

AYOUB'S PULSE

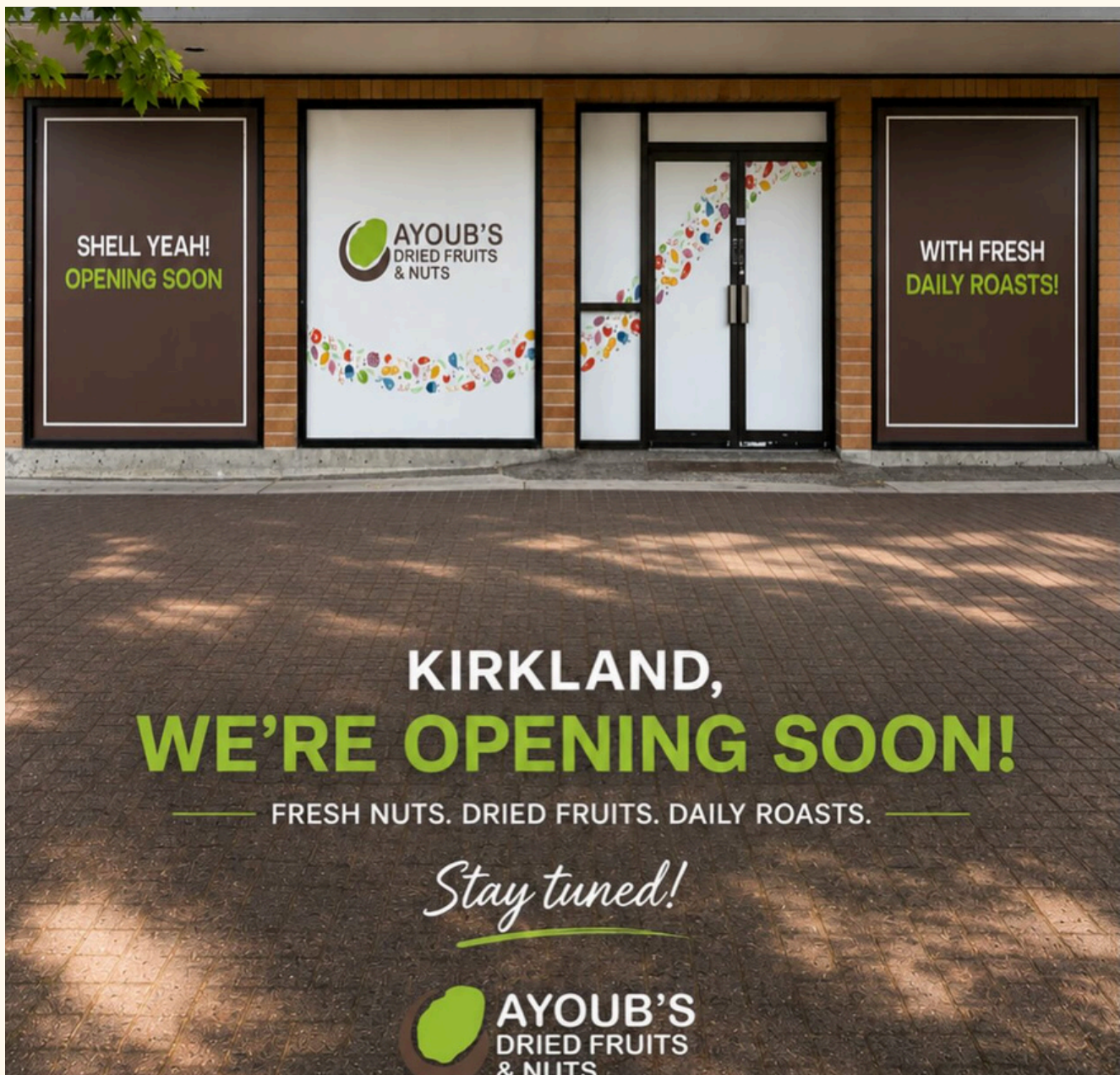
Internal Newsletter

LEADERS ARE MADE—AND GREAT LEADERS
MAKE MORE LEADERS

BALANCED STOCK AMID SUPPLY
CONSTRAINTS

CONNECTING OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE
WITH SALES PERFORMANCE

STRENGTHENING THE FUNDAMENTALS
WHILE PREPARING FOR GROWTH



Ayoub's prepares to open its first U.S. location in Kirkland, Washington.

