

Question & Answer Summary

Keeping Groceries Alive: Recruiting Store Managers March 11, 2021

Q: How many employees do you have?

Answered live. View recording at www.ruralgrocery.org under the Events tab.

Q: What is the recommended budget amount for hiring a store manager?

Answered live. View recording at www.ruralgrocery.org under the Events tab.

Q: How did you deal with floor renovations? What type is easiest to clean? What is your advice?

Tasha Malay: The installation company we hired worked over-nights, so we didn't have to close during the day for them to work. I think we had to shut down a couple of areas in the mornings while the glue finished drying before we allowed people to walk on it. I have only ever dealt with tile and our vinyl, so I can't speak for stained & poly concrete. I like the look of the concrete when it is done correctly - but I've seen where they chipped the tile and didn't get the surface stains cleaned from the concrete, so the pattern of the tile was still visible on the concrete. It made it look rushed and unfinished. Any floor you put a coat of protection on will have to be reapplied at some point, and that's why I like the vinyl so much. It is finished - there is no wax or poly to remove/reapply. It's also very easy to clean - the installer actually told us not to use detergent on it for the first few years, so we only mopped with warm water and it always looks nice. It also is not slippery, ever, even when it's wet, which our insurance company appreciates!

Carly Whorton: We chose to remove the tile and stain/polish the concrete floor. This option was one of the most expensive up front but in the long run will look the nicest (in my personal opinion). Any kind of floor covering you put down will have to live under constant foot traffic and shopping carts. The previous tile was chipping and very dirty at the seams (impossible to get clean). The only maintenance our floor will require is every ~5 years, we can mop on a new top coat layer. This would take ~24 hours to install/dry which would be a little tricky in a business that's open 363 days/year but it's also super infrequent (5 years).

Q: Tasha, do you have a specific strategy of managing your pricing, marketing, etc. with Dollar General in your town?

Tasha Malay: I don't want to say I don't compete with them - but I have come to terms with the fact that I CAN'T compete with them. They are a multi-billion dollar company, and with their direct-ship program and product movement, I don't stand a chance - honestly. We keep an eye on key items like milk, eggs, and bread and make sure we are competitive where we can be. This may not be the best practice for it - but again, I can't compete. We offer more variety of items (30 condensed soup choices vs. 5-10), better and more customer service, and we contribute back to the community through donations, sponsorships, and more wages than they do; and people notice. They may have 1 flavor of coffee creamer for \$1 less than us, but we have 20 more flavors. The people that have always shopped there will continue to - but we aren't actively seeing more customers choosing to shop DG over us.

Q: Carly, can you talk a little about the thought process behind staying in the same building, even after realizing that the previous owner had taken a lot of the grocery fixtures out (shelving, refrigeration...)?

Carly Whorton: We understood that prior to signing our agreement on the building. However, we liked the building because it sits directly on 75 Highway right in the middle of Holton. Plus, we would've had to install those pieces if we had moved to a different building as well.