

Loblaw



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Sunday 12:00 AM - 12:00 AM

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Who We Are

Loblaws Supermarkets: A Brief History

1919 - Theodore Pringle Loblaw and J. Milton Cork open the first Loblaw Groceterias in Toronto. They have a new concept in grocery retailing, combining self-serve and cash-and-carry. No longer will customers have to wait for a clerk to fetch items from behind a store counter. Loblaw and Cork are told it will never work. But sales grow as customers take advantage of better quality goods at lower prices. Charles B. Shields, another prominent Toronto grocer, soon joins the partnership. Within a decade, the Loblaw chain has grown to over 70 stores in Ontario alone.

1928 - Loblaws Groceterias expands throughout Ontario and into New York State, Pennsylvania, and Chicago, Illinois. With 69 stores, a new state-of-the-art Loblaw Head Office and Warehouse is unveiled at Fleet and Bathurst streets, along today's Lake Shore Blvd, Toronto. Hailed as a model of efficiency, the Loblaw Warehouse includes its own electric tram railway, giant ovens for baking a ton of cakes and cookies a day, huge drums for blending tea, and 22 thousand feet of pipes for refrigeration. Warehouse employees have their own bowling lanes and an auditorium for putting on plays.

1933 - T. P. Loblaw, dubbed the "Merchant Prince" by the press, dies of complications from a minor sinus operation at age 60. When still a boy, with only a few dollars in his pocket, he arrived in Toronto determined to find work. He landed a job in a grocery store and decided that one day he would own his own business. By the time of his death, Loblaw Groceterias included over 150 stores in Ontario and parts of the United States. In addition to being a successful businessman, Loblaw was known for his philanthropy, which included support of local hospitals and the Boys Club.

1947 - W. Garfield Weston, president of George Weston Limited, acquires 100,000 shares of Loblaw stock from company co-founder J. Milton Cork when he offers to sell his stake. Grocery bag wielding families begin appearing on the cover of Weston annual reports. By the early 1950s, George Weston Limited has gained controlling interest of Loblaw Groceterias Co. Limited.

1949 - Loblaws again leads the way with the introduction of "healthfully-cool equipped air-conditioning," in its new "super markets." Other innovations include "magic carpet" doors that open automatically before shoppers. The post-war boom of the 1950s sees store sizes steadily expand, with larger and larger parking lots to accommodate an increasingly suburban class of consumers.

1956 - Loblaw Companies Limited is incorporated and acquires Loblaw Groceterias in Ontario and Loblaw Inc. in the United States. It also takes a major stake in National Tea, a large American grocery store chain, and soon acquires

controlling interest. Loblaw Companies Limited goes on to become one of Canada's largest private sector employers.

1959 - Loblaws enters the trading stamp wars with its own "Lucky Green Stamps." Featured on its saver books is Miss Lucky Green, a bright-eyed, pony tailed little girl. With wand in hand, she points the way to the "Magic World of Gifts" that awaits Loblaws shoppers. The Loblaws Lucky Green Stamp Gift Catalogue, with hundreds of household items to choose from, becomes a mainstay in many homes.

1967 - With Canada's Centennial celebrations underway, Loblaw Groceries shows its true colours in a patriotic display of flag waving. Hundreds of Canadian and Centennial flags are hung from its warehouse and head office to help mark a very proud moment in the country's history — the 100th anniversary of Confederation. The 'Loblaw News' writes that we've "never looked so colourful. The splendour of the 650 flags on Loblaws headquarters buildings was a stirring sight."

1972 - As price wars take their toll and losses mount, W. Galen Weston is appointed Chief Executive Officer of Loblaw Companies Limited. He begins cutting costs, while looking to rejuvenate the chain. A complete redesign of stores, inside and out, is initiated, and new Loblaws colours and logo are adopted. A new advertising campaign is rolled out, with Canadian actor William Shatner telling TV audiences, "More than the price is right ... but by gosh the price is right!"

1978 - No Name products hit Loblaws store shelves. With their distinctive yellow packaging and bold lettering, No Name makes a real statement, especially when it comes to value, offering significant savings over the national brands while matching their quality. As sales boom, Loblaws opens a prototype No Frills store, featuring the No Name line. "We had to close the doors at 10:30 this morning and let people in as other people left," beamed one Loblaws manager on opening day.

1984 - President's Choice makes its debut. Very soon, President's Choice products gain a devoted following among shoppers, who not only rave about the quality but can't wait for the next issue of the "Dave Nichol's Insider's Report," filled with great recipes and culinary tongue-in-cheek. The President's Choice brand proves such a success that it makes its mark on everything from toasters to train sets.

1989 - Because "Something Can Be Done!" President's Choice Green Products are launched by Loblaws. More than 100 'environmentally friendly' and 'body friendly' items are featured, including "100% Natural Source Lawn & Garden Fertilizer" and "Just Peanuts Old Fashioned Peanut Butter." It all creates a stir in some quarters. Pollution Probe's executive director resigns after being criticized for endorsing the line's non-chlorine bleached disposable diapers.

1998 - "Dear, please pick-up some milk and a mortgage." That's how one news headline greeted the unveiling of President's Choice Financial. With its in-store bank machines and pavilions, PC Financial offers the convenience of banking where you do your grocery shopping. Its "No Hassle" promise of no daily fees, no minimum balances and no restrictions strikes a cord with consumers — a real alternative to the big banks. Loblaws is the first major Canadian retailer to offer full-fledged banking.

2006 - Joe Fresh Style arrives in stores. The clean, crisp, and highly fashionable, not to mention very affordable, clothing line is designed by Joe Mimran, founder of Club Monaco. With the latest looks, Joe Fresh is attracting lots of attention. The only thing missing is the high price.

2007 - What's a PC GREEN Reusable Shopping Bag worth? About 99 cents and an estimated one billion plastic bags that won't end-up in our landfill sites each year! "Canada's Greenest Shopping Bag" is made of 85% post-consumer recycled plastic, twice the size of a regular grocery bag, and can carry 10 kilograms (22 lbs). Just days after going on sale, the green bag all but sold-out. Loblaws Executive Chairman Galen G. Weston says Canadians feel a sense of personal responsibility for protecting the environment. "The sell-out of our PC GREEN Reusable Bag confirms it — when retailers make it simple for consumers to do their part, they will embrace the opportunity."

2008 - Loblaw takes a big step in reducing its carbon footprint with the opening of its new environmental flagship Superstore in Scarborough, Ontario. The store cuts discharges from refrigeration units, that cause greenhouse gases, by 85 percent. A new low temperature system, the first of its kind in Canada, reduces carbon emissions by 15 percent, while recycling heat from refrigeration cuts the store's footprint another seven percent. "Loblaw is changing the face of grocery retail with this environmental Superstore," says Peter Love, Ontario's Chief Energy Conservation Officer. "Effective energy initiatives this store incorporates will serve as a blueprint for more to come."

2009 - On a windy day, there won't be any shortage of clean, renewable energy at the Atlantic Superstore in Porter's

Lake, Nova Scotia. In partnership with Scotian Windfields Inc., Loblaw Companies has installed the first wind turbine at a Canadian grocery store. The turbine will supply around 250,000 kilowatt hours of power a year or about one quarter of the store's energy needs.

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