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

LEADERS ARE MADE—AND GREAT LEADERS MAKE MORE LEADERS

In recent editions of *The Pulse*, we have been building a common language around leadership. We have talked about Store Energy—the emotional climate we create through our attitude, pace, presence, hospitality, and pride. We have also explored *The Charisma Myth* by Olivia Fox Cabane and its powerful message that charisma is not simply something you are born with. It can be developed through presence, power, and warmth.

I strongly encourage everyone to read or listen to this book. It is not only for managers. It is for anyone who wants to communicate more effectively, connect more deeply with others, and become more intentional about the energy they bring into a room.

That lesson leads directly into the theme of this edition: **Leaders are not born. Leaders are made.**

People Stepping Forward

Growth becomes real when people accept greater responsibility, take on unfamiliar challenges, and help others become better.

Our new **VP of Revenue, Nader**, is working to build a more engaged culture throughout the company. That means creating an environment where we contribute ideas, participate in discussions, and take ownership of improving the business together.

Engagement must also reach our customers. We should not simply complete transactions.



We should share our knowledge, explain our products, tell our stories, and allow customers to feel the genuine passion we have for what we do. That is how a visit to Ayoub's becomes more than a shopping trip.

Moe has been demonstrating that engagement through his focus on sales and his efforts to help the Coquitlam store reach its targets. Thank you, Moe, for stepping forward and helping your store move in the right direction.

Zaid is also stepping up to take on the Victoria store—our first store outside our home region. This will be an exciting opportunity, but it will not be easy. We will face challenges we cannot anticipate from here, and overcoming them will require resilience, grit, creativity, and a positive attitude.

That is exactly what makes this such an important leadership opportunity. You do not always become ready and then take on the challenge. Sometimes, you take on the challenge—and the challenge makes you ready.

As Zaid moves into Victoria, **Saida** is preparing to step into store management.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Continued from 03

Taking on that responsibility requires courage, discipline, and the willingness to grow through uncomfortable moments. I am excited to see Saida embrace that opportunity with grit.

Hamzeh is moving beyond the responsibility of one store and preparing to support more locations. At the same time, **Raha** is successfully growing into the store manager we have always seen the potential for her to become.

These transitions are important. They are how we create depth in the company. One person grows, another person steps forward, and a new opportunity opens for the next person. I also want to recognize all our managers who continue to carry the daily responsibility of serving customers, coaching their teams, protecting our standards, and keeping their stores moving forward.

Building the Systems Behind the Stores

While Nader and our managers are focused on our stores, teams, sales, and customers, **Alan and the warehouse team** are busy behind the scenes building new stores, developing new projects, and supporting new products.

I am especially excited about the new **point-of-sale system and rewards program** Alan is preparing to implement. He has put an enormous amount of time and care into researching the best possible option for Ayoub's—and trust me, it was not an easy task.

A system like this will eventually touch almost every transaction and customer relationship in the company. Choosing the wrong platform could create years of unnecessary friction, so the research and discipline behind this decision matter.

Raha also contributed several thoughtful ideas to the rewards program. That is exactly the type of engagement we want throughout Ayoub's: people closest to the stores and customers sharing ideas that can improve the entire company.

Our goal is to begin bringing these systems to life as early as the **first quarter of 2027**.

