

This **article** was written for Hannaford Brothers “Voices” newsletter.

## **Hannaford U. Brushing Up on Leadership Skills**

Wouldn't it be great to attend college, and get a degree in just five days? No mid-terms. No term papers. Orientation and graduation all in the same week. Impossible, you say?

Welcome to Hannaford U., located at the Latham, N.Y. store. The course is the brainchild of Bob Schools, Director of Retail Operations for the Western Division.

This week long “formal” training and re-training program stresses a **knowledge and understanding** of Hannaford's “Standard Practices” and Festival strategy. It also focuses on leadership and communication skills to meet the challenges of an ever-changing retail environment, resulting in more efficient and profitable stores

“It gives us one facility within the division that can serve as both a role model for how a store should be run, and a place to do “test sets” in various departments before we roll programs out to the other stores,” Schools said.

### **A Well Rounded Education**

The program's initial phase is now at full throttle. Since early May, store managers from all over the Western Region have been attending classes, and returning to their stores with a much greater understanding of **every phase of the business**, from produce to leadership training.

Once all the store managers have attended the school, the district managers will follow. Eventually, assistant store managers will attend, as well.

Frank Graziano, manager of the Hannaford Retail Training School, is overjoyed at the impact the school has already had. The program's design is proving beneficial.

### **Sharing Ideas**

“We intentionally intermingled the districts,” Graziano explained. “We wanted to have managers from different areas interacting with each other, **transferring vital information** back and forth. The real measure of our success will be in how the store managers apply all the knowledge they received here to their own stores.”

Mike Simone is the store manager of the training school at Hannaford U. He has poured a lot of himself into this effort, and is gratified by the overwhelmingly positive responses he has received from the graduates.

“The managers are really embracing the program,” Simone acknowledged. “Anytime I can help someone become a more efficient store manager – well, that’s really rewarding for me.”

One of those managers is Ted McCue, who heads up the Nashua, N.H. store, and has been with Hannaford for 26 years.

### **Back to the Basics**

“It was great to get back to the basics,” McCue said. “Over the years, you tend to lose sight of the little things. **This experience refocused me.** I now know how many varieties of cut melons should be in my produce case. Basically, I’m now looking at my store with a whole new set of eyes.”

The new kids on the block reap huge benefits from the course as well. Dave Clearwater, who manages the Kingston store, has been with Hannaford just one year. Dave is clearly an advocate of the program.

“I have to tip my hat to Frank and Mike for putting this all together. What really got my attention was how willing they were to listen to the manager’s suggestions about improving the program. That really speaks volumes about the kind of organization Hannaford is. That never happened at Grand Union.”

Special thanks go out to Barbara Irish and Anne Spinks in Operations And Development, and to all the training specialists – Mike Downey, Stacey Turk, Kevin Loveland, Tom Alex, Donna Enny, Tom Jablonowski, Ron Biles, Gary McGrath, Lori Lettko, Wendy Bowman-Lanoue, and Mark Cooper. Distinguished praise, as well, goes out to all the department managers at the Latham store for their **extraordinary contributions** to the school.

Once again, Hannaford U. proves that it’s never too late to go back to school.