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NEW DIGS: New England's Technivend opens doors of new facility with gala housewarming that sets backdrop for distributorship and repair center's fourth annual vending showcase **PAGE 16**. Pictured at left, principals Bill and Danielle Cioni (r.) and expert technicians Dave (l.) and Doug Albowicz roll out the red carpet for their customers.

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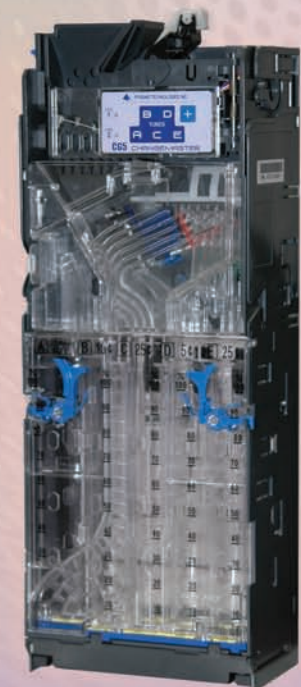
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Technivend Hosts Grand-Opening Gala At New Headquarters

WILMINGTON, MA — Technivend Inc. hosted operators from throughout New England on March 6 for a celebration of the grand opening of its new sales and service facility here. The event doubled as a festive backdrop for the distributorship and repair center's fourth annual vending showcase.

Located 15 miles north of Boston, just down the street from Technivend's original facility, the new 5,000-sq.-ft. site in a brand-new building is conveniently situated to serve all of the six states in the New England region: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont. Beyond its New England operator base, Technivend also serves customers nationwide with its parts sales, coin-handling repairs, vending machine refurbishing services and used equipment sales.

Principals Bill and Danielle Cioni designed the custom-built headquarters to feature a spacious showroom that better accommodates the wide range of vending equipment they distribute and to facilitate a more efficient workflow of the repair and

refurbishing processes.

"In the early '90s, with electromechanical machines, we were geared more toward repairs. Now that machines are more reliable, service requirements are fewer," Bill told VT. "As we've grown as a distributor, sales represent a more substantial part of our business. Our new building allows us to be more efficient, to accomplish more by having easier access to machines and get to them in a more timely fashion. This allows us to keep our costs down, which helps us keep costs down for our customers."

Operators turned out in full force to celebrate Technivend's move, explore equipment and products, take advantage of show specials and door prizes and enjoy a catered meal. On the show floor at the grand opening gala were the latest products from Automated Merchandising Systems, Coin Acceptors, Conlux, Crane/GPL, Dixie-Narco, Standard Change-Makers, SandenVendo, U-Select-It and Sharp, among others. Factory representatives were on hand to explain equipment features and new product developments, while area brokers and sup-

pliers exhibited the newest vendible products and related services.

"It was a great event, and our way of saying 'thank you' to our customers while showcasing our new building and the leading range of equipment we offer, and answering questions," Bill told VT.

At the foundation of Technivend's long-term relationships with the operators it serves is the Cionis' commitment to ensuring that the vending machines they sell, once installed, are fully operational at all times. The company supports operators of all sizes by providing expert technical assistance through onsite repairs; in-house rebuilding; coin changer, bill validator and refrigeration repairs; and equipment upgrades and conversions.

Bill Cioni's vending industry experience dates back to 1978 when, during high school, he took a part-time job with a local full-line vending leader, Woburn Vending. Beginning on the amusements side of the business and then moving into vending, Cioni benefited from a hands-on technical education and eventually worked his way up the ranks to service manager.

It was also at Woburn Vending that he later met his future wife and business partner, Danielle, who was employed part time in its money room while she pursued her undergraduate degree.

In 1990, well versed in equipment repair, Bill set out on his own, launching Technivend Inc. His found a receptive clientele for his specialty: repairing vending equipment, including coin mechanisms and bill validators, for companies too small to support a service department as well as larger organizations, including major bottlers, with an overflow of repairs beyond their internal capacity.

"We found a niche and what we did led to an expansion of our services," recalled Bill. "I'd get equipment on trade, or people would have us do a repair and forfeit, so I found myself dabbling in buying and selling used equipment, which laid the groundwork for the next step."

With confidence in the loyal following Technivend quickly built and its solid reputation among New England operators, Crane Co. approached the company to distribute its GPL vending machine line. This new role prompted Cioni to expand the options for his customers, and he earned the rights, line by line, to distribute Automated Merchandising Systems, Vendo, Royal, U-Select-It and Standard Change-Makers equipment.