A special thank-you also goes to **James** for helping us get a better handle on the back-of-house areas of our stores. James is a master of space planning and organization. He can look at an area, see what is not working, and quickly find a more practical way to use the space.

If I were a store manager, I would be asking James to visit my store and give me feedback as often as possible. A well-organized back room may not be the first thing a customer notices, but it affects speed, productivity, inventory control, team morale, and ultimately the customer experience.

The Leadership Our Future Will Require

Part of my responsibility is to spend time thinking about the future of this company—where we are going, what we must build, and what Ayoub's could become over the next five, ten, and twenty years.

But I can only spend time working on tomorrow because I rely on your leadership to confront the challenges of today.

The future of Ayoub's is tied directly to the future of the people who choose to stay, grow, and build with us. The better we become as leaders, the larger and stronger a company we can build together.

So I regularly ask myself:

What kind of leaders will Ayoub's need five years from now? What about ten years from now? What about twenty?

Continued on 05

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Continued from 04

John C. Maxwell, my favourite leadership teacher, explains this beautifully in his book *The 5 Levels of Leadership*.

At **Level 1—Position**, people follow you because they have to. You have a title, but a title alone does not create trust, loyalty, or genuine influence.

At **Level 2—Permission**, people follow because they want to. You have earned their trust through your care, kindness, respect, and relationships.

At **Level 3—Production**, people follow because they respect your competence and the results you create. You know your work, solve problems, maintain standards, and move the team forward.

When people both trust your character and respect your competence, your leadership becomes much stronger.

But **Level 4—People Development** is where leadership begins to multiply.

A Level 4 leader does not only perform well personally. That person identifies potential in others, gives them responsibility, trains them, coaches them, and helps them become Level 2 and Level 3 leaders themselves.

That is the kind of leadership Ayoub's will need for the future.

Level 5 is earned over many years. People follow these leaders because of who they have become, what they represent, and the lasting impact they have had on people and organizations. But no one jumps directly to Level 5. Every level must be earned.

The Leaders Who Can Replace Themselves

Over the next five years, we intend to move into new regions. Eventually, we want to take Ayoub's into markets around the world. To do that, we will need regional leaders and VPs who understand this business inside and out.

But knowledge alone will not be enough.

They must also be capable of rapidly replacing themselves.

They must be able to find people with potential, train them, mentor them, give them meaningful responsibility, and prepare them to take over. Once a successor is ready, that leader can move on to the next store, the next region, or the next major challenge.

The most valuable leader is not the person who makes the company completely dependent on them.

The most valuable leader is the person who makes excellence repeatable.

Paradoxically, leaders who know how to replace themselves often become the hardest people in the company to replace.

They are rare because they do not simply create results—they create other people who can create results.

That is Level 4 leadership, and that is what will allow Ayoub's to grow far beyond the company we are today.

I Know Leaders Are Made

I know leaders are made because I have watched it happen in my own life.

Years ago, I was visiting stores every week and spending many hours driving. I began listening to audiobooks in the car. It started slowly, but eventually I became so excited about what I was learning that I could not wait to get back into the car and continue listening.

I listened to books about business, marketing, negotiation, personal development, and leadership.

Over time, I watched myself become a different person.

It did not happen overnight.

It happened one drive, one book, one mistake, one new concept, and one difficult experience at a time.

Continued on 06

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Continued from 05

To this day, I do not go a week without listening to a book, studying a new concept, taking a course, or learning through a seminar. I am not doing that because I believe I already have all the answers. I do it because the company we want to build tomorrow will demand more from me than the company we operate today.

The same is true for every one of us.

Leadership development must be intentional. You cannot wait for experience alone to teach you everything. Experience is valuable, but experience combined with reflection, study, feedback, and coaching is far more powerful.

This Edition's Leadership Challenge

Before the next edition of *The Pulse*, identify one person around you who has potential.

Teach that person something you know. Give them a meaningful responsibility. Coach them without taking the task back from them. Allow them to make decisions, learn from mistakes, and experience the pride of succeeding.

