

## **Marsh –Experts in Fresh**

Marsh Supermarkets, Inc. started with one store in Muncie, Indiana in 1931. Today it is a leading regional food retailer in Indiana and Ohio. At the end of World War II, Ermal Marsh, the company's founder, expanded the original store to establish Marsh Foodliner as the first supermarket in Muncie.

Innovation is the keystone of the corporate philosophy at Marsh. In 1952, the company distinguished itself with its own popular brand of Marsh ice cream. By 1953, there were 16 stores in the chain, and Marsh Supermarkets went public.

During the 1960's, Marsh invested in the local "convenience store" trend. In the 1970's Marsh took an innovative step that launched the retail food business into a new era. On June 26, 1974, a cashier at the Marsh Supermarket in Troy, Ohio read the price of a 10-pack of chewing gum with a unique scanner, earning Marsh a place in the history books as the first grocery store in the world to use bar codes.

More recently, Marsh has introduced other electronic and internet-based innovations. The Marsh Fresh IDEA card electronically applies instant discounts to purchases, rewards customer loyalty and allows customers to receive unique MyMarsh one-to-one marketing offers.

Today, CEO Don Marsh is focusing on establishing Marsh Supermarkets as the "Experts in Fresh." An innovative new shopping experience was unveiled in December 2003 in Noblesville, Indiana. Mr. Marsh used tile throughout the store to produce a European ambiance. Visitors to the store enter through an eye-catching fresh flower market that opens onto a rotunda filled with mouth-watering ripe fruits and vegetables. At the hub of this grand wheel is a coffee bar, which sends out a breath-taking aroma that tempts customers to linger a few moments and get a java jolt before beginning their shopping rounds.

From the coffee bar, shoppers can view individual rooms flanking the inner circle, with prominent signs displaying the goods sold in each area or "shop" – seafood, pastry, meats, wine, frozen foods, pantry items, health and beauty aids, and much more! An imposing deli, which seems to carry everything imaginable, is accessible from the central hub or from an alternate street entrance. Shoppers can start at any point on the circle and progress from shop to shop via side entrances from one to another, or they can exit back to the rotunda and take a short cut to a shop on the other side of the market.

The individuality of the shops is emphasized by the decor of each one, especially the tile used on the floors. And that posed one of the biggest challenges faced by the store's developers. Marsh wanted this diversity, but they wanted a smooth shopping experience for their customers as well. The store was moving rapidly toward the deadline for its opening date, when the construction team ran into a brick – or in this case, a tile – wall.

Local contractors didn't have the manpower to lay 45,000 square feet of tile in the two-day window allotted to the job. In addition, tile contractors told Marsh that installers could not lay the tile in that short a time because the mortar would not set up fast enough for a large number of workers to get back onto the

set racks, display cases, and heavy equipment into place. This presented another problem due to cure time of traditional cement-based mortars.

The situation was looking bleak when John Turek, the Vice-President of Construction, remembered a large tile contractor he had once worked with in Chicago – Trostrud Mosaic & Tile Company. John contacted Mike Malizzio at Trostrud, who agreed to manage the project using the MAPEI *Granirapid*® System, which had been suggested by the tile supplier, Daltile. *Granirapid* is a particularly fast-setting latex-modified cementitious mortar, and Trostrud had experienced excellent results when using the system for tiling floors that had to be ready for use within a very short period of time.

Faultless project management was crucial to the success of the endeavor. Mike Malizzio assessed the size of the job, the different tiles involved and his manpower needs. Then he set to work, sending a crew of 12 employees down to Noblesville a week in advance to do the surface preparation. Greystone Concrete of Mooresville, Indiana was responsible for the ideal surface preparation. They used MAPEI Planipatch® to level some areas, and then they laser screeded the entire surface. Mike later said, “I have to give Marsh and Greystone the highest rating possible – it was the best job of leveling a concrete substrate I have ever seen.” Mike’s crew laid out the tiling plan, snapped lines and got everything ready for Saturday morning.

Back in Chicago, Mike was rounding up a work force of 90 tile installers. First, he contacted every available installer who currently worked with Trostrud or who had worked with them in the past, which accounted for 85% of the group that would go to Noblesville. Next, he called the Union in Chicago, Local 67. They supplied 10 additional tile setters. Then Mike reached 5 more installers locally in the Indiana area. In planning the project, Mike attacked the huge job as 90 little jobs. He set up tasks and timing for every man. He even asked the head of his company, Earl Trostrud, to come down to Indiana and watch over the project. Now they were ready.

On Saturday morning at 8:00 a.m. the plan was set in motion. All the other trades had moved their people and equipment off the site for the two days. Everyone rapidly got to work on the tasks Mike had assigned, and each man did his part of the job flawlessly. The challenge of an absolutely flat substrate had been overcome by the laser screeding. Using ½-inch trowels and MAPEI’s *Granirapid* thin-set mortar system, the men set the tiles in each “shop” and in the central rotunda. Then they grouted the entire 45,000 square feet. Working 16 hours on Saturday and another 8 on Sunday, they got the job done.

When the project was over, everyone was in awe. Sometimes rapid work results in a loss of quality, but not on this project! “After all the tile was installed, we did a cart test,” said Christine Stull of Daltile. “The shopping carts had been modified with a bushing system to reduce noise, and a different wheel was used to soften the impact in case there were any imperfections in the tile surface. Each grocery cart has a cup holder; the Marsh people put cups of coffee in the holders and wheeled their carts all over the store. No spills!”

As a side job, Trostrud workers installed three large tile murals on the exterior of the store. Marsh had sent people to Italy, where they took photographs of vineyards and farms. These images were transferred onto porcelain tiles with a laser and numbered to insure proper installation. The result adds to the feeling of European country charm that infuses the entire shopping experience.

Marsh's company philosophy of innovation and their high standards in construction helped them find a solution to their dilemma. The "we-can-do-it" attitude of the people from Trostrud and the MAPEI products they used to install the tiles from Daltile brought the product in on deadline. For the people who shop at Marsh, there is now a charming environment where fresh food is "the basis of true happiness!"

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