



Progressive Grocer Names Four Food Lion Leaders to 2019 "Top Women in Grocery" List

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SALISBURY, N.C.--([BUSINESS WIRE](#))--*Progressive Grocer* magazine has named four Food Lion leaders to its prestigious 2019 Top Women in Grocery, one of the food industry's highest honors.

Progressive Grocer's Top Women in Grocery award recognizes grocery retail leaders who demonstrate excellence in leadership daily throughout the industry, their stores and in their communities. The awards honor leaders in various categories. The Food Lion "Senior-Level" category winners include:

- **Linda Johnson, Senior Vice President of Human Resources**

Johnson's primary focus in 2018 was to oversee staffing for remodeled Roanoke and Norfolk, Va., stores; her strategies resulted in year-over-year hiring increases of 47 percent (Roanoke) and 54 percent (Norfolk). Her talent management strategy achieved a retention rate of 85 percent-plus for director level and above while increasing diversity in the category. Under Johnson's direction, her team recognized associates at certain milestones in their careers, such as 30, 35, 40 and 45 years of service. The company celebrated nearly 300 employees for their dedicated service to the organization by holding a luncheon in their honor, hosted by Food Lion's president. Linda Johnson is a native of Portsmouth, Va., and lives in Concord, N.C.

- **Deborah Sabo, Senior Vice President of Marketing**

With oversight of a multimillion-dollar marketing budget, five directors and more than 50 associates, Sabo steered Shop & Earn, Food Lion's new shopper rewards program, in its first year to save MVP loyalty card customers more than \$22 million on top of their usual MVP savings. She directed the company's new Food Lion to Go grocery delivery program, among other responsibilities. Responsible for the company's philanthropic platform, Food Lion Feeds, Sabo supervised the completion of a 500 million meal donation through the grocer's Feeding America-affiliated food bank partners in May. Deborah Sabo lives in Davidson, N.C.

The "Rising Star" category winners include:

- **Jennifer Brown, Category Manager**

Brown grew cookie/cracker sales by 5 percent, reversing a negative trend after only one year in the role, and, with her team, grew units by 5 percent and margin by 50 basis points over the previous year. She led a major project that consisted of the conversion of 45 items from a break-pack facility and transferring the items to the distribution center. Brown collaborated with the iconic Dewey's Bakery, based in Winston-Salem, N.C., to develop items to be sold exclusively at Food Lion to provide locally relevant product for customers. Outside of work, she volunteers at Rowan Helping Ministries, a feeding agency in Salisbury, N.C. Jennifer is a native of Salisbury, N.C.

The "Store Manager" category winners include:

- **Annette Johnson, Food Lion #1624 Store Manager, Virginia Beach, Va.**

Johnson led her store to a customer count increase over last year, adding thousands of shoppers even as her location underwent an extensive renovation. She developed a passion for having the fastest checkout in the chain's Southeast region, which greatly helped drive and retain the customer count increase her store experienced. This past year, Johnson received Food Lion's Regional Store Manager Award and ultimately garnered the banner's highest accolade, Store Manager of the Year, beating out more than 1,000 candidates.

About Food Lion

Food Lion, based in Salisbury, N.C., since 1957, has more than 1,000 stores in 10 Southeastern and Mid-Atlantic states and employs more than 63,000 associates. By leveraging its longstanding heritage of low prices and convenient locations, Food Lion is working to own the easiest full shop grocery experience in the Southeast, anchored by a strong commitment to affordability, freshness and the communities it serves. Through Food Lion Feeds, the company has donated more than 500 million meals to individuals and families since 2014. Food Lion is a company of Ahold Delhaize USA, the U.S. division of Zaandam-based Royal Ahold Delhaize Group. For more information, visit www.foodlion.com.

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