“I am able to discuss things at a higher level now.”

— Lynnie Nojadera, Apprentice Program Alumni from Quebec Distributing Co.
INSIDE

Cultivating the Industry’s Next Generation of Leaders .............................................. 2

Learning .......................................................................................................................... 5

Professional Development ............................................................................................... 6

Applications ..................................................................................................................... 7

Who Becomes an Apprentice? .......................................................................................... 9

Meet: Lynnie Nojadera ..................................................................................................... 10

Meet: Troy LeCheminant ................................................................................................. 12
CULTIVATING THE INDUSTRY’S NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERS

As part of its mission to promote and support the industry, the Fresh Produce & Floral Council is committed to helping cultivate and develop the next generation of industry leaders. The FPFC Apprentice Program was created to provide professionals from every department and at every level the experience, education and skills they need to succeed and lead.

FPFC Apprentice Program learning objectives are focused on providing exposure to the entire supply chain, as well as focusing on real-world challenges and the assets and resources that can be used when facing them.

Because success in the fresh produce and floral industry is still very reliant on face-to-face interactions and strong business networks, FPFC Apprentices attend networking events with industry mentors and participate in service activities with others in the industry. Professional development in the FPFC Apprentice Program also includes group projects and experience and training in public speaking.
The FPFC Apprentice Program is a great way to give [people new to the supply side] exposure to various aspects of the industry — increasing their knowledge and building their networks."

— Greg Corrigan, Director of Produce and Floral, Raley’s Supermarkets
“Any company would get a huge benefit from having an employee attend this program.”

— Bill Brooks,
President and CEO,
Westlake Produce Company
LEARNING

A primary goal of the FPFC Apprentice Program is to provide participants with the knowledge they need to build not just their own careers, but also the future of the industry.

Field tours
Apprentices have the opportunity to visit a variety of growers during tours planned by the FPFC and in conjunction with the Center for Growing Talent by PMA

Facility tours
Apprentices tour several packaging and shipping facilities and make a trip to the L.A. Wholesale Market

Retail tours
In conjunction with the Center for Growing Talent by PMA, Apprentices visit Los Angeles area retailers

Educational sessions
Educational sessions include panels and speakers on a variety of topics relevant to the future and development of the industry

“The FPFC has built a great program.”
—Kent Kuwata, Smart & Final
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

As part of their participation in the FPFC Apprentice Program, Apprentices are given the opportunity to develop skills and contacts that will help them develop into industry leaders.

• **Group projects**
  Apprentices are given group assignments that encourage them to learn to reach out to contacts, divide work product and prepare a final presentation.

• **Public speaking**
  Apprentices are given the opportunity to develop their public speaking skills both through practice and consultation with a professional speaking coach.

• **Networking**
  Each Apprentice is assigned an industry mentor with whom they attend FPFC Membership Luncheons and the Southern California Fresh Produce & Floral Expo.

• **Service**
  As part of the program, Apprentices volunteer at City of Hope’s Walk for Hope and find items for the FPFC’s Annual Holiday Luncheon and Charity Auction.

• **Team building**
  Apprentices are encouraged to work as a team and are given the option of attending the FPFC Bowling Tournament as a team.
APPLICATIONS

Applications for the FPFC Apprentice Program are available at the end of the year for the following year. The FPFC Apprentice Program is not restricted to sales, marketing and operations professionals. All employees of FPFC member companies looking to expand their experience and exposure to the supply chain are encouraged to apply.

“Our Apprentices have gained industry knowledge, confidence and, of course, applicable networking prospects.”

— Sean McClure, Director, National Procurement, Ready Pac Foods
“The relationships developed during the program have provided immediate value in these young careers.”

— Jack Gyben, Vice President and Partner, Progressive Produce, LLC
WHO BECOMES AN APPRENTICE?

FPFC Apprentices come from every facet of the industry: growers, wholesalers, distributors, processors, and retailers, as well as allied industries like transportation/logistics, trade associations and food banks.

Apprentices are not necessarily novices. Many Apprentices are accomplished professionals who have changed industries or departments and are looking to expand their knowledge and build on their experience.

