



## Darrin Johnston

*Meyer Corporation  
Managing Director*

**PLAYER'S CREDENTIALS:** Darrin Johnston started with Meyer 18 years ago as an entry-level account executive in the company's sales department. However, he has come a long way since then. Johnston climbed within the organization and by 2014, he was the svp/sales, a position that was created for him. By 2015, Johnston was named to the post of managing director of the company and is now in charge of the U.S. and Latin American divisions.

**WHAT TO WATCH:** With the recent paradigm shift in housewares, one that includes the increasing influence of the Internet on purchases, Johnston will have to navigate a changing retail channel that, he said, will require a significant investment in asset support in the coming years.

"The relationship between e-commerce and brick-and-mortar retail will continue to evolve, requiring us to be more diligent than ever in reviewing and adjusting our brand distribution and positioning strategies," Johnston said.

In his new role, Johnston will also be at the helm as the Millennial consumer comes to the forefront and begins making major purchases. "They have immense amounts of information at their finger tips and will be the most educated consumers the market has ever experienced. Speed will be the key to engaging this consumer, motivated by immediate gratification," he said.

Johnston noted that he plans to continue building the portfolio of brands that the company has been known for. "By continuing to focus long-term on how to expand that brand portfolio but also stay focused on growing the portfolio that we have, it's going to give us a lot of options and the ability to move and shift the right ways as the market evolves," he noted.

**PERSPECTIVE:** "As a company that has built its business on managing a significant brand portfolio, we are working very hard to insure we protect and maintain the value statement behind each of our brands. This is extremely important to the current and future health of our organization as well as our retail partners," Johnston said.

—Emily Cappelletto



## Scott Boilen

*Allstar Products Group  
CEO*

**PLAYER'S CREDENTIALS:** Scott Boilen started Allstar 20 years ago as a direct mail marketer, and then led the repositioning of the company in 1999 into an As Seen On TV marketer. Backed by such initial TV-to-retail hits as the Cold Heat soldering tool and Smart Spin food container system, Allstar skyrocketed to national DRTV prominence after the launch of the Snuggie blanket, which has sold more than 33 million units. Boilen described Snuggie as one of the first As Seen On TV winners to get a big lift from social media, now an integral marketing platform for Allstar. Allstar has followed up Snuggie with a succession of As Seen On TV hits, including several that have anchored the company's effort in recent years to build top-selling items into long-term, multi-SKU retail brands, such as Perfect cookware, Hot beauty accessories and Secret hair extensions.

**WHAT TO WATCH:** Boilen is steering Allstar into the back half of 2015 with no fewer than nine new TV-supported retail items, the widest slate of holiday rollouts in company history. Beyond the growing volume of TV-tested items in Allstar's pipeline, the company continues to advance a multi-legged marketing approach that complements its DRTV core with digital and social media strategies. This has accompanied an effort to identify TV winners that can move from As Seen On TV retail departments into permanent in-line retail distribution.

"This business is evolving into an entire big-box approach," Boilen said. "The retailer is looking holistically at the best ways to maximize sales throughout the store."

**PERSPECTIVE:** "In some ways it's a challenging time in the As Seen On TV business. This used to be a simple model—run TV to hit all the customers we needed to hit. Now the challenge is coming up with the right mix of TV, digital and social to make sure we're penetrating our market base and finding the eyeballs needed to create the demand our customers expect. It's also an exciting time. There aren't too many companies that are innovating. Innovation is hard and expensive. In the As Seen On TV business, you either innovate or die," said Boilen.

—Peter Giannetti



## Tony Gardner

*Libbey  
Chief Commercial Officer*

**PLAYER'S CREDENTIALS:** Tony Gardner was appointed to the newly created position of chief commercial officer for Libbey in 2014, with the responsibility of leading the revitalization and growth of the brand and the transformation of its commercial efforts globally—including sales, marketing, innovation, pricing and communications. Gardner had served as a consultant for Libbey for the eight months prior to his current role.

**WHAT TO WATCH:** Gardner is continuing to bring new life into the Libbey brand and the glassware category by moving from an industrial product mindset to a consumer focus. "It's not as much about volume as it is about value. We want to get the consumer's input first. We have the opportunity to be at the forefront of entertaining trends," Gardner said. This includes boosting social media efforts. Libbey is embarking on its #CelebrateThis digital marketing campaign, which aims to "enhance the consumer experience in the tabletop category."

Brand name relevance is also important, in what has largely become a private label glassware business in retail. Building a recognizable brand makes it more valuable to the end consumer and to the retailer. "We need to bring value, better product and better packaging," Gardner said.

At the Housewares Show, Libbey debuted two new brands as part of its "Own the Moment" company strategy: Just Indulge and Perfect Collection. The company also developed a new American-made glass formulation, ClearFire, to be utilized in a premium collection called Perfect Signature, which will debut at Bed Bath & Beyond this fall, with a broader retail rollout planned for 2016. Libbey also expanded its distribution relationship with Spiegelau, which had been in the U.S. food service channel, to include the U.S. retail market.

One of Gardner's goals for 2016 is to continue to "build brand health in all regions," he noted.

**PERSPECTIVE:** "Relevance rules," said Gardner. "We have to be relevant for all celebrations. Every time people get together to bond, we want to be front and center."

—Lisa Cowley