

BOF Corp.

Uncovering new labor saving solutions is one of the top objectives of retailers today, says Jamie Knorring, president of BOF Corp.



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Talk about BOF Corp.

Jamie Knorring: BOF Corp. provides labor savings, thanks to our innovative gravity flow solutions. Our company is known for creative ideas and our products are known

for heavy-duty durability. We listen closely to our customers' challenges and we develop new products in response to their evolving needs. For example, while we have long been known for developing labor-saving merchandising tools for store coolers, we are expanding our offerings to address emerging center-store application needs.

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How have retailers' merchandising equipment needs changed?

Recently, we have seen renewed emphasis placed on labor savings, because it is the largest variable in cost for retailers. While we would not argue that this is a new trend—after all, it has been the core of our business for years—we can say that retailers seem increasingly interested to learn more about our labor-saving solutions.

What is behind this emerging need?

One of the biggest reasons retailers want to reduce labor is the push toward a \$15-per-hour minimum wage. When you think about what that means to grocery stores, it is not only the entry-level employees who will be getting a dramatic raise. A lot of raises will be going to mid-level employees who earn somewhere between the current minimum and the proposed \$15-per-hour minimum. If you are paying that much for labor, you want your workers restocking shelves rather than spending time pulling product forward.

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How does BOF help retailers reduce labor costs?

According to Willard Bishop, it costs a retailer about 2.5-cents every time an associate touches a product. Gravity flow solutions from BOF provide one-touch merchandising, eliminating the need for multiple product touches.

A major C-store chain adopted our gravity flow shelving for their beer coolers. The BOF products dramatically increased their product pack out and reduced their facing time. Their purchasing team concluded that the BOF solution saved them the equivalent of a full-time employee in each of their test stores on beer alone.

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What is new from BOF?

After years of working in the cooler, we are excited to announce that we have moved into the center store. In response to customer demand, we developed a self-facing system for wine that reduces labor for the most expensive per-inch inventory area in the store.

While we feel that BOF's VersaSlide product is a great fit for any shelf, the best application to test it with is top-shelf wine. We are seeing a return on investment from this product in about six months, just in labor savings. That does not even account for loss prevention savings due to reductions in breakage by making the products easier for customers to reach.

While we anticipated these benefits during the R&D phase for **VersaSlide**, we are now finding that the greatest advantage for retailers may be inventory management. With self-facing products, there is no need to have multiple appearances of the same SKU. This gives retailers extra flexibility to double or triple the number of wine SKUs or reduce inventory to make room for other related products, like craft beer or liquor, which may be selling better.

Going forward, where else might these labor-saving tools be applied?

Labor saving tools are being applied to more and more areas in center store, including two-liter soda, juices, detergent and water. We are also being asked to develop applications for freestanding cases throughout the store.

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