

PLMA's 2023 University Outreach Student Program



November 11-14, 2023

At the Hyatt Regency O'Hare & Donald E. Stephens Convention Center, Chicago
Held in conjunction with PLMA's Annual Private Label Trade Show

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Did you know that private label is now a \$229 billion segment of the \$1.2 trillion U.S. grocery business and that more than one of every five items sold carries a store's own name or brand?

The growth of private label, also known as store brands or retailer brands, has been remarkable. PLMA reports that by the end of last year, annual store brand dollar sales had increased by nearly 40% over a five-year period.

All signs point to that continuing as 2022 was a banner year across all channels. Powered by a double digit increase in dollar sales, nearly twice the rate of national brands, store brands set new records in annual dollar volume as well as in both dollar (18.9%) and unit (20.5%) shares. Store brands accounted for nearly one-third of all new sales last year. That degree of expansion has continued in 2023, reports Circana.

Personnel requirements of the industry are growing, too. Career opportunities with manufacturers and retailers abound. Can store brands be your first step upon graduation? To help you find out, PLMA will offer this November in Chicago a concentrated, four-day program on the fundamentals of the store brands business. It will be conducted in conjunction with PLMA's 2023 Private Label Trade Show, at the Donald E. Stephens Convention Center.

The program, University Outreach, includes an overview of retailing and store brands development in the U.S. and internationally, the role of store brand manufacturers and of the chains who sell them, consumer retail psychology and a tour of nearby stores with superlative private label programs.

What makes the program so unique is the mentorship phase, which connects each student, one on one, for a part of a day with an exhibiting manufacturer representative, and also provides an opportunity to shadow a retail buyer as they conduct strategic business in real time.



Admissions for 2023 will be competitive. Space is limited to 24 highly qualified students from colleges throughout the country who are interested in exploring a career in the store brands industry. PLMA covers related expenses and on-site hotel accommodations during the program.

Students are identified as candidates by their university or department. The student completes an application and provides their resume. The final decision on admission is made by the university and PLMA. While experience in retailing is not required, it can be helpful. Strong consideration is given to the student's statement on career goals and expectations for the program. For more information, please contact your university adviser.



If someone told you how big the store brands industry is, would you believe them?

Store brands. It's a multi-billion-dollar business you've probably never heard of. Yet, odds are you not only know the products but buy and use them regularly. Most American consumers do.

Store brands are not an intentional secret. It's a business that's been too busy expanding to shout about itself. And one with burgeoning career opportunities and outstanding employers. Among them are manufacturing companies large and small, and retailers from coast to coast and around the world who are doubling down on store brands as a key strategy for success in a challenging marketplace.



You also know the key players in the space, they include supermarkets, drug chains and mass merchandisers, as well as club stores, dollar stores, convenience stores, specialty food chains, deep discount operators and online retailers.

Many other non-grocery retail channels, ranging from health and beauty to sporting goods, from office supplies and home improvement and housewares to pet care, are also experiencing a surge in store brand development.

The process of going to market works the same in all channels. The store oversees the supply of products on which it puts its own corporate name or brand. It then positions the products to compete head-to-head on its own shelves against national brands. The secret sauce is a keen eye on product quality, innovation and evolving shopper needs. The desired outcome is a win-win for both shoppers and retailers in terms of greater savings and sales at checkout.



Career opportunities abound in store brands

As for career opportunities, a good place to start is with leading chains that sell store brand products. Major retailers, including Kroger, Aldi, Walmart, Albertsons, Amazon, Target, Costco, H-E-B, Sprouts, Fred Meyer, Shop Rite, Safeway, Acme, Publix, Meijer, Wegmans, Giant, Meijer, Stop & Shop, Food Lion, Trader Joe's, Whole Foods, Walgreens, Jewel-Osco, CVS and Dollar General, among many others, all offer comprehensive and sophisticated store brands programs as do many regional and local chains.

Supplying these retailers are manufacturers who produce products based on the retailer's own unique specifications. The manufacturers fall into five broad classifications:

- Large national brand manufacturers that utilize their expertise and excess plant capacity to supply store brands.
- Small, high-quality manufacturers that specialize in particular product lines and concentrate on producing store brands almost exclusively. Often these companies are owned by corporations that also produce national brands.
- Major retailers that run their own manufacturing facilities and provide store brands for themselves and, in a few cases, for other retail chains as well.
- Regional brand manufacturers that produce private label products for specific demographic markets.
- Large, nationwide manufacturers of store brands across a range of food and non-food product categories that supply a multiplicity of retail chains and channels in the U.S. and internationally.





Student and adviser comments

Following are comments from students who participated in the Program:

"It was truly an immersive experience and I loved getting to see things from both a manufacturer's and a retailer's point of view."

"In meetings, I was able to observe the challenges and positives of the relationships between vendors and buyers. The global presence was a great insight into how expansive private label is."

"I had a great experience and learned so much in just 4 days. I came out of the program with a lot of knowledge about store brands that I'm currently trying to get the food marketing association at my school to hold a Private Label Brands night so my peers can learn what I know."

"I loved how busy and interactive the PLMA experience was. We learned a lot and got to do a ton in a short amount of time, which really made the trip seem super worth it! I had no prior knowledge of private label and store brands, and now I know so much! It has really carried with me and my grocery shopping experience has completely changed- in a good way! I would definitely recommend this program to a peer. It was very well organized and super fun. Thank you for such a great experience! "

Comments from advisers of participating colleges:

"This was a fabulous opportunity for students to see what it is really like at a trade show."

"The students were overwhelmingly pleased with their experience and felt extremely fortunate to have this opportunity. The program was extremely well-organized. The students were made to feel very welcome."

"The program was fast-paced and delivered on its mission and goal to immerse students in the private label experience."





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