



# Seasonal Standbys

Mobile merchandisers are key to holiday displays.

By Bob Ingram

**M**ost food retailers have already planned their displays for the approaching holidays, and mobile merchandisers are playing a large role.

"Mobile merchandisers play a significant part in our holiday planning and serve as an efficient avenue to display holiday product near the category or near a complementary category," affirms Ray Harrison, VP of center store category management at Brookshire Grocery Co., in Tyler, Texas.

"They also help communicate the season and set the tone for the time of the year," he adds. "Lastly, they serve as an efficient way to ship variable quantities of product in place of regular cases and,

in many instances, we obtain a more favorable cost when product is bought in this manner."

One of Brookshire's most successful holiday displays, according to Harrison, combines the variety of the holiday — such as baking items, canned vegetables and candy — with the marketing of the mobile merchandisers in a free-standing walk-around display that generally measures 4 feet by 8 feet and 60 inches tall, with several shoppable layers. "It really lets our customers know that the holidays are here," he emphasizes.

Harrison notes that at Brookshire, seasonal imports and holiday grocery require "two completely different timelines for planning." Imported goods require a minimum of 10 months of pre-planning,



## DESTINATION CENTERS

Mobile refrigerated merchandisers from Hillphoenix provide mini holiday kitchens on wheels.



**HOLIDAY SOLUTION**  
Hillphoenix refrigerated mobile merchandisers help create cross-merchandising flexibility.



with purchase orders booked seven to eight months in advance and product generally in-store nine to 10 weeks before the holiday. Grocery and nonfoods, meanwhile, require product to be in-store nine to 10 weeks ahead of the holiday, but the pre-planning timeline shrinks to 17 to 18 weeks.

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—Chelsea Minor, Raley’s

### Group Effort

Mobile merchandisers also play a key role in merchandising holiday items at Raley’s Family of Fine Stores, in West Sacramento, Calif. “It’s important to cross-merchandise like products to ensure a bigger basket,” says Chelsea Minor, Raley’s director of public relations and public affairs.

Raley’s stores typically plan six to eight weeks in advance for holidays, Minor explains, noting that showcasing holiday products with cross-merchandising ensures consistent merchandising at each store location.

“Mobile merchandisers will work in high-traffic areas or ‘hot spots’ to maximize sales opportunities,” Minor observes. “Holiday season is a retailer’s most exciting and profitable time of year. Displays must welcome our new consumers, showcasing not only holiday items but value.”

At Raley’s, the concepts for holiday displays are a collaborative effort among advertising, sales and merchandising, Minor says, offering this caveat: “When using mobile merchandisers, arrange your

merchandise so it’s easily shoppable. Showcasing unique products has made for successful, innovative holiday displays. With the right display and signage, a story can be told.”

### Call to Action

Among suppliers, Cathy McCosham, merchandise manager for shelving and floor fixtures at Harrison, Ohio-based Hubert Co., says, “Mobile merchandised displays allow merchants to strategically put holiday party and meal-planning items in high-traffic impulse areas.”

Three of Hubert’s newest and most popular mobile display fixtures are a rustic wood table in grey with a galvanized top that measures 48 inches long by 24 inches wide by 37 inches high, an Expressly Hubert Industrial Chic Cart made of iron and wood, and a Vintage Shelving Unit Wide 5 Shelf that’s 51 inches by 18 inches by 72 inches.

“Creatively merchandised mobile displays done well serve as an inspiration and ‘call to action’ for holiday gift-giving or party and meal planning,” McCosham notes.

During holidays, as shoppers seem to be highly focused on their end goal, it’s important to ensure that displays are strategically positioned and merchandised to guide busy customers to smart choices, asserts Marjorie Proctor, marketing and design specialist at Conyers, Ga.-based Hillphoenix.



"If done right, a refrigerated mobile merchandiser provides a solution to help tell the holiday merchandising story and provide retailers the opportunity to merchandise in their stores to captivate their shoppers and create cross-merchandising flexibility," Proctor says. "Mobile refrigerated merchandisers open up possibilities to cross-merchandising, promotional events, and the versatility of moving merchandise from one place to another to support any holiday venue."

A successful holiday set commands the attention of the shopper, who will thus be less likely, Proctor notes, "to be enamored with their smart devices and fully focused on reality."

She continues: "When a shopper is impressed and completely enveloped in the present, those are the segments in time when a shopper is most likely to buy. This supports why it is so important to take the time to think merchandising through and create a show-stopping display that will encourage shoppers to want to buy."

The holiday season provides retailers with an enormous opportunity to develop lasting relationships with their customers and encourage foot traffic, she observes.

"With the grocerant and food destination center finding momentum in retail food stores," Proctor says, "mobile refrigerated merchandisers and mobile demo stations will provide retailers the opportunity to kick up their demo stations and create mini destination centers around the holiday seasons. A mobile demo station tricked out with a sink, conduction burner and cutting boards provides chefs with a mini kitchen on wheels, with small mobile refrigerated merchandisers flanking the demo areas [for] the fresh prepared meals and products."

#### 'Brand Soul'

Harry Newton, director of sales and marketing at Structural Plastics Corp. (SPC), in Holly, Mich., says that grocers need to seize the opportunity to create what his company calls "brand soul." This concept, according to Newton, "allows retailers to develop a deeper, more meaningful and personal connection with their shoppers with the simple adaption of their displays to any holiday or merchandising theme, allowing them to show product to its fullest potential in the front-of-store, high-traffic perimeter, and seasonal selling

areas throughout the store."

With the right tools, like mobile modular displays, and the right strategies, Newton says that store-level teams can quickly transform selling space and make shopping fun and convenient by pulling together ingredients and inspiring shoppers with ideas on how to "eat, drink and be merry with friends and family during the holidays."

According to Newton, the right combination of mobile merchandisers, lightweight modular displays and merchandising strategy can be highly effective in maximizing and right-sizing any space.

One of SPC's most popular mobile merchandisers for the holidays is the 3-Step Display, which comes in widths of 36 inches, 66 inches and 96 inches. It can be used as a stand-alone display or joined together to scale up and down for product sell-through. Made with 100 percent post-consumer recycled plastic, the item assembles without tools.

"It also pairs well with many of our other displays to create eye-catching 'Brand Soul' focal points, promo displays, and even pop-up shops inside and outside of stores," Newton says. A newer display, SPC's Power Tower, has multiple shelves for display and storage, as well as channels for easy signage and graphic integration.

"The good old days of putting up a folding table, complete with tacky plastic tablecloth and a handwritten sign, are long gone," Newton declares. "A well-planned store layout, merchandise presentation and strategy for implementing mobile merchandisers in key areas can help refresh, revitalize and reposition grocery stores for success during the holidays and all year long." **PG**

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#### FRONT AND CENTER

This rustic wood table from Hubert Co. can hold holiday impulse items.