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COVERAGE





Pioppi's Package Store Stands Out with Community Involvement

Very few people are extremely passionate about what they do. Many just go through the motions so they can make money and provide for their families. This is the opposite for Peter Balboni, owner of Pioppi's Package Store.

Situated in Plymouth, MA, this 10,000-square-foot liquor store is rising through the ranks by being Balboni's sole focus. "I am a hands-on store owner and believe running one store with 100% of my attention is better than two or more average stores," he says. "This philosophy has resulted in us becoming a leader in the industry, achieving Package Store Retailer of the Year in 2009 and 2024, multiple Top 100 Beverage Dynamics Retailer of the Year Awards and many other local accolades."

After Prohibition, the first liquor license in Plymouth was issued to Pioppi's Package Store in 1933, according to Balboni. Now, Pioppi's carries more than 700 wines and 150 domestic, imported and micro beers.

"Our liquor selection is huge," notes Balboni. "We recently added on an upper shelf where limited release products are placed."

While the selection is impressive, the store features are what truly makes Pioppi's stand out.

PROMINENT CHARACTERISTICS

Balboni points out that the package store offers recycling in the redemption room at the front of the building. They also boast a fine wine room with an extensive collection of award-winning wines, with vintages ranging from the 1980s to today, according to Balboni.

"We also offer in-store tastings, wine dinners with local restaurants, public fundraisers with a beverage element and a friendly and knowledgeable staff," he says.

Due to the increasing popularity of no- and low-alcohol beverages, Pioppi's recently created a new area for zero proof beer, wine and liquors.

"This category is growing like crazy," Balboni explains. "Things have changed from the old days when there were only several choices of beer, which were very basic and not all that flavorful. As far as wine, there was very little choice and most tasted like grape juice. Liquor alternatives were non-existent. Now, there are IPAs, pale ales, wheat beers and many varieties of wine and champagne. Not to mention the boom in mocktails."

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Balboni says that Pioppi's Package Store strives to maintain a

personal connection with the local community. They achieve this through not only excellent customer service, but also by getting involved.

Townwide legislation banning nips and mini-sized bottles was passed in the fall of 2023, and Pioppi's led the charge to fight the ban. "The first thing we did was reach out to the town clerk and ask what we needed to do for a recall," says Balboni. "The answer was to collect 5% of the registered voter's signatures who agree to our petition. If accomplished, this would trigger a special town election."

The catch? They only had three months to get it all done.

Balboni immediately got started and built an action committee, "speaking at local precinct meetings and attending selectmen's and other relevant meetings to advocate a reversal of the ban."

"We had a mailing campaign, yard signs, radio and online ads — you name it, we did it," he continues. "We are very

happy to say that with guidance from the Massachusetts Package Store Association, my past extensive community involvement and a great group of volunteers, the votes spoke and reversed the ban."

LOOKING TOWARD THE FUTURE

Between being more active on social media and their website, expanding curbside pickup and delivery options, increasing the product selection of hemp-based beverages and encouraging the redevelopment of the plaza where the store is located, Balboni has hopes for Pioppi's to exceed last year's sales numbers.

"We are aggressive with our pricing, our store always looks clean and organized and our staff is friendly. We also have the strongest marketing campaign in the area," he says.

Seeing Pioppi's proven past success, they should be able to reach their sales goal.



The new Williquors store layout allows a comfortable atmosphere for customers to try new products and connect with employees.



Why Williquors is a Top 100 Retailer

With construction expected to start for a third location soon, Williquors' success has quickly skyrocketed since its inception in 2014. Nestled into Bismarck, ND and Sioux Falls, SD, the two currently open locations continue to see revenue growth year after year.

Not only was Williquors named a Top 100 Retailer every year since 2019, they

were also voted Bismarck Mandan's "Best Liquor Store" and "Best Wine Selection" for nine years running.

When co-owner Brent Skjerseth CSW, who has been on all sides of the liquor industry, met up with three guys building a liquor superstore, he was immediately drawn to be a part of it. "I joined them to help get the store up and running, and then two years later bought into it. So now, all four of us own it," he explains.

Their flagship store in Bismarck is 28,000 square feet of "liquid happiness," as Skjerseth calls it. On top of having the largest selection of spirits in a three-state radius, this location also contains a 500-square-foot classroom for educational purposes, as well as two dedicated tasting bars for customers.

When the Sioux Falls location became available, the Williquors team knew they had to act on it. "Our vision was always to move down the Midwest a bit, and when the location came up, we knew it would be perfect for us," says Skjerseth. "There's still some competition down there with grocery stores and gas stations, but they have such a limited selection, so we thought the larger store footprint could offer more. And it's going really well down there."