That is how Level 4 leadership begins.

And choose a book to read or listen to. Start with *The Charisma Myth* if you have not already read it, or continue with *The 5 Levels of Leadership*.

Do not wait for a new title before deciding to become a leader.

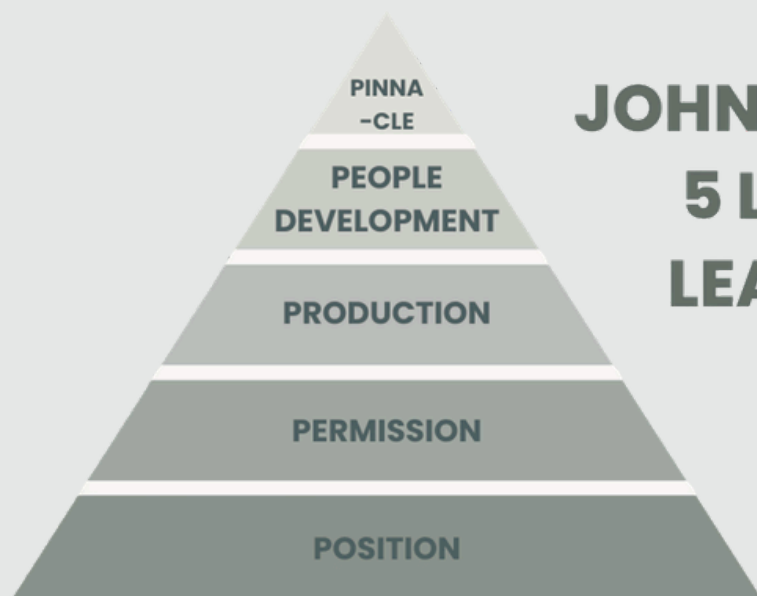
Leadership begins with how you show up today: how you respond under pressure, how you make people feel, how you protect the energy of your store, how willingly you share your knowledge, and whether the people around you become better because you were there.

Thank you to everyone who is stepping forward.

We are not only building new stores. We are building people who will one day be capable of building teams, stores, regions, and an international company.

That is how the future of Ayoub's will be built.

AMIR HOSH



JOHN MAXWELL'S 5 LEVELS OF LEADERSHIP SKILLS

CORRESPONDENCE



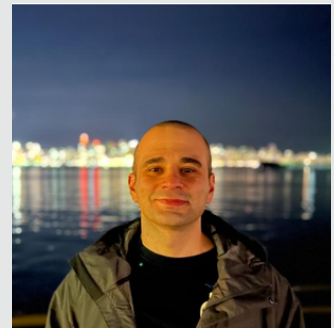
NADER VAKILI



ALAN SALIH



GILLIAN BRADY



NAVID AGHDAM



EDYTA ALFAWICKA

This issue of Ayoub's Pulse was shaped by insights and reporting from teams across the business. The perspectives shared here reflect ongoing work in operations, marketing, merchandising, inventory, and leadership.

OPERATIONS: STRENGTHENING THE FUNDAMENTALS WHILE PREPARING FOR GROWTH

BY ALAN SALIH

As Ayoub's wrapped up Q2, VP Alan Salih thanked teams across the stores, warehouse, and support departments for their continued hard work and commitment.

"Q2 brought its share of challenges, but it also brought meaningful progress," Salih said in his quarterly update. "Every improvement we make, big or small, helps strengthen our operations and better position Ayoub's for long-term success."

IMPROVING OPERATIONAL CONSISTENCY

One of the biggest areas of focus during the quarter was improving operational consistency. Teams continued reinforcing inventory accuracy,

COGS management, payroll management, waste control, and overall store organization.

"These fundamentals allow us to deliver the quality our customers expect while operating efficiently and profitably," Salih noted.

