

Commissary/Industry Leaders

SHARE IDEAS AT DeCA-WIDE SUMMIT

By **TERESA HEIN**
SENIOR EDITOR

• ATLANTA, Ga.

For the first time in six years, a joint American Logistics Association (ALA)/Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA) training conference was held with store directors in attendance. In total, about 775 people attended the 2010 ALA/DeCA Worldwide Partnership Summit, held from June 7-10, 2010 at the Hyatt Regency in Atlanta, Ga.

This year's theme was "We Make it Worth the Trip!," underscoring the role that everyone plays in the commissary agency's success at delivering the benefit. Dynamic training sessions and inspiring speakers teamed up to make the worldwide summit a productive experience.

Kudos go to the summit's steering committee, ably chaired by JD Fenessy of Del Monte Foods, and con-

sisting of outstanding representatives from both industry and the commissary agency.

INNOVATIVE TRAINING SESSIONS

Vendor stocking and commissary pricing were two of the challenging topics tackled by the creatively organized training sessions. All seven sessions delivered useful takeaways that store directors could bring home and implement in their commissaries.

The summit started out on a relaxed note at a well-attended evening "Cheeseburger in Paradise" reception with attendees dressed in a plethora of colorfully printed Hawaiian shirts, and some regions adding a themed trademark accessory, like a parrot head hat or oversized sunglasses, to distinguish their members.

Spread out through the conference at different lunch and dinner functions were a number of annual award presentations as well as a new competition that singled out stores that built the best displays highlighting DeCA's motto, "It's Worth the Trip."

GROCERY TRENDS

DeCA's Acting Director and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Tom Milks highlighted a wide variety of commissary issues and grocery trends. "Coupon



Conference Steering Committee Chair JD Fenessy (center) of Del Monte Foods is congratulated by (from left) Command Sgt. Maj. Victor M. Garcia, USA, and then-DeCA Director and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Philip E. Sakowitz, Jr.

usage is way up, and people are cross-shopping, looking for deals and specific brands," he reported.

On the health and wellness front, Milks said, "People are avoiding products high in fat, salt and sugar, and looking for more fiber, whole grains and vitamin D. Other key trends are," he observed, "probiotics in everything, anti-aging, botanicals, value brands, recycled and pet care."

At the same time, he noted, "Patrons are also looking for convenience, with

heat-and-eat options, in both frozen and shelf-stable grocery, especially ones that provide a restaurant-type experience at home." And, Milks pointed out during his presentation, "everything coconut" was one of the top 10 food trends for 2010.

DeCA Director of Sales Chris Burns pointed out, "Restraint remains the new normal" for consumers, and "value is the top priority." He also observed that 48 percent of items stocked in commissaries today are



S U C C E S S

By far the most popular service we provide our business partners.



Our Mid Valley Products Enterprise Business Solution has been serving the U. S. Military Resale System for 25 years, while showing a consistent pattern of growth year over year.

MVP aggregates and streamlines the wide range of processes that are required for commerce in the military market. We continually refine our strategy based on the changing demands of our clients, retailers and the military patron.

Technology and human capital are also important factors in our growth as a service provider - our clients are some of our best ambassadors.

The refinement of our capabilities over time has resulted in a unique ability to provide a comprehensive and positive benefit to our existing stable of leading Consumer Package Goods manufacturers.

It is important in today's environment with the focus being placed on driving sales, that all options for service providers are considered.

To learn more about our leadership in Military Resale and to become a Mid Valley business partner, contact us today.

MID VALLEY
P R O D U C T S



Alfredo "Al" Alferez, Los Angeles AFB, Calif., Commissary store director, was honored with the Defense Commissary Agency's (DeCA) Blackwell Leadership Award for 2009 during June's American Logistics Association's (ALA)/DeCA Training Summit. Alferez turned an average-performing store into an exceptional one, according to Robert Varela, Alferez's supervisor and DeCA Zone 18 manager. "Al set high standards for store appearance, cleanliness and customer service, and provided training and recognition for high-performing employees. Morale improved by leaps and bounds, and sales grew."



vendor stocked.

Going forward, Burns reported that DeCA is looking to refresh its signage, examining ways to revamp the case-lot sales, discussing what the "right" number of annual category reviews would be, and considering whether some stores are closing too early in the afternoon.

Burns laid out two ambitious goals for fiscal 2011: to reach \$6 billion in sales, and serve 100 million customers.

FAREWELL SALUTE

Since this summit served as then-DeCA Director and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Philip E. Sakowitz, Jr.'s last large stage before retirement, he spoke passionately and persuasively about the importance of delivering the commissary benefit.

"Wellness, along with environmental issues, are two issues that DeCA will have to stay vigilant on," he advised. "We're increasing our staff in terms of wellness programs."

Sakowitz reported that the Training With Industry (TWI) program has been revamped. Most notably, the duration of the assignment has been cut to 60 days. Candidates will be solicited this month, he noted, with participation targeted to GS 11 and GS 13.

In looking back at his tenure at the agency, Sakowitz recalled that "electronic shelf labels were one of the bigger decisions in his time on the job.

"The loyalty shopper's card that is under development at DeCA," he added, "is going to hopefully provide us with a mechanism to get a little more info out to authorized patrons, 80 percent of whom are military moms."

TOP PERFORMERS

Sakowitz said he found several statements made earlier in the conference by the University of Notre Dame's compelling football Coach Brian Kelly to be especially worth repeating, such as, "Winners make a habit of manufacturing their own positive expectations in advance of the event. It becomes habit-forming."

Based on his years of gov-

ernment experience, Sakowitz advised, "It's those who manage to a validated, justified standard who get the most funding. At the time, with what's going on with the federal budget, it's never more important to manage all our stores to the Commissary Levels of Authorized Standard Services (CLASS) standard."

"Iron Man" athlete Cal Ripken, Jr. shared his "eight elements of performance that make the difference," which include conviction, consis-

tency and a strong will to succeed.

For the first time, the conference's popular strategic planning appointments (formerly known as the "One-on-One" sessions) were open to store directors as well as industry personnel.

Next year's ALA/DeCA Training Event and Conference is scheduled for May 23-25, 2011, at the Norfolk Waterside Marriott in Norfolk, Va.

—E and C NEWS





- ✓ Sales Execution
 - ✓ Category Management
 - ✓ Information Technology
 - ✓ Passion
-

Results



For More Information, contact:

Frank J. Makely Jr., President
Dunham and Smith Agencies
A division of Eurpac Service, Inc.

The Powerhouse, Suite 400,
800 St. Louis Union Station,
St. Louis, MO 63103
Phone: 314-436-2155
Fax: 314-436-4535
E-mail: fmakely@dunhamsmith.com
Web site: www.dunhamandsmith.com