

# Convenience STORE RESCUE, Part Deux

Mid America Market gets a new owner after turnaround effort

BY DON LONGO

**T**he cover story of the October 2016 issue of *Convenience Store News for the Single Store Owner* featured the “rescue” of a Marathon-branded single store in Mahomet, Ill.

When owner Satesha Patel brought in an outside firm to run the store this past February, Mid America Market was dirty and disorganized. Customer service was poor. Products were illogically priced and there were problems with one of the fuel tanks.

Industry veteran Michael Zielinski and his team at Retail Management Services Inc., a Willowbrook, Ill.-based firm that manages stores for owners with little or no retail experience, spent a year addressing the 13-year-old store’s problems.

As detailed in our cover story, Retail Management Services resolved the fuel tank problem, turned over and hired new customer-service-oriented staff, reviewed margins, and instituted category management best practices across the store. The firm also added several new product lines such as real milkshakes, a non-carbonated frozen drink and fresh, baked-on-site cookies — among other enhancements.

“One of the biggest factors was getting experienced people to run the store,” Zielinski said in a follow-up interview in late November. “Especially on the foodservice side.”

As we reported in October, the store has made great strides in both in-store and fuel sales, and while



In-store and fuel sales are both up by 10 percent at Mid America Market.

“adjustments are still being made,” Mid America Market is well on its way to being a successful convenience store with growing, and profitable, sales.

With the turnaround nearly complete, Satesha Patel was able to sell the store on Nov. 1 to another single-store owner, Nel Patel (no relation).

Satesha was very grateful for the improvements spearheaded by Retail Management Services, but “he wanted to direct his attention to his myriad other businesses, which includes hotels and two Subway franchises,” Zielinski recently told *Single Store Owner*.

At the time of the sale, the store was up 10 percent in both in-store sales and fuel sales in the most recent month vs. a year ago. The new owner was able to assume a store with a clean inventory, a proper pricebook, a modern back-office system, and product category margins appropriate to industry-wide averages.

In addition, the new owner is amenable to moving forward with several of the foodservice options presented by Retail Management Services, including the potential of bringing in a branded Hispanic food offering to the store’s currently unused drive-thru. **SSO**

**Editor’s Note:** Look in *Convenience Store News* throughout 2017 as we will continue to publish convenience store rescue stories periodically.



Frozen beverages were among the new product lines added.