

MAY 2018

# Foodservice

equipment & supplies

A CHEF IS ONLY AS GOOD AS HIS LAST MEAL.



*FE&S' Facility Design Project of the Year: Café 36 at Microsoft*  
page 70

*The Future of Automation in Foodservice*  
page 84

2018 *FE&S'* DEALER OF THE YEAR  
**THE BOELTER COMPANIES**

page 46

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**70**  
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take as long for you to learn and become self-sufficient.”

The end goal of this training, though, remains focused on the customer. “Learn how to sit in front of a customer to learn what their dream is,” Chaplick says. “You can sketch it out, write the spec and be there for the entire process. Then, you are part of something from start to finish, and that’s something special.”

Indeed, Boelter associates’ ability to show empathy for their operator customers remains a distinguishing factor for the company. “People come to us because we are going to take the time to sit with them to understand their business,” Chaplick says. “The customer who calls in and asks, ‘Can you sell me a refrigerator, and what’s your price?’ — the first thing we should say is, ‘Tell me about your business and how you are using this equipment.’ Then, we engage them by asking if we can come see their business or have them come to us. If you can engage them and show you can bring something to the table, then they understand you are not just trying to sell them a piece of equipment.”

Boelter’s open and honest communication extends to its supply chain partners, too. “It’s the experience we want to provide all of our stakeholders. Trust and transparency don’t happen on their own. We have chosen key suppliers to work with, and we strive to always be better communicators,” Eric Boelter



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## SALES GROWTH

Boelter’s sales nearly doubled in a five-year span (2011-2016) and stayed solid in 2017. That kept Boelter at the No. 5 spot in FE&S’ 2018 Distribution Giants study, a position the company has maintained since the 2014 Distribution Giants study (the company bumped up to No. 5 that year from No. 7 the prior year).

### Year Sales (in millions)

2011 \$186

2012 \$203

2013 \$239

2014 \$260

2015 \$308

2016 \$355

2017 \$355

says. “That helps us to get across the finish line together, which is what we want. If we work hard to sell a supplier’s products, we want to know they are working hard for us, too.”

Despite its rapid growth — both financially and geographically — Boelter strives to maintain the warm atmosphere only a family business can have. And it starts at the top. “The owners know your name. He walks into the building and says, ‘Hello, I am Eric. How are you?’” Chaplick says. “He treats everyone equally — from the guy unloading a truck to the CAD operator to the \$5 million salesman.”

But this is about more than a warm smile and a handshake. “It’s important to know people personally. We want to know them, and you do need to be intentional about it,” says Eric Boelter. “You speak by your actions and not by what you say. You have to be approachable. People need to be able to come talk to me and Rick and feel good about it. It’s knowing you can make a difference no matter your role. We don’t allow process and standardization of process, which are important as you grow, to trump the customer experience. We need to have our