BRINGING BACK THE GREEN BIN INITIATIVE

To better understand product loss, Ayoub's brought back the Green Bin initiative.

Stores will once again return waste and spillage to the warehouse at the end of each month. This will provide better visibility into where product losses are occurring and help identify opportunities to reduce waste and improve processes.



TESTING TOAST POS AT PARK ROYAL

Ayoub's also began testing Toast POS at the Park Royal location.

"We are very happy with the results so far and will continue evaluating the platform over the coming months," Salih said.

The goal is to invest in systems that simplify operations, provide better reporting, and support the future growth of the company.

A NEW MERCHANDISING ASSESSMENT

Another milestone was the completion of the first Ayoub's Quarterly Visual Merchandising Scorecard & Assessment, developed by Edyta.

The assessment provides every store with a consistent way to evaluate merchandising and presentation standards while identifying opportunities for improvement.

"It will play an important role in helping us elevate the shopping experience for our customers, create greater consistency across all locations, and ultimately drive stronger sales," Salih added.

He also thanked Edyta for leading the initiative and developing the resource for store teams.

UPDATES TO OPERATING STANDARDS

Several operating standards were introduced or reinforced during the quarter.

Stores are now required to maintain an entrance mat at the front door to help reduce slipping hazards.

Expectations also continue to be reinforced around inventory adjustments, waste reporting, backroom organization, and operational consistency across every location.

COGS REMAINS A PRIORITY

Managing COGS remained one of the company's highest priorities throughout Q2.

While several stores showed improvement, there is still an opportunity to become more consistent across the company.

Accurate inventory counts, proper product rotation, disciplined waste reporting, and strong execution will continue to be key drivers of success.

NAVIGATING SUPPLY AND ECONOMIC PRESSURE

The operating environment continues to be challenging.

Ayoub's is still navigating supply challenges involving products sourced from the Middle East, while the Canadian economy continues to put pressure on consumer spending.

Customers are becoming increasingly price-conscious, and the company expects that trend to continue into the next quarter.

Ayoub's will continue monitoring product availability, supplier costs, and market pricing carefully to remain competitive while continuing to deliver the premium quality, freshness, and value that define the brand.

VICTORIA AND SEATTLE MOVE FORWARD

Construction is progressing on the company's two newest locations in Victoria, British Columbia, and Seattle, Washington.

Both projects are moving forward as planned, with openings currently targeted for September.

"These new stores represent another important milestone in Ayoub's continued growth, and we look forward to sharing more updates as we get closer to opening," Salih said.

Q3 PRIORITIES

As Ayoub's moves into Q3, the priorities remain clear: execute the fundamentals exceptionally well.

That includes staying focused on inventory accuracy, reducing waste, controlling COGS and labour costs, maintaining outstanding merchandising standards, and delivering a consistent customer experience.

"By staying focused on inventory accuracy, reducing waste, controlling COGS and labour cost, maintaining outstanding merchandising standards, and delivering a consistent customer experience, we will continue building a stronger and more successful Ayoub's," Salih said.

He closed the update by recognizing the team's continued contribution.

"Thank you again for everything you do every day," he added. "I truly appreciate your dedication, teamwork, and commitment to making Ayoub's better each and every day."

LEADERSHIP & CULTURE: CONNECTING OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE WITH SALES PERFORMANCE

BY NADER VAKILI



Leadership development in Q2 focused on connecting operational excellence with sales performance.

In his quarterly update, VP Nader Vakili identified “stronger product knowledge, upselling and customer engagement” as key parts of delivering a premium customer experience.

He also pointed to “outdoor sampling, promotion execution and Google Review generation” as continuing priorities, alongside “building a coaching culture through consistent observation, feedback and follow-up.”

CONNECTING OPERATIONS TO SALES

One of the main training initiatives was Operations to Sales Management, which Vakili described as “linking operational discipline to revenue growth.”

The Monthly Store Assessment Program focused on “standardizing coaching and performance across all stores.”

