

John Leone

JOHN.LEONE.USA@GMAIL.COM • <https://www.linkedin.com/in/johnleone/>
+ 1.860.840.1409 • P.O. Box 523882 • Miami, Florida, 33152 USA



Professional Summary

Dynamic commercial leader with 20+ years of experience in sales, marketing, distribution, and event production within the beer and beverage industry. Proven expertise in conceptualizing and implementing innovative strategies that drive business development and consumer engagement. Adept at creating impactful business plans, marketing campaigns, and brand programs while optimizing profitability and P&L performance. Skilled in managing large-scale events, brand design, merchandising, and creating world-class consumer experiences. Recognized for performance-driven leadership, coaching, and motivating cross-functional teams to achieve exceptional results. Strong communication, problem-solving, and interpersonal skills with a talent for building lucrative stakeholder relationships and advancing brand identity. Passionate about beer, craft beer, and brand innovation.

- Commercial Excellence
- Merchandise & Logo Design
- Large Event Planning & Organization
- Strategic Planning
- Business Development
- Sales & Distribution Management
- P&L Optimization
- Communication & Collaboration
- Organizational Leadership

Career Experience

Managing Director, GreenSpring B.V. Marketing & Management, Sint Maarten, Dutch Caribbean

- **The St. Maarten Heineken Regatta:**
Developed and executed the entertainment and operations for the Music Festivals **in 2018, 2019, and 2020**, overcoming challenges from post-hurricane recovery and COVID-19.
- **Pelikaan Brewery N.V.:**
Development and expansion of the first craft brewery on St. Maarten. Suite of services include Brand and Logo Design, Operations, Social Media execution, packaging and merchandising roll out. **(2017-Present)**
- **The Seaview Beach Hotel:**
Renovation and conceptualization of the comeback of an historic boutique beach hotel, bar, restaurant, pool, cabanas, market, coffee café and event center. **(2022-Present)**
- **DIVICO:**
Complete development and launch of a modern cash-and-carry outlet and the Integration of the Heineken beer and beverage portfolio into its consumer goods distribution operation. **(2019 – 2021)**

Commercial Director, International Liquor and Tobacco Trading, St. Maarten, Dutch Caribbean

2009 – 2018

Directed the integration of NE Caribbean's largest beer portfolio (Heineken, Guinness, Red Stripe, Smirnoff Ice) with a leading Spirit portfolio (Diageo, Remy Cointreau) across four islands. Handled all facets of operations, importation, and inventory, while ensuring smooth functioning of operations. Designed brand and pricing strategies, go-to-market initiatives, programs, incentives, and POS. Supported organization by optimizing P&L, administering budgets, and managing HR functions.

- Steered business success by growing beverage division from \$7 M to \$50 M annually.
- Increased the Beer and Beverage portfolio revenue from 16% to 60%.
- Introduced new brands (incl. FIJI, Vita Coco, and Carib Beer) developing new profit categories.
- Led staff and rewarded cross-functional teams for meeting and exceeding company goals.

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- Played a vital role in transforming the commercial department, while working on three main pillars: The Best Service, The Best Brands, and The Best Prices.

Managing Director, HEINEKEN SINT MAARTEN, St. Maarten, Dutch Caribbean 2005 - 2009

Supervised marketing, sales, logistics, and distribution teams and encouraged staff to enhance workflow efficiency. Devised and implemented effective environmental awareness campaigns and developed positive working relationships with five off-island direct distributors.

- Boosted sales growth and improved profit margins by 20% in a mature market.
- Achieved highest Heineken brand scores in the company.

Global Merchandising Manager, HEINEKEN INTERNATIONAL, Amsterdam, The Netherlands 2003 - 2005

Revised international catalogues and developed global merchandising guidelines. Conducted a wide range of activities, such as updating company portfolio, directing the development of retail space planning initiatives, and managing purchasing reform programs to leverage buying synergy.

- Provided exceptional business consultancy on six continents: assisting clients in running businesses more efficiently.

Marketing Manager Off-Premise, HEINEKEN EXPORT GROUP, Amsterdam, The Netherlands 2001 - 2003

Assisted international team in delivering marketing resources to key global markets. Co-developed off-premise sales promotion tools and authored commercial excellence manuals. Implemented Heineken University trainings, including Heineken Key Account Management (KAM) Toolbox, and Heineken Essential Merchandising Skills (On and Off-premise) for enhancing staff learning and development capabilities.

- Presented key cross-cultural presentations and offered merchandising and commercial consultancy in Hong Kong, China, Australia, Taiwan, S. Africa, Dubai, Puerto Rico, S. America, and the Caribbean.

Store Manager, KOHL'S DEPARTMENT STORES, Branford, Connecticut USA Nov. 1999 - Jan 2001

Supervised 185+ employees and motivated staff to enhance organizational productivity.

- Boosted annual sales growth up to \$27 M by selling fashion and home goods.

Store Manager, WAL-MART STORES, INC., Cromwell, Connecticut USA Jan. 1997 – Nov. 1999

- Oversaw opening of a greenfield location and managed over 260 associates and \$35 million in sales.
- Oversaw shelf merchandising, fashion merchandising, distribution, operations, packaging, supplier support, training, environmental and safety compliance, loss prevention and community relations.

Operations Manager, WAL-MART STORES, INC., Bentonville , Arkansas USA Jan. 1993 – Jan. 1997

Wal-Mart Management Trainee program

- Directed over 200 associates and \$6 million in inventory during greenfield openings. Managing operations, HR and merchandising for the region's largest operating unit.

Market Research, KRAFT GENERAL FOODS, INC., White Plains, New York April 1992 - Sept. 1992

- Conducted comprehensive analysis for various products using qualitative and quantitative data. (Maxwell House Coffees)

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Education & Trainings

Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration and Management | University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT USA

Brewer's Association Craft Beer Conference 2018, 2023 USA

Heineken International Management Course (HIMAC) | Insead University, France

Top Management Seminar, Retailers and Suppliers | Harvard University, USA

Graduate | Walton Institute Leadership Academy **Wal-Mart**, Bentonville, Arkansas USA

Small Powerboat, VHF and Motorcycle Licenses 2021

ECR (Efficient Consumer Response), Europe

Censydium Consumer Motivational Training

Awards & Honours

Recently featured in the Management & Leadership book, *The Solutions Oriented Leader: Your Comprehensive Guide to Achieve World-Class Results* | Directed events for over 15 editions of the St. Maarten Heineken Regatta | Self-published three poetry books

Volunteer Experience

Coordinator of numerous relief efforts for Hurricane Irma Recovery
SHTA St Maarten Destination & Marketing Committee

Professional Associations

Board of Directors: Sint Maarten Hospitality and Trade Association 2022-Present

Board of Directors: Sint Maarten Yacht Club and Regatta Foundation 2009-2024

Board of Directors, Middlesex County United Way Foundation

University of Connecticut, American Football team

Founding Father and President, Tao Kappa Epsilon Fraternity, University of Connecticut

Personal Interests

Sports, Volleyball, Softball, Golf, Padel, Kickboxing, Yoga, Creative Writing, Reading, Drawing, Art

Success: "To laugh often and love much; to win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children; ... to appreciate beauty, to find the best in others; ... to leave the world a bit better...; to have played and laughed with enthusiasm and sung with exultation; To know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived." *Ralph Waldo Emerson*

Smile:)