



**by Dan Provost**

Provost is vice president of loss prevention for Staples U.S. Retail stores and distribution centers. Prior to running the LP team for Staples, Provost held numerous positions within the organization, including vice president of store operations and store systems. His retail career spans nearly three decades, the last of which has been primarily dedicated to LP. Provost can be reached at 508-253-9145 or via email at dan.provost@staples.com.



## Your Future...Your Choice

**A** while back one of my directors, Jim Carroll, contacted me and asked me to take a look at some programs being developed by a group called the Loss Prevention Foundation. To be completely honest, I put Jim's request on the back burner for a while, but the more I procrastinated the more assertive Jim became, until it was nearly a demand.

Anyone that knows me knows that I have been unaffiliated with any specific organization or foundation over the years, not because I don't see the value, but rather because I haven't found a direct connection between an organization's goals and the specific needs of my team. I am very proud to tell anyone that's willing to listen, that Staples U.S. Retail has an excellent LP team, and that they've delivered tremendous results over the years. As such, I am of the opinion that the team is totally in control of and comfortable with our business-partner role in the company and is excellent in executing our core programs and processes.

All that said, the question becomes, "So how do we continue to get better?" That was exactly Jim's point.

### From Skeptic to Advocate

This question led to a larger discussion between me and the LP directors. What we saw taking shape with the Foundation was very exciting—a group of extremely dedicated LP and academic professionals attempting to create something to benefit the *individual*...just what we had been looking for. So after a bit of debate and skepticism, the director team agreed that we should affiliate ourselves with the Foundation and offer our assistance and insight into what was taking shape.

At the beginning of 2010, I contacted the Foundation's president, Gene Smith. I wanted to make sure that what we saw was real before becoming charter members. For those of you that haven't had the pleasure of speaking with Gene, I've got to tell you, all you need to do is listen to him for a few minutes to get a sense of his passion and dedication to the Foundation. Being in retail for almost thirty years has jaded me for sure, but Gene won me over and made me a believer within twenty minutes. Amazing!

Beyond that, Gene and I clicked immediately because we shared some common beliefs that I would like to pass along here.

*Being a strong specialist is great, but being a strong manager is far better.*

That's why I love the Foundation certification programs. If you haven't looked at the curriculum yet, you should. It's not just "all about LP." It's all about being a great manager first, and a great specialist second. Trust me, in my thirty years of retail, I've held roles in logistics, distribution, operations, systems, merchandise allocations, labor, field management, as well as loss prevention. I would hazard a guess that if I was only a "specialist," I would not have had these wonderful opportunities.

---

**What we saw taking shape with the Foundation was very exciting—a group of extremely dedicated LP and academic professionals attempting to create something to benefit the individual...just what we had been looking for.**

---

*Personal and professional development takes a back seat to the day to day, and it shouldn't. Education needs to be easy to access.*

I don't know if you've ever said this, but I know I have: "I don't have the time to go somewhere and take a course; my life is just too busy." This may be true, but what about on-line courses or distance learning? How much easier could this get? Self-paced, high-quality, high-impact, accredited certification. The Foundation absolutely nailed that one.

*Continuing education and development of any sort is what keeps "A" players "A".*

If you're a hiring manager, you already know what I'm going to say here. When I look at a resume, I want to see forward movement. I want to see that the person cares enough about

their future to invest the time to constantly challenge and better themselves. It's always nice to see a person with a great background, but it's even better to see a person with a great background *and* striving for a great future.

*Managers own the responsibility of making development available and affordable for all associates.*

It's easy for employers to talk development. What's not so easy is providing the financial support to make development possible. That's why it was critical to me that Staples approve the Foundation curriculum and certification programs for our tuition reimbursement program *prior* to getting the team engaged. I am thrilled to say that we were successful in making this happen, partly because Gene and the Foundation board of directors did an outstanding job of getting academia fully involved in the curriculum.

*Every individual determines their future.*

Life is full of choices; being great is one of them. As an employer I clearly can't make people grow, but I can offer them the opportunity. That's what this is really all about—opportunity. Not just opportunity as a specialist, but opportunity for growth and career advancement as a manager. Plain and simple, it's a choice, and it's up to you.

## A Total Commitment

So how strongly does the Staples LP leadership team feel about what the Foundation is doing? I'd have to say we're as committed to this as we ever have been to anything...probably more so.

I had the pleasure of finally meeting Gene Smith a few weeks ago. We held our annual U.S. Retail Loss Prevention Conference in May, and the focus of our agenda was personal and professional development. In fact, development made up about 70 percent of our agenda.

As we were assembling the agenda, it became obvious that the Foundation needed to play a significant role at the conference. I called Gene and invited him. He could not have answered "Yes" more quickly or graciously. Gene attended the conference and conducted breakout sessions with each of the four divisions. He made himself available to every one of our team members, day or night, and participated in every session and activity. By the end of the conference, it was almost like he was part of *our* team.

I could not be more proud or energized that we finally found our fit with the Loss Prevention Foundation. If you're still kicking the idea around of getting on board with continuing education through the Foundation, but you're really just not quite sure yet, feel free to call me. I'd be glad to tell you why I believe that the Foundation is one of the best things that has happened to our industry in a long time. ■



David J. Foreman, RPh., N.D.

# The Herbal Pharmacist Says

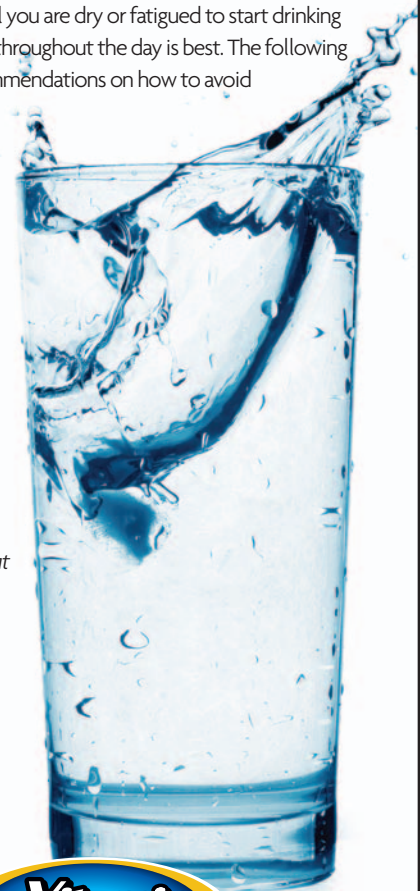
## STAY HYDRATED

Water is perhaps the most critical nutrient for the human body. All cells use water to transport nutrients in—and waste out. As little as a one to two percent decrease in fluids can lead to difficulty concentrating, so it's easy to see how vital staying hydrated is to our health and wellbeing.

So how much water should you consume? The minimum should be at least half your body weight in ounces of water. Example: 150-pound person should consume a minimum of 75 ounces of water per day. The more active you are, the more water you should consume to compensate for fluids lost through perspiration.

Finally, don't wait until you are dry or fatigued to start drinking water. Drinking fluids throughout the day is best. The following are some other recommendations on how to avoid getting dehydrated this summer, and beyond:

- Flavor your water
- Eat more fruits and vegetables
- Avoid salty (canned, processed, frozen) foods
- Drink before, during and after any physical activity
- Avoid beverages that are high in sugar, caffeine or alcohol



STORES NATIONWIDE OR AT [VITAMINSHOPPE.COM](http://VITAMINSHOPPE.COM)