Vakili also highlighted weekly store recaps and one-on-one coaching as tools for “continuous team development.”

STRENGTHENING CUSTOMER RETENTION

The Customer Retention Program focused on “converting first-time visitors into repeat customers.”

This work supported the broader emphasis on product knowledge, upselling, customer engagement, and sales performance.

LEADERSHIP SPOTLIGHTS

Vakili highlighted **James Mohajer**, the Lonsdale store manager, for his work in supporting Denman’s operational standards and team development.

“James played a key role in strengthening Denman’s operational standards while developing the team’s capabilities,” Vakili said.

At Kitsilano, **Raha Hashemi** was recognized for establishing a consistent coaching rhythm.

“Raha has built a strong coaching rhythm by providing clear, individual feedback every week,” Vakili added.

“Her consistent focus on customer experience and team development has helped create accountability across the store.”

KITSILANO TEAM RECOGNIZED

Vakili also recognized Ayoub’s Kitsilano team for its strong execution during the quarter.

“The Kitsilano team has demonstrated excellent consistency in coaching, customer service and operational execution,” he noted. “Their disciplined weekly follow-up and continuous improvement mindset have created a strong culture of accountability.”

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES AHEAD

Looking ahead, Vakili identified several development opportunities:

“Leadership assessments for emerging managers,” along with coaching on “basket building, customer engagement and sales conversion.”

He also emphasized “strengthening manager presence during peak traffic.”

Leadership development will continue through High Output Management, Multipliers, and The Starbucks Experience.

BEHAVIOURAL FOCUS

“Our focus is simple,” Vakili said. Teams are expected to:

- Start every shift with a brief huddle.
- Observe and coach in real time.
- Ask more open-ended questions.
- Read each customer before recommending products.
- Confidently ask satisfied customers for Google Reviews.
- Recognize great behaviours immediately.

This version keeps the reporting style consistent by clearly attributing Nader’s wording throughout and using direct quotations wherever his questionnaire provides complete statements.

MARKETING: BUILDING MOMENTUM ACROSS CHANNELS

BY GILLIAN BRADY

Q2 campaigns combined promotional activity with continued work on customer retention, WhatsApp marketing, and in-store communication.

Marketing activity in Q2 combined major promotional campaigns with continued development of customer retention, WhatsApp marketing, and in-store communication strategies.

The Anniversary Sale ran across email, WhatsApp, and digital channels, featuring sitewide savings, early access for subscribers, and coordinated promotional messaging throughout the campaign. The 2026 sale outperformed the previous year despite offering a lower 15% discount.

Email was the strongest revenue driver, while WhatsApp converted 5.4 times more efficiently than email. Overall May sales increased 16% year over year.

SEASONAL CAMPAIGNS

The Father's Day campaign showcased premium gift boxes, gift cards, and thoughtful snack gifts. The campaign was supported by lifestyle creative, customer reviews, gift inspiration, and a dedicated landing page connected to a website banner. The landing page received 202 visits and converted 9.15% of visitors into customers.

Limited-time free gift initiatives also ran during the quarter. These included free Spicy Cashews for Canada Day and free Milk Chocolate Rocks for World Chocolate Day.

The campaigns were supported across email and WhatsApp with dedicated creative, reminder messaging, and clear redemption instructions. Marketing also supported FIFA World Cup activity through dedicated email campaigns and homepage banners. These campaigns connected tournament moments with timely promotions and themed messaging throughout the competition.

CUSTOMER RETENTION DEVELOPMENT

Work continued on improving post-purchase email journeys by analyzing customer purchasing behaviour and refining the timing of second- and third-purchase communications.

A four-part Klaviyo email flow was created for one-time purchasers who signed up for the newsletter during checkout.



