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FOOD INDUSTRY RISING LEADERS

**ALEX BALOGA**

Pennsylvania Food Merchants Association (PFMA)

Title:

VP of External Relations

Years with company:

Two and a half

Education, professional/volunteer groups:

Bachelor of arts from West Virginia University; currently pursuing certification in the Certified Association Executive (CAE) program.

Who are your mentors and how have they assisted you in your career development?

I have been fortunate to work with a few people I would consider mentors. Those individuals have helped push me to grow and given me the opportunities and support I needed to succeed.

What makes your job exciting?

Being able to work with a lot of great people, including our members, our team at PFMA, industry partners and elected officials and their staff.

What has been the key factor in your rise to success to date?

Hard work, taking on new challenges, support from family, friends and colleagues and showing respect to the people I work and interact with.

Hobbies:

Exercising, movies, traveling and sports 🏈

**NICHOLAS BERTRAM**

Ahold USA

Title:

SVP of Merchandising Strategy & Support

Years with company:

Two

Education, professional associations, volunteer group affiliations:

Bachelor's degree in marketing and an MBA;

serves on the boards of directors for Pennsylvania's Chamber of Business & Industry and the American Red Cross of Central Pennsylvania.

Who are your mentors and how have they assisted you in your career development?

My grandfather, George Bertram Jr., remains my most important mentor. Working in the family business, I picked up his work ethic and desire for perfection.

Joanne Glasser taught me how to cast vision and the value of being inspirational.

Jerry Spencer taught me how to be a retailer, how to give direct and constructive feedback, and the importance of digging deep into details.

Daniel Hatfield showed

me how to live my values regardless of the environment I was in.

What makes your job exciting?

It's great to be part of a company that has a strategy that is working today and simultaneously positioning us for the future. Working with such a talented team stretches me each day, which I find very rewarding.

Advice for upcoming professionals:

Relationships always come before results, so put the proper energy into connecting with your stakeholders. Don't look for quick wins; instead, seek to add value that stands the test of time. Find a way to have fun; laughter is the one universal language. 🏈