"Our distribution has grown through our service mentality. We represent as much of a variety of equipment as we can and let the consumer make the choices; our sales are dictated by the consumer, not the other way around," stated Bill. "I was on the other side of the table when I worked for an operator; I know the issues they run into. If they buy a piece of equipment and like it, they'll be successful and they'll be back. It's only then that we are successful at Technivend."

Bill's passion for the business and devotion to customers is shared by Danielle, who joined her husband full time in 1995, shifting from her career in pharmaceutical sales to head up Technivend's day-to-day operations, including accounting, scheduling and customer service.

Another integral member of the Technivend team, whom the Cionis credit for helping build their reputation and win the loyalty of a long list of satisfied customers, is Doug Albowicz. Hired as Technivend's

first employee in 1992, his mechanical aptitude set Technivend apart early on and has helped the company keep pace with rapid technological changes. "I now rely on Doug's technical prowess to help me with new developments; he's the best out there. If he can't fix it, no one can," praised Bill.

Rounding out the team is Dave Albowicz, who came on board three years ago when Technivend was appointed as a Coinco-approved repair center. Trained to specialize in coin changers and bill validator repair, Dave's expertise provides Technivend customers the assurance of a quick turnaround on most makes and models, backed by a three-month warranty.

"Anyone can sell something. We try to build relationships so our customers keep coming back," Bill commented. "When you call, you will speak with someone who can make a decision or at least get the answers immediately. We're real people, and our employees are empowered to do what they need to do to serve the customer; it's much different than working with a huge conglomerate."

Given the current economic climate, Bill said he finds it more important than ever to work closely with his customers long after selling them equipment as part of his ongoing commitment to help them succeed. And from cleaning and painting to replacing and testing internal components, Technivend can help its customers extend the life of their equipment.

The Technivend principal is inspired by operators' willingness and ability to quickly and profitably adapt. "One positive trend I've seen is operators being more creative in merchandising their machines to sell more than soda and snacks — and having good luck doing so," he remarked. Bill also sees operators increasingly making use of dual-temperature combination venders intended to merchandise snacks and soda to replace carousel-style food machines, valuing the flexibility and merchandising appeal they offer in making a wide range of products available to a growing base of workplaces with smaller populations.

"The days of buying a machine and saying 'What can I sell through it?' are over, thanks to versatile equipment and creative operators. Now operators can say: 'This is what I want to sell,' and then customize the machines to their menus, versus menuing what they offer to the machine," noted the distributor. "In the long run, despite the rapid changes and challenges facing the industry, I see operators and manufacturers adapting to meet a different market."

Technivend is located at 355 Middlesex Ave., Suite 13, Wilmington, MA 01887; tel. (978) 658-2415; technivend.com.



Bill Cioni (right) joins Crane Co.'s Roy Taylor to showcase for the first time in New England the new GPL Fusion Series. The machine provides the flexibility to menu a combination of refrigerated food, snacks, candy and beverages. Featuring Dixie-Narco cabinet and refrigeration components, 85 units are currently being tested in the field, with full production scheduled for May.



From left, Mike Santos of Harold W. Young Inc., Vistar's Rich Conrad and Jeff Mayhew of Flowers Foods take wraps off new Broad Street Bakery premium pastry line, expanded in February with the addition of cream-filled Carrot Stick Cakes and Cinnamon Buns. Highlighted by upscale packaging, the new line commands a \$1 to \$2.25 vend price.



Firestone Financial's Kurt Engelhardt presents creative equipment financing possibilities customized for vending and OCS operators to Emile Le Blanc, Colonial Vending (Medford, MA), during Technivend grand opening and equipment show.



Vittoria's Ernest Noble (left) and New England broker Larry Pepin team up during Technivend open house and grand opening celebration to promote the Canadian roaster's wide variety of gourmet OCS and vending coffee blends and flavors.



Mike Butler of Automated Merchandising Systems (left) runs 40-select snack vender through its paces, highlighting dual spirals, guaranteed delivery system and sleek "executive"-style trim, for Patrick Anzalone, Automated Foodservice (E. Boston, MA).



Burdette Beckmann's John Derrick (left) and Jeff Terban (right) serve sample of new Tempest Tea caffeine-free green tea energy drink in slim 8.4-fl.oz. can to Mark Martell, Martell Enterprises (Maynard, MA). With a suggested \$2 vend, the new drink costs operators around \$1.



The Vendo Vue 40 is in the spotlight during Technivend show and reception, where Danielle Cioni joins Vendo territory manager Dave Lockrow (left) and regional vice-president John Finkbeiner to put high-impact glassfront beverage vender through its paces for New England operators.