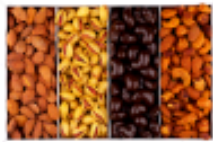
IT'S NOT A
"DAD BOD"
It's a **Father Figure.**



Don't forget Dad's favorites this
June 21st.

[Shop Dad's Favourites](#)

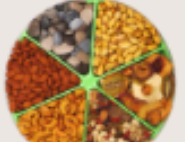
**For The Man Who Never
Asks For Much.**



Ayoub's Signature
Collection Gifting
Tray



Gift Box - Lime &
Pepper Kernel Mix



Ayoub's Deluxe
Tasting Tray - 12"

A separate flyer was developed for customers who were not subscribed. The flyer included a QR code and a free peanut butter incentive.

WhatsApp broadcasts continued to support major campaigns through promotional reminders and limited-time offers alongside email marketing.

IN-STORE COMMUNICATION

Planning also began for a dedicated email strategy for customers who sign up in-store.

The strategy includes a landing page featuring monthly offers, which will be updated each month. This will allow marketing to promote exclusive in-store offers while keeping the messaging separate from online promotions.

The proposed landing page may also develop into an In-Store Hub, a central destination for monthly store promotions, new product launches, packaging updates, store news, and other retail-focused content.

One potential feature is a Staff Pick of the Month, where a different team member recommends a favourite product and shares why they enjoy it.

Other ideas being considered include:

1. What's New In Store updates
2. Meet the Team spotlights
3. Monthly recipes or serving inspiration
4. Behind-the-scenes roasting or bakery highlights

5. Upcoming in-store events

6. "Did You Know?" facts about products or sourcing

7. Seasonal favourites and manager recommendations

Manager feedback will help identify what customers would find most valuable and which ideas could strengthen the connection between stores and the community.

NEXT MONTH'S FOCUS

The next month will include the launch of the in-store landing page promoting exclusive monthly offers.

Customer retention journeys will continue to be optimized, with a focus on increasing second- and third-purchase rates through more data-driven email timing.

Seasonal promotional activity will include Labour Day and Trail Mix Day across email, WhatsApp, and digital channels. Product discovery content will highlight recipes, serving ideas, and customer favourites to encourage customers to explore more of the Ayoub's range.

Planning will also begin for Black Friday and Cyber Monday, the largest campaign period of the year.

Preparation will include promotional strategy, creative direction, customer segmentation, automation planning, landing pages, lead-generation initiatives, and campaign testing ahead of launch.



MERCHANDISING: ELEVATING THE AYOUB'S EXPERIENCE

BY EDYTA ALFAWICKA



Every detail in our stores contributes to the story we tell our customers. Recently, visual merchandising efforts have focused on creating an even more refined, premium shopping experience from the moment a customer walks through the door.

Across locations, teams continued strengthening the presentation of the Signature Collection, enhancing gifting displays, and refining the customer journey through thoughtful merchandising.

From impactful entrance displays and beautifully curated gift presentations to clean sightlines and well-balanced product stories, the goal remained the same: to create stores that inspire, delight, and reflect the exceptional quality of the Ayoub's brand.

VISUAL MERCHANDISING SPOTLIGHT

As standards continue to rise across all locations, several reminders remain especially important. Seasonal features should create a memorable first impression and capture attention within the first three to five seconds of entering the store.

Gift boxes, baskets, and Signature Collection displays should remain beautifully styled, fully stocked, and ready for gifting.

Every display should tell a clear product story that feels inviting, intuitive, and easy to shop.

Clean windows, polished fixtures, organized shelving, and impeccable presentation all reinforce the premium nature of the brand.

Displays should also be refreshed throughout the day. Products should be front-faced, replenished, and visually balanced so the store continues to look its best.

The Weekly Store Cleaning & Visual Merchandising Checklist should continue to support a consistent Ayoub's experience across every location.

