments. Because the form will be standardized, it will allow for anyone to do an evaluation of a department and provide consistent, actionable steps for doing so, which will in turn aid in operational excellence and greater financial success.

Building Your Food Service Fan Base

Michael Paynic (INFRA)

No matter what level of food service operator you are, connecting your customers to what you create and offer is key, and there is no better strategy than putting your best face forward. Help your customers reach your product while creating a convenient and comfortable shopping experience. Join Food Service Program Manager Michael Paynic for insights on increasing food service foot traffic, working with trends, and becoming a more desirable food destination.

Organizational Structure: Then, Now, and Tomorrow

Dan Chapman (Sunrise Health Foods), Emily Kanter (Cambridge Naturals), Jerry Farrell (Rising Tide Natural Foods), Lindy Bannister (Food Matters Market), Richard Tarlov (Canyon Market), Terry Brett (Kimberton Whole Foods), Hosted by Pat Rector (INFRA)

With increasing market pressures and changes from every direction, how will you adjust your structure and how you operate? In this session, we will explore organization structures and build a case for reviewing yours to meet your current strategic and organizational needs. Plus, you'll have the opportunity to hear the perspectives of fellow INFRA Members on this topic!

Driving Innovation and Growth Through Category Management

Westley Weaver (KeHE)

Join KeHE's Westley Weaver for a detailed look at understanding the importance of category management, including techniques to focus on finding voids and distribution gaps and staying relevant with innovation. KeHE monthly new items, KeHE category reviews, item match and gap analysis, KeHE Indy Sprints, and macro trends will be discussed throughout the presentation.

Questions?

For general information on the conference or registration, contact Hannah Gomes at hgomes@infretailers.com.
For information on 2021 INFRA Sponsorship Opportunities, contact Meggie Smith at msmith@infretailers.com.

All sessions and speakers are subject to change.