



Media Contact:

Grace Baird
GC Buying Group
grace@gourmetcatalog.com
gcbuyinggroup.com
+1 214 855 0005

For Immediate Release

GC Start the Year Conference Inspires Members for 2020

Dallas, January 28 – GC Buying Group kicked off the new decade with the 17th annual Start the Year Member Conference and Vendor Showcase. Held January 15 and 16 at AmericasMart Atlanta, the two-day event drew independent retailers from small communities and large cities alike. “This has been my favorite GC event yet and I learned so much,” stated Kirsten Gjesdal owner of The Carrot Seed Kitchen Co. in Brookings, SD.

Stores and vendors arrived ready to focus on what’s working for independent retailers. The private member meeting on Wednesday featured an open discussion of best-sellers, with stores sharing their most popular products, recommending brands to buy and contributing ideas for amping up in-store customer experiences. Wednesday’s meeting headlined guest speaker Dan Holman, business coach and consultant known as The Wealthy Retailer, with a focus on Retail Math. Also, on the agenda were Peter Giannetti, editor of *HomeWorld Business*, imparting sage industry advice, and Sybille Van Kempen, GC member and owner of Loaves & Fishes, presenting her new Bridgehampton Inn Cookbook. In keeping with the importance of creating great in-store customer experiences, a demonstration by Rosie Gill, director of education at Milk Street Cooking School, captivated the audience with a cooking class; and Mike Solaegui from Perfect Edge sparked excitement with an impressive knife sharpening tower demonstration. Mike continued to interact with store members at the Vendor Showcase on Thursday, commenting that the GC event was “the best he has ever attended.”

Dan Price, owner of Kitch in Mystic, CT, verified, “The Retail Math seminar was awesome – It was very reassuring to know that we track most – but not all – of the things we should.” Store member Doug Huemoeller, president of Kitchen Window in Minneapolis, MN, having attended all 16 years, extended “thanks to the GC team for another inspirational Start the Year meeting.”

The esteemed Vendor Showcase filled with products for the home – from gadgets to fine cookware to the latest in kitchen electrics – allowed 200 buyers to network with 130 vendors. David Shull, VP of Sales and Marketing for Jura, walked out of the showcase gushing, “This was amazing! We had so many

people come back after seeing us at GC Summer School to say how well our machines are selling!" Stores and vendors were inspired to engage and form relationships that generate orders. Kate Banks co-owner of VAIN Foods affirmed, "Connecting with potential GC customers was exciting. The show allowed me to share my passion for exceptional flavor and learn how to engage the end-consumer."

The private showcase allowed GC members to discover new merchandise and take advantage of exclusive special offers. Emerging trends like sustainability were evident in store discussions and featured in products at the event. Michael Twer, Founder and CEO of new GC vendor Delilah Home, commented, "Our 'wellness' concept resonated well with the Members."

Janis Johnson, president and founder of GC, summed up the positive vibe of the conference, pointing out, "the buzz started early and continued throughout both days." Johnson concluded by saying, "GC is thrilled and honored to work with such upbeat and energized retailers and to have this great opportunity with AmericasMart and IMC."

Meet GC Buying Group in Chicago during The Inspired Home Show, Booth S2222, March 14-17. GC will also host a Networking Breakfast for store members on Saturday morning, March 14 at McCormick Place, 8:30 to 10am, before the show's opening.

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About Gourmet Catalog & Buying Group:

GC Buying Group Members form the original and leading buying group in the kitchenwares industry. Celebrating 39 years in 2020, GC works to ensure the success of independent retailers. GC is now accepting applications for membership in the elite GC Buying Group. For more information, call: +1-214-855-0005, email: info@gourmetcatalog.com or visit: www.gourmetcatalog.com. Follow on Facebook, Pinterest and Twitter with handle: GC Buying Group.

Photos below:

January 15, 2019 | GC Store members during discussion at Wednesday's Members-Only meeting.



Jamie Butler owner of The Butler's Pantry



Laura Havlek owner of Sign of the Bear

January 15, 2019 | Rosie Gill with Milk Street and Mike Solaegui with Perfect Edge demonstrating at Wednesday's Members-Only meeting.



January 16, 2019 | Jacobsen Salt Co. table and Zavor table at the Vendor Showcase.



January 16, 2019 | Stores and vendors connecting during the GC Vendor Showcase



January 15, 2019 | Capital City Club after Market party.

