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CEO Interview for Restaurant Daily News

G&K Services: CEO Richard Marcantonio Highlights BioSmart™ Innovation for ProSura™ Food Safety Program

Richard L. Marcantonio is Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer of G&K Services, Inc., a publicly held company with nearly \$1 billion in annualized sales headquartered in Minneapolis, Minnesota. In a recent interview he emphasized G&K's company's strong record of innovation to support food safety initiatives:

What's your main line of business?

G&K Services is a market leader in branded apparel and facility services in the United States and the largest such provider in Canada. G&K operates over 160 processing facilities and branch offices, serving more than 160,000 customers. G&K's mission is to enhance image and safety in the workplace through innovation in all market segments, including the food industry.

What makes your company unique?

G&K is constantly innovating and has been doing so throughout its 106-year history. For example, G&K was the first company to introduce a closed-loop process designed specifically to support its food industry customers' efforts to prevent cross-contamination and support their HACCP program documentation. This closed-loop process is G&K's patent pending ProSura™ Food Safety Solutions program, which we have further enhanced with the recent introduction of BioSmart™ technology – an exciting innovation that provides significant value to the food industry.

What is BioSmart™?

BioSmart™ is an innovative textile fabric technology created by Milliken & Co. that binds EPA registered chlorine bleach* to the fabric surface and actively kills



bacteria and viruses including Salmonella, Staph, E-coli and Hepatitis A. Independent lab testing has confirmed that the chlorine bleach* used in G&K's proprietary ProSura™ wash formula kills 99.9%** of many common bacteria and viruses that a single chlorine charge will maintain efficacy for up to 12 weeks after the wash process. G&K provides a variety of food industry garments and wipers made from BioSmart™ fabric. These garments and wipers are recharged with EPA-registered chlorine in our facilities every service cycle and returned to G&K's customers ready to kill bacteria and viruses during the workday. Another important feature of the BioSmart™ technology is that it lasts for the life of the garment, making it an excellent value for everyday use.

What distinguishes G&K Services from the competition?

As I mentioned, G&K was the first company to introduce a comprehensive food safety solutions program to the marketplace. ProSura™ is specifically designed to meet the needs of G&K's customers in the food industry, where public health and food safety are critical concerns that demand the most stringent anti-contamination requirements are met. The ProSura™ procedures and protocols represent true innovation in garment collection, cleaning and delivery to mitigate the risk of cross-contamination every step of the way as the garments pass through the closed-loop process between G&K's facilities and its customers. No competitive program is as comprehensive as ProSura™. G&K is moving into the next generation of innovative solutions by offering BioSmart™ technology on garments and towels to actively kill bacteria and viruses while in use. Furthermore, G&K has an exclusive agreement with Milliken to offer BioSmart™ to the food industry – no other competitor can offer the proprietary and exclusive food safety solutions that we provide.

Who are your target customers in the food industry?

ProSura™ powered by BioSmart™ has benefits for the entire food industry – including food growers and processors, distributors and other industry suppliers, grocers, caterers and other food service facilities and restaurants. For example, G&K provides chef coats, aprons, cook shirts, pants and towels for the restaurant industry specifically. Recently, G&K expanded its offering with BioSmart™ garments in colors other than white, including a black waist apron for food service customers and a light blue frock for food processing companies. To help our customers to get the most value from their BioSmart™ purchase, G&K and Milliken partnered to create a series of customer marketing tools that we provide free of charge to be placed throughout a customer's facility to inform their clientele of their commitment to food safety. This program includes window clings, signs, postcards, digital images and co-op marketing funds to reimburse customers who use G&K's committed to food safety logo in their advertising.



What is your outlook in general for these innovations?

We continue to be very optimistic about ProSura™, especially given our now that we have an exclusive agreement with Milliken to market garments and towels made with BioSmart™ as part of our ProSura™ program. Market response to BioSmart™ has been positive since its introduction, especially among restaurants and food service facilities. As you know, all parties in the food industry must be vigilant when it comes to preventing food contamination in the food environment. ProSura™ powered by BioSmart™ is the most important innovation G&K can offer customers to further prevent contamination on garments and towels.

To what do you attribute G&K's success?

Certainly, our ability to listening to our customers and provide innovative solutions that truly meet their unique needs plays a key role in the success of G&K. ProSura™, for instance, grew out of working with our customers in the food processing industry who were looking for additional ways to reduce the risk of cross-contamination. BioSmart™ takes that thinking a step further and provides a vital solution for a more open environment like food preparation and retail. Our culture of providing innovative solutions to enhance our customers' image and safety needs, demonstrates our leadership position in the industry, continues to strengthen our competitive advantage and has allowed G&K to grow and prosper for more than a century.

For additional information about G&K Services, ProSura™ or BioSmart™, visit www.gkservices.com.

* When used in accordance with its EPA-registered label instructions.

** Laboratory conditions using AATCC 100 test method.