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Foodservice

equipment & supplies

Seven Emerging Chains

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**2017 DSR of the Year:
Luke Green**
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for the students, who work alongside professionals as part of their educational experience.

Green was involved with the operation even before he transitioned to sales. From 2008 to 2010, while much of the facility was in the planning stages, he worked on specifying and procuring all of its equipment.

"I was a chef-instructor at the time, so I was using the equipment and involved in designing the facility, which opened seven years ago. Luke was always around and always available in the kitchen," Horsfield says. "He'd be measuring and asking a lot of questions about the functionality that we needed. After I moved into this position, I continued to go to him for whatever I needed."

In addition to his patience, Green's penchant for being thorough and inquisitive impresses Horsfield. "If I'm vague about what I'm after, he'll probe and give me multiple options, asking if I've thought of this or that other option. He doesn't just go ahead and do what you ask; he goes farther by saying, 'OK, that's good, but here's maybe a better alternative.' Often, that alternative is better and less costly than what I thought I wanted. From being an installer, he brings such a working knowledge of equipment to his sales role and that really sets him apart. He's more interested in providing great service based on what our needs really are than in just selling the highest-margin item."

That style of service has firmly established Green as a go-to guy at Kirkwood, and not just for equipping its kitchens. From the knife kits that every student entering the culinary arts program must have to the cooking-show-style demonstrations required as part of their final exams, which he helps to evaluate, he plays a personal role in their education.

Each semester, Green is a featured guest presenter offering insights on working with a DSR and on designing and developing restaurant operations. He educates students on products and equipment and helps to bring new staff

members up to speed, developing relationships and familiarizing them with his purchasing process so that they can reach out to him as needed.

While certain aspects of sales remain uncomfortable, Green has never regretted making the transition. In particular, he loves the entrepreneurial aspects of building and managing his own book of business. As Green gradually found his footing and increased his sales, the commission checks didn't hurt either.

Green also appreciates the fact that Rapids' leadership gives him free rein to pursue diverse projects and to work so independently, often wearing multiple and sometimes unconventional hats on projects.

Unlike some reps, who brag about prospects and add up their commission as soon as they get an appointment, Green keeps his business close to the vest, Schmitt points out. "He'll very seldom tell me about a project prospect until he knows it's going to happen. I sometimes have to drag information out of him about what's in his pipeline and how things are going. For instance, I had no idea the Hunt Brothers freezer deal was in the works until it was signed. But that's just Luke. He's not a gambler or a bragger and he doesn't get ahead of himself."

Going forward, Green has his sights set on continuing to build his business by

providing his own unique brand of service. At age 30, Green knows he has a long and open road ahead of him and, having checked his goal of earning DSR of the Year honors off his bucket list, is thinking about where that road might lead.

For now, though, Green's focused on building more business two hours to the west, in Des Moines, Iowa, and on learning to let go of some of the minutiae of project coordination that he enjoys in order to be able to do so.

"I've always been very hands-on in every aspect of every project," Green says. "But as my business has grown, I've had to let some of that go. It's getting more comfortable. We have great project coordinator support at Rapids, but it's tough to let go. You can't help but worry that someone else won't do it quite like you would."

In Green's case, that's probably true.

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