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New Retail Tomorrow Advisory Board Sets Tone of Innovation for GMDC GM16 Conference

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo., May 25, 2016 – As a springboard to this year’s general merchandise marketing conference, Global Market Development Center launched its Retail Tomorrow Advisory Board to leverage innovation in the marketplace through development and advancement of unique and first-mover products, services and technologies for members.

The board also helps accelerate the retailer “next practice” process for the fast-paced change of consumer shopping habits.

“Not surprisingly, consumers – and even the industry itself – demand ideas, products, services and technologies that are truly revolutionary. While many companies, and even other associations, are talking about innovation, our new Retail Tomorrow Advisory Board is delivering these opportunities to our members and opening pathways of discovery for provocative, product-and process-changing solutions in the marketplace,” said Patrick Spear, president and CEO of GMDC.

The board’s first initiative will be a live stream of Plug and Play’s Spring Expo on today, May 25, during which, start-up and scale-up companies will make pitches to potential venture capital investors. Companies can register through GMDC’s new RetailTomorrow.com site and watch the Silicon Valley session as companies present and winners are chosen.

Members of the Retail Tomorrow Advisory Board are Patrick Spear; Tom Duffy, vice president of industry services for Nielsen; Mark Deuschle, president of Navajo Incorporated; Mark Ciccone, industry consultant and pioneer for the Innovation Center at Procter & Gamble; and Trey Holder, principal at Propeller Retail – a venture capital and private equity firm.

“Today’s sellers have to navigate physical and virtual consumers, from millennials to boomers in a seamless, smart and differentiated way,” said Holder. “This board brings together years of experience to provide new and established companies with insight and guidance that will help them recognize and connect to the evolving shopper and store of the future.”

The theme of innovation will carry over to the GM16 Conference, which takes place June 10-14 at the JW Marriott, Grande Lakes in Orlando, Fla. Among the event’s highlights is the “Innovation Conversation” business session and a new Board Chair’s Choice Award for the most forward-thinking, category-advancing product.

Innovation Conversation – During Saturday’s business session, Kevin Coupe, industry veteran and MorningNewsBeat.com blogger will host an “Innovation Conversation.” Tom Furphy, former

Amazon.com vice president of consumables and originator of AmazonFresh, will contribute via pre-recorded video. Furphy is CEO and managing director of Consumer Equity Partners—a venture capital and development firm. The session will engage attendees in exploring the fast-changing, technology-driven retail landscape and how it affects businesses and consumers.

Board Chair’s Choice Award – This competitive honor will go to the most innovative product featured in the conference’s showcase. GMDC Board Chair Stephen Davis of Weis Markets and a panel of board members will choose the winner, who will be recognized during a Saturday dinner event. This recognition is in addition to GMDC’s annual “Top 10” list which details the showcase items that received the most on-site product interest scans by retail attendees using mobile scanners.

For more information on GM16 visit <https://www.gmdc.org/conferences/2016-gm-conference>.

About GMDC

Global Market Development Center (GMDC) energizes members and the marketplace by advancing a culture of Connect-Collaborate-Create-Commerce. As the leading GM and HBW trade association, GMDC is dedicated to serving its ecosystem of more than 600 General Merchandise and Health Beauty Wellness retailers, wholesalers, suppliers and service/solution member companies by enabling consumer-facing innovation and retail reimaged. GMDC's combined member volume represents more than 125,000 retail outlets and more than \$500 billion in sales. To learn more, visit www.gmdc.org

Media Contacts:

Olivia Otterstedt

Marketing & Communications Specialist
GMDC
oosterstedt@gmdc.org

Todd Smith

President & CEO
Deane | Smith
todd@deanesmithpartners.com

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