



Super J and IGA

A great combination for Five Star Retail Excellence

“A warm welcome from friendly, knowledgeable associates. Great service and quick response to your special requests. Locally owned by people you know and trust. At the heart of the community.”

That’s the promise that captures the workings of the over 4,000 independent supermarkets which are part of the Independent Grocers Alliance (IGA) Millions of customers in over 45 countries confidently shop their local IGA’s knowing that IGA promises a unique brand of personalized, neighborly customer service. Here in Saint Lucia, Super J Supermarkets as a master franchise of IGA is no different. The company is constantly focusing on ways to capitalize on the strength and support that come from being part of the tremendous retailing network that is IGA.

Leveraging the Brand

When most people in Saint Lucia think of IGA, they think of the red oval sign on the package of product. (Insert Red oval logo here). This is not surprising, given that this is perhaps the most visible aspect of IGA and speaks to a line of quality assured products which are competitive alternatives to national brands.

However, IGA is much more than a brand of product. It is about a concept and philosophy in which customers are promised a preferred shopping experience, focused on services from a well trained team of local people whom they know and trust. It is also about operational excellence in the way the supermarket does business, how it is maintained, its use of technology, and, very importantly, its support of the local community. Super J is

capitalizing on the opportunity of being connected to the IGA brand by taking full advantage of the expertise, support and brand-building programmes offered by IGA. For Saint Lucia this partnership is certainly bearing fruit.

Focused on Training through IGA Coca Cola Institute

Take for instance Super J's access to and participation in the training programmes offered by the IGA Coca Cola Institute, the training arm of IGA. Super J team members are actively taking the courses offered by this international organization which provides supermarket employees at all levels, an opportunity to acquire new skills and knowledge in their various fields and a means of upward mobility. A quick glance at the website of the IGA Coca Cola Training Institute www.igainstitute.com and you notice that Super J Supermarkets are among the top ten IGA Stores recognized for training. This year seventeen of the company's team members were recognized as IGA Top Students for outstanding completions of web-based courses offered by the institute in 2008. The seventeen were selected from over ten thousand eight hundred (10,800) students of the Institute. Of significance is the fact Gemma Remy, a Deli Assistant at Super J Sunny Acres team landed herself the distinction of being the Top Student of the Institute in 2008, having successfully achieved sixty five (65) completions of the online courses offered by the Institute. Picture of IGA Training Awardees

The IGA training courses as well as many others are administered through Super J's in house Supermarket Career Institute (SCI). Not only are the courses equipping team members with required skills, but coupled with ongoing recruitment drives, is helping to reverse the negative image of the industry as a low skill, low pay, and dead end trade. Super J employees are guided and rewarded for their efforts to improve themselves in their job specific areas and the knowledge that team members are acquiring manifests on the job and in their level of self-confidence.

Providing value through Differentiation, Pricing and Promotions

The red oval behind the Super J logo promises a preferred shopping experience and the company has been focused on just that. For Super J a preferred shopping experience means working harder than ever to differentiate and demonstrate value to shoppers. Super J is now well known for being first and keeping up with changes in the retail environment. In

store pharmacies, deli services, bill express counters and other convenient services available at Super J are testimony to this fact. (Pharmacy Pix here) This coupled with the incorporation of up to date technology into all aspects of the operation speaks of a company that is determined not to lose its relevance to customers and their changing needs.

That is why customer loyalty is never taken for granted at Super J IGA supermarkets. The company is constantly looking for new ways to enhance and reward customers for their patronage. The newly introduced Super J Loyalty Card Programme (Insert Loyalty Card picture) through which customers can now earn points on purchases starting at one dollar, easily redeem points for groceries and gift vouchers at Mega J and earn extra points on specials and other promotions is an example of this value creation. In addition seasonal and themed promotions (Easter, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Back to school and Christmas) are just some of the many events that add to the excitement of rewarding customers throughout the year. Added to all this, is that in the last year, Super J has moved from offering customers monthly specials on groceries, to mid monthly specials and now weekly specials. The core purpose being to offer valuable savings and the best value on a range of grocery, perishable and non food items.

"As household budgets are under greater pressure than ever, we know how important it is to save our customers money. That's why we have taken a more aggressive approach to working with our suppliers and distributors on our specials campaign, to ease the pain of soaring grocery bills, while bringing welcome relief to families doing the weekly shop," explains Martin Dorville, Deputy Managing Director of the company.

Community Proud:

Super J IGA customers know that when they shop at any one of the eight stores, they're supporting not just a locally owned business but their community as a whole. Super J's "Community Proud" focus is captured through sponsorships, donations, material contributions and expertise provided to a range of community, youth and sports related activities as well as Diabetes, Cancer and Environmental causes to name a few. (Cancer pix here)

This care is also very visible through the company's interactions with the farming community. As one of the main purchasers of agricultural products Super J, is well aware of the challenges that local farmers face as they attempt to improve and increase production as well as move up the value chain. That is why since 2004 farmers who have been certified under the Ministry of Agriculture's Farmer Certification Programme are rewarded for their commitment. As an incentive they receive preferential pricing at Super J. The company acknowledges that quite apart from boosting the local economy, working with local food suppliers is a good idea as it encourages agricultural development and growth, while giving hope and charting progress for those farmers who work under the certification programme.

As a means of further promoting the buy local concept Super J supermarket shelves now feature shelf talkers that specifically highlight locally produced/ and manufactured products (Customer Sampling local food)

Five Star Excellence:

Embedded in all of Super J's actions is a vision of becoming the most successful supermarket chain in the Caribbean Region. Therefore every project, every strategy and programme employed by Super J is designed to achieve just that. It is therefore not surprising that ***IGA's Five Star Assessment Programme*** is of particular interest to the supermarket chain. This programme (which is well recognized internationally) provides a mechanism for enhancing the competitive advantage of IGA supermarkets, through the use of retail store standards and other guidelines as benchmarks. Store appearance, product quality, employee training, customer service, engagement in IGA consumer focused marketing events, support and involvement in the local community are some of these.

The programme involves four unrevealed and one revealed assessment within the course of a year, and also incorporates a customer feedback component. Through participation in the *Five Star Excellence Programme*, Super J supermarkets will be monitored and measured on an ongoing basis and areas for improvement flagged. Super J's management team is hoping to use the Five Star Assessment to enhance the chain's overall quality of service and product delivery in Saint Lucia.

Leveraging the Brand in the Caribbean

But Saint Lucia is not the only island in the Caribbean which is aligned with IGA. Antigua, Aruba, Bahamas Barbados, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Cayman Islands, Grenada, Jamaica, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Vincent, Turks & Caicos, Trinidad are also members of this international alliance.

Earlier this year Super J's MD Andre Chastanet became the Chairman of the Board of IGA Caribbean, a regional grouping comprising IGA retailers, distributors and wholesalers in the region. Through this network members have committed to working even more closely starting with merging their regional purchasing power to achieve better prices, greater choice and quality and service for Caribbean consumers.

The Promise of Super J IGA

Working with IGA the Super J team plans to transform the supermarket industry in Saint Lucia. No doubt customers and Saint Lucia will benefit tremendously from this partnership. As the company charts this course to supermarket excellence, customers can rest assured, knowing that the IGA promise of **“A warm welcome from friendly, knowledgeable associates. Great service and quick response to your special requests. Locally owned by people you know and trust. At the heart of the community”** , is a pledge that every staff member of Super J supermarkets is committed to fulfilling everyday.