COMING SOON: A NEW VISUAL MERCHANDISING TRAINING HUB

One of the projects Edyta is most excited to share is the new Ayoub's Visual Merchandising Training Hub, developed in collaboration with **Karla Bonastre Chavez**. Launching soon, the YouTube-based training library will become a centralized learning resource available to every Ayoub's team member.

Designed to support both new and experienced employees, it will feature concise, hands-on training videos covering:

- Signature gift box assembly and folding techniques
- Professional gift basket creation
- Packaging and presentation standards
- Visual merchandising best practices
- Seasonal display execution
- Product styling and presentation tips

The initiative is an important step toward creating consistent merchandising standards across all stores while making training more accessible, practical, and inspiring. The goal is to provide every team member with the tools and confidence needed to deliver the exceptional presentation customers have come to expect from Ayoub's. Together, the focus is not only on merchandising products, but on creating memorable experiences that make every visit to Ayoub's feel special.

INVENTORY: BALANCED STOCK AMID SUPPLY CONSTRAINTS

NAVID AGHDAM

Overall inventory health was generally balanced last quarter. Availability was tighter in two areas: products sourced from the Middle East and the “Fancy” California-sourced range.

The rest of the assortment remained stable, with no critical shortages or significant overstock.

TOP-PERFORMING CATEGORIES

Iranian mulberries, Medjool dates, and tart cherries were the strongest-performing dried fruits.

In the nuts category, Iranian and California pistachios, organic cashews, and California almonds led sales.

In-shell sunflower seeds, along with Chubby and Gooshti pumpkin seeds, were the strongest performers in the seeds category.

CALIFORNIA-SOURCED AVAILABILITY

Based on current supplier guidance, “Fancy” California-sourced products are expected to remain out of stock through August 31, 2026, while suppliers transition to the new crop. Temporary alternatives are being evaluated to minimize the impact on stores during this period.

MIDDLE EAST SUPPLY CHALLENGES

Products sourced from the Middle East have

experienced recurring shortages because of regional conflict and shipping constraints.

The next shipment is currently expected by July 31, 2026, although the timing remains subject to changing logistics conditions.

Maritime conditions in the region remain highly disrupted and continue to change quickly.

AGING-INVENTORY PRIORITIES

California peaches, California pears, and goji berries are selling below forecast and currently present the highest aging-inventory risk.

Stores should prioritize sell-through and avoid unnecessary replenishment where on-hand inventory is already sufficient.

Product visibility should also be improved through displays, staff recommendations, or approved promotional activity.

PRIORITIES AHEAD

Priorities soon will include strengthening supply continuity by qualifying backup suppliers and temporary alternatives for products facing recurring supply-chain risks.

Work will also continue on a new store-ordering process, with attention to supplier lead times and established reorder points. The goal is to improve store-ordering accuracy and efficiency.

Another priority is reducing aging inventory through tighter purchasing controls and coordinated store-level sell-through plans for slower-moving products.



EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT: CELEBRATING SUCCESS

MOHAMMAD ABDALLAH

**Department / Store:**

Ayoub's Denman Store

Recognition highlight:

Mohammad made an immediate impact through his positive attitude, customer engagement and willingness to learn. He embraced coaching, excelled in sampling and quickly became a valuable contributor to the team.

Mohammad's coachability and enthusiasm have made an immediate difference. He represents exactly the kind of customer-first mindset we want to build across our stores.

Leadership note:

Mohammad is a great example that leadership starts with attitude, not title. His initiative and genuine care for customers have set an excellent example for the team.

EACH QUARTER, WE RECOGNIZE A TEAM MEMBER WHOSE WORK REFLECTS OUR STANDARDS, VALUES, AND COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE.

Internal Newsletter



**EACH ISSUE BRINGS TOGETHER THE WORK, INSIGHTS, AND PRIORITIES
SHAPING AYOUB'S ONGOING PERFORMANCE. FOR FEEDBACK OR
SUGGESTIONS, PLEASE REACH OUT TO HAMID@AYOUBS.CA**

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