A number of FPFC member companies have seen the benefit of the FPFC Apprentice Program and have sent applicants to the program each year.

Ready Pac Foods is one such company, and Sean McClure, Director of National Procurement confirms that he has seen a “distinct positive change” in their Apprentices. “They have grown both personally and professionally, throughout and following the program,” he says. “Our Apprentices have gained industry knowledge, confidence and, of course, applicable networking prospects.”

Progressive Produce, LLC and their subsidiary Pathfinder Logistics have also sent more than one employee through the FPFC Apprentice Program. Vice President Jack Gyben says, “We send applicants every year because we get so much value from the FPFC Apprentice Program. The relationships developed during the program have provided immediate value in these young careers.”

Raley’s Supermarkets has had multiple Apprentices, as well. Greg Corrigan, Director of Produce and Floral says the program is valuable to Raley’s for the breadth of industry knowledge it provides. “People new to the supply side, who don’t know a lot of people need an education about the various aspects of the industry,” he says. “The FPFC Apprentice Program is a great way to give them that exposure—increasing their knowledge and building their networks.”
Meet:

Lynnie Nojadera

Lynnie Nojadera of Quebec Distributing Co. applied for the FPFC Apprentice Program because she wanted to learn more about the industry. “I wanted to learn more about not just what I do, but how things are done from the start to the end, from fields to the grocery store.”

The Apprentice Program gave her not just a learning tool, but also the opportunity to network outside of the industry area in which she works. She says that her favorite part of the Apprentice Program was learning about the people. “I really liked hearing from all of the speakers,” Lynnie says. “Hearing their stories and hearing how they got started. I also loved working on the group project. It allowed me to really get to know people and hear their backgrounds.”

Completing the Apprentice Program has given Lynnie more confidence in her industry knowledge. “I am able to discuss things at a higher level now,” she says. “I can have those conversations without being intimidated.”

Her boss, President and CEO Marvin Quebec, agrees. “She is so much more confident now,” he says. “And because she is more confident, I am more confident in her dealings with our customers.”

After completing the program, Lynnie was promoted to account representative and deals directly with customers.

One of those customers, Mike Short, Senior Buyer for Bay Cities Produce says he has seen changes in Lynnie since she completed the FPFC Apprentice Program. “She is a dream to work with,” he says. “As her skills and confidence have increased, so has our business with Quebec.”
Meet:

Troy LeCheminant

Troy LeCheminant from Westlake Produce Company had been working in the produce industry for more than six years when he applied for the FPFC Apprentice Program. “I was in year seven--right at the cutoff,” he says. “I had never worked at any other company and I had a narrow view of the industry. There were so many facets I had never been exposed to.”

Bill Brooks, President and CEO of Westlake Produce Company, believes exposure to the industry is a valuable aspect to the program, “Any company would get a huge benefit from having their employees attend this program,” he says.

“It gave Troy such good insight into all aspects of the produce industry, not just the ones he sees in our business. It proved to be a great asset to both Troy and to our company.”

Most beneficial, Troy says, were the field trips. “It was good to get outside my environment and routine and see some fields or a plant and see how the product is processed.”

“But the bus rides were great, too,” he adds. “Riding around on a bus all day provided a chance to talk with the other Apprentices and learn about them and their jobs. This business is personal; you can’t take people out of the formula and be successful.”

Having finished the program, Troy says the biggest change is that he now knows “what questions to ask.”

“I may not have the answers,” he says, “but I learned enough to ask the right questions.”

Kent Kuwata of Smart & Final, a Westlake customer, has seen the change in Troy. When he first dealt with Troy, Kent found him “very shy, not outgoing.” But, he says, “Watching and dealing with him after he graduated from the FPFC Apprentice Program, Troy is a more confident person with a better understanding of the industry and the ability to speak confidently to groups.”

Kent has also seen Troy take on a leadership role with younger professionals. “I see him talking to new, young, eager produce people who want to learn about our industry and he is able to give them an overview of what to expect. I feel the FPFC Apprentice Program has given him not only the knowledge, but the ability to take that role. The FPFC has built a great program.”