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TierOne Helps Advance Grocery Stores



Presents

A conversation with Chris Smith

Vice President of Information Technology
HAC, Inc.

TierOne presents: A conversation with Chris Smith, Vice President of Information Technology at HAC, Inc. (*Homeland, Piggly Wiggly, United*)

Since 2014, TierOne has been **helping clients in the retail sector** streamline stores and untangle labyrinthine networks of outdated phone and connectivity solutions.

In 2020, **HAC, Inc.** was facing billing issues across its 80-store, 3,600-employee company. To untangle opaque invoices and misassigned charges, Chris Smith, HAC's Vice President of Information Technology, partnered with TierOne to streamline billing and upgrade phone systems across all stores. Read on for Smith's firsthand experience:

Going into this partnership, what were some of the key issues you wanted to resolve?

Chris Smith: Five years ago, I surveyed all the other departments, and I asked, "What is your biggest issue, and what can IT do to help?" The No. 1 response from our accounting department was asking for help with billing for our telecom services because it was never correct.

Itemized charges were an issue. We were getting bills in Kansas for stores in Oklahoma. It was very mixed up, and as we would clean them up ourselves over time, they would change again.

We are retailers, so we needed a partner who understands how to work with the big telecommunications companies out there, someone who could help us clean up, consolidate, and understand our bills. That was the first thing we tackled with TierOne.

What drew you to TierOne initially?

CS: We were purchasing a group of stores, and we connected to TierOne through that acquisition. The relationship was created by us reaching out and TierOne helping us, essentially asking nothing in return.

Now we're updating our infrastructure to save even more money, which is why

we're starting to switch over to Voice-over-IP schemes. We're rolling out that plan in all 80 stores and in our corporate locations.

What advantage have you gained by working with TierOne?

CS: TierOne came in and helped us talk to the big telecom companies out there that hide a lot of charges or make it hard to place charges with stores. TierOne's **inventory audit** cleaned that up for us. It helped us understand exactly what was going on with our billing.

How has partnering with TierOne changed the way your IT department works?

CS: Our IT team is 15 people, which sounds like a lot, but in a company of 3,600, it's really not. Working with TierOne has freed up two of my team members' time to pursue other things. They're not stuck tracking down bills or trying to figure out where charges are going. Understanding and simplifying our billing has also made it much easier to budget.

After having worked with a third-party solutions provider, what advice do you have for other organizations considering doing the same?

CS: One of the biggest aspects of being a good manager of IT infrastructure is knowing what to spend your resources on, whether that's people or actual hardware. You want to find solutions that are quicker, easier, cheaper, and smarter than what you can accomplish with the infrastructure and team you currently have, so pick and choose those wisely. Find an expert who can help you meet your goals without having to task your entire team with those projects, especially when there's talent out there who can help you quickly.



When you are ready to leave behind the service provider rat race and the revolving door of account reps, wasted hours on hold with support, or bills you can never get right. TierOne is compensated entirely by the service providers you select, but there are no premiums on those services. Best of all, TierOne services are complimentary! Call (417)TIER-ONE or email info@tieronesolutions.com when you are ready to simplify the way your organization connects and communicates.

Key Advocacy Wins for Independent Grocers

- ✓ Retail Glitch Fix
- ✓ Extended Hours of Service emergency declaration
- ✓ Funding for the SNAP Online purchasing program through May 2021
- ✓ An additional \$75 million in funding for the Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNip)
- ✓ Extensions of the New Market Tax Credit and the Work Opportunity Tax Credit
- ✓ Funding for vaccine development and distribution to frontline workers

NGA 2020 Annual Report

Last week the Missouri House and Senate paused for Legislative Spring Break, marking the halfway mark of the 2021 Legislative Session. So far it has been a whirlwind of a year, dealing with the lasting effects of COVID in the Capitol to a snowstorm blanketing the state, causing the canceling of a week in the Senate and several days in the House. There is still much to be done until the end of session, meaning long days and nights are ahead.

While there is much going on at the state level, there are many different moving parts nationally. From President Biden's executive orders, to details about the new stimulus package, and everything in between coming out of the US Senate and House, it can be complicated and tough to follow and keep up. We are appreciative of our Partners at

the National Grocers Association for their dedication to the grocery industry at the national level and working with us here in Missouri to ensure we stand united to ensure the continued

success of the grocery industry, both nationally and in the state of Missouri.

On Wednesday, NGA released the 2020 Annual Report, an in-depth look into the challenges and successes the year brought. It was a year unlike any other, with independent supermarkets put to the ultimate test of their abilities to serve and engage with their communities, while also complying with guidance on safety and sanitation to provide a secure shopping environment for their customers.

In true independent spirit, our retailers and wholesalers led the way in 2020 by not waiting for state or local edicts to adopt measures such as plexiglass barriers at checkout, social distancing indicators, mask requirements for associates and shoppers, temperature checks for employees and suppliers, and dedicated shopping hours for at-risk customers. On the government relations front, 2020 began with NGA building out plans to ensure independent grocers were represented in Washington D.C. However, NGA's entire focus quickly pivoted to the COVID-19 pandemic and supporting our members on the front lines. With your help, we achieved several wins in DC, which are listed in the graphic in the upper left. [Click here](#) to view NGA's entire 2020 Annual Report.

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