

## Gerke, CSP Information Group Form Convenience Insights

### Joint venture to produce research, information, insights to improve convenience channel performance

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OAK BROOK, Ill. -- Gerke & Associates and CSP Information Group Inc., in association with its consulting partner b2b Solutions LLC, have launched Convenience Insights, a joint venture that will provide retailers and suppliers in the convenience store channel with research, category data and insights to improve their performance. Using custom research and reports produced by trusted organizations within the industry and developed with detailed insights from industry decision-makers, Convenience Insights will provide retailers and suppliers with information on market conditions to help them better understand current trends and expected shifts in category management strategies and tactics, space allocation efforts, new product activity, promotional programs, private-label product development and other key business issues.

"Our new brand, Convenience Insights, offers timely research with leading retailers in the convenience channel and provides their current thinking and future considerations on key issues," said Paul Reuter, president of CSP Information Group. "This channel-specific information will provide the strategic guide your company needs to effectively respond to our dynamic marketplace."

With Convenience Insights, suppliers can gauge the success of marketing and merchandising programs from the retailer's perspective and quickly identify key opportunities, the companies said. Retailers, meanwhile, can employ Convenience Insights to significantly improve their operations through access to category metrics and trend analysis that enable more precise forecasting and category management, added the companies.

"In developing merchandising programs and preparing for contract negotiations, it will be extremely valuable to know the marketplace perspective on category strategies and tactics, and the expected changes in product mix and space allocation," said Gene Gerke, president of Gerke & Associates. "Combining the resources of our organizations [will] bring more facts and insights to our information-starved industry."

Leading Convenience Insights' day-to-day activities is Jerry Clapp, president of Decipher Marketing. "We have been working on ways to bring this type of information to the industry for a period of time," Reuter said. "Jerry's experience is just right for helping us deliver these insights and develop future programs."

Convenience Insights is currently conducting a study of the cold-vault section of the c-store. In this highly competitive area, where space allocation and category management can have a significant impact on overall store profitability, Convenience Insights will provide a picture of market conditions and expected shifts impacting the packaged beverage, beer, wine and fluid milk categories.

Gerke & Associates provides consulting services to the c-store and petroleum marketing industries. The firm's clients span all segments of the industry -- retail chains, oil companies, single-store operators, wholesalers, product and service suppliers, equipment manufacturers, software providers and major trade associations. The firm's work has included extensive research and analyses on topics ranging from category management to fuel site analysis to systems integration. It is often engaged to collect and analyze highly sensitive data and as such has an absolute commitment to maintaining confidentiality, it said.

Decipher Marketing provides consulting services to assist retailers, manufacturers and service organizations in achieving their growth plans. The organization focuses on marketing strategies, market research and the marketing process, to better understand the characteristics, lifestyles and needs of customers, thereby enabling companies to more effectively introduce new products and services.

By blending these marketing disciplines with newly developed marketing information systems, Decipher Marketing has generated new applications and products to accelerate sales and profits, created growth programs based on detailed trade area analytics and implemented one-to-one loyalty marketing programs, it said.

CSP Information Group is a leading business-to-business communication company specializing in the convenience and retail petroleum industry. CSP (Convenience Store/Petroleum) comprises multiple business units: *CSP Magazine*, *CSP Daily News*, CSP Custom Publishing and CSP Meetings & Conferences. CSP is a consulting

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partner with b2b Solutions LLC, working with retailers and manufacturers on business-to-business solutions for the convenience retailing industry.

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