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## The Imperial Advantage

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It's one thing to make the country's best sugar. But getting that delicious sweetener onto grocers' shelves is another matter entirely. Making sure that consumers always have a fresh supply on hand falls to [Advantage Sales and Marketing](#), an Imperial business partner.



"Imperial's the expert at making the variety of sugar products that customers want," says Advantage's Tom Cunningham, Business Manager for Imperial's Texas sales. "Our job is to make sure that the products are positioned and priced correctly in all accounts where we represent Imperial."

Advantage represents hundreds of globally-recognized premium brands and high-profile customers that trust Advantage's industry reach, depth of knowledge, diversity of services and years of experience to help them grow their business.



Tom Cunningham, Advantage Sales and Marketing

For the last five years, Imperial has trusted Advantage to do just that. And it's working.

"We facilitate the sales functions that most manufacturers simply don't have the resources and personnel to perform," says Cunningham. "Headquarter representation, retail merchandising, reset services, administration services (including order-entry, order to cash and customer service) are some of the functions Advantage offers. Advantage is structured to perform these, and a myriad of other functions, in a cost-effective way that helps companies like Imperial keep costs low while delivering the very best cost and service possible to their customers."

Cunningham and his team of 15 professionals handle sales and marketing for both the Imperial and Dixie Crystals brands to the following customers in Texas: Grocers Supply Brookshire Grocery, Brookshire Brothers

and Brenham Wholesale.

A typical day involves just what you might think: handling the hundreds of details that make sure the right product is in the right store at the right price at the right time. "We plan with our partners at Imperial 4 times a year to update and outline changes to our plans based on market changes and competitive conditions," says Cunningham.

"Forecasting promotional spend and product needs includes determining how many pallets of sugar products will be sold to each customer, based on the depth and breadth of promotional activity along with whether special displays will be required. Advantage also ensures that the Imperial products command the best shelf position, based on dollar sales and unit movement, so consumers can easily find the Imperial and Dixie labels they're looking for."

"Brand blocking" is one way to do that. When customers come up the aisle, they'll see a solid block of Imperial or Dixie Crystal products on the store shelf, all lined up in order with their brand-specific logo packaging facing front and center.

For more than 20 years, Advantage Sales and Marketing has specialized in helping with sales, merchandising, category management and marketing services to major-label brand name manufacturers, suppliers and producers of food products and consumer packaged goods.

Their relationships include a variety of trade channels such as grocery, mass merchandise, specialty, convenience, drug, dollar, club, hardware, and home centers.

Jeana Hines, Imperial's Director of Consumer Sales sums up the benefits of the Imperial/Advantage partnership succinctly: "Advantage helps us create outstanding value for our customers through superior sales execution, operational excellence and innovative marketing services every day. And with Thanksgiving and Christmas, the highest consumption periods for sugar right around the corner, we're anticipating yet another successful holiday program in partnership with Advantage."



Jeana Hines, Imperial's Director of Consumer Sales

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