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## Regular Joe, Regular Folks

I have had the pleasure of speaking with Joe DePinto at various CSP functions and other events since he took the helm at 7-Eleven. I have always enjoyed our conversations and his ability to relate to those around him. I get the sense that he is well-grounded in reality and what is occurring in life and in business. Hey, this old Air Force guy holds no grudges that Joe is Army; I simply have enjoyed our discussions, and I respect the top-notch leadership he has shown at 7-Eleven.

That being said, I have to say that I was impressed and found further respect for the man following the CBS airing of the Feb. 21 episode of “Undercover Boss,” titled “Regular Joe.” I am not a fan of reality television; however, having read about “Undercover Boss,” I found the concept interesting, and even more so after learning that one of the CEOs to appear would be Joe.

Not only have I not been disappointed in the series to date, I was extremely impressed with the “Regular Joe” episode. Why? Because I personally believe that Joe DePinto, in that one hour on Sunday night, did more positive public relations for this industry than any industry association, marketing firm, public-relations company, etc., could have accomplished in years. Joe DePinto displayed the human side of not only a major global company and its leader, but also, and more important, the caring side of this industry that so many of us identify with and call home. I would think every

business owner, executive, retailer, supplier and all the others associated with this retail sector had to have walked a little taller, held heads a little higher, and carried a little more pride on Monday morning following the Sunday airing of “Regular Joe.”



### The Human Side

Having pride in the job that is done, the industry of which we are part, the employees that depend upon us, the customers we serve, the communities where we are located, and the standards and morals we each hold dear and sacred speaks to who we are. It is us, those individual souls, who merge into one collective being that serves our millions of customers on a daily basis across the great land and around the world. This indus-

try’s “Regular Joe” displayed that absolute human side of business and corporate (large and small), and we each should be proud of the picture he painted, one of an industry that could use a little artistic flair and patron recognition.

I visit numerous stores within this industry every week. I can tell you there are hundreds of Doloreses out there each and every morning at 5:30 a.m. serving customers with a giant smile on their faces, love in their heart and respect for the people they serve and the companies they are associated with. Customers probably do not know that many of those Doloreses are on dialysis waiting for a kidney, maybe a Bill who is undergoing cancer treatment, or Ralph fighting some other personal battle. What the customer knows is that Dolores is there every morning to say hello to her customers, those whose life she is most definitely a part of.

Yes, Joe discovered why a certain store in Queens sells more coffee than any other 7-Eleven in the system: The reason is named Dolores. Each and every one of you has Doloreses who work for you. Heck, I know of several working every morning as “coffee moms” for one company in northern Virginia.

I only wish there were enough space in this column to write about the others in “Regular Joe,” but there is not. It is these regular folks who make this a special industry doing a special job with special people. Be proud and be thankful for the class showed by Joe DePinto, this industry’s “Regular Joe.”