



## New Jersey Firm Emerges As Industry Leader In Pre-Cut Vegetables For Food Service And Retail Markets

For Supreme Cuts LLC, its ascendancy to the top of the pre-cut vegetable industry has been the direct result of a combination of two factors: truly visionary leadership and product innovation.

The Mahwah, NJ processor and distributor was one of the food service industry's first

appointments of a woman to its presidency. In her role as president, Merle Axelrod has overseen the company's daily operations and management team.

Axelrod's path to the helm, as in so many cases in food service, was a matter of timing. "I sold computer software, and managed people. My husband was

involved in the business and over the years, I simply got more involved. I was able to bring to the table my business expertise. This really included an attitude that broke the mold of: "This is the way that it's always been done."

Under Axelrod's direction Supreme Cuts has grown aggres-

sively -- with a wide variety of additional product offerings in both their food service and retail lines. In addition, the Garden State company has moved into a larger state-of-the-art facility to accommodate the company's ongoing growth.

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**Merle Axelrod**  
Supreme Cuts LLC

agement team to draw from over thirty years experience as a pre-cut vegetable processor. Today, with a radius of some 1500 miles from its New Jersey headquarters, Supreme Cuts services a growing number of both food service and retail customers.

Axelrod's two years at the helm have been marked by a record of dynamic growth. "We have grown to be number two in our division as a green bean processor," Axelrod explained. "We're proud of that; however, quality remains our number one goal."

Among Supreme Cuts innovations has been the Snipped Green Bean line it introduced to the

food service market in 2002. In 2004, Supreme Cuts launched its retail Snipped Green Bean line, which including Snipped Green Beans and Rainbow Medley in six-color 12 oz. packages. This year, Supreme Cuts is continuing its innovation in the fresh, pre-cut green bean area - with the launch of unique new "steamer bag" technology/packaging of Supreme Cuts Green Beans, Wax Beans and Rainbow Medley. This new packaging allows people to enjoy the enhanced nutritional value, and great taste, of freshly steamed vegetables simply by microwaving the bags - and is an exciting new addition to the Supreme Cuts retail line. In addition, Supreme Cuts has also just announced the launch of three additional new retail products: Fresh Unsnipped Green Beans, Fresh Snow Peas and Fresh Sugar Snap Peas. The new items, an extension of the popular food service line of these products, will be available at a number of major supermarkets and retail outlets nationwide.

Additional Supreme Cuts product innovations through the years have included the launch of Trimmed Brussels Sprouts for retail in an 8 ounce tamper-proof container - which, back in 2005 was the first in a new family of pre-cut vegetables at Supreme

Cuts. The company also added a wrapped Baby Vegetable program in an 8-ounce fully microwavable tray. The six new items included Snow Peas, Sugar Snaps, French Beans, Baby Yellow Patty Pan, Baby Green Patty Pan and Baby Green Zucchini.

"Our goal is never to be the biggest," Axelrod continued. "We value our customer relationships because that's what truly drives growth. We've expanded in areas where we can add value for our customers."

A key to the ability to provide industry standard customer service was the Supreme Cuts move in July 2007 to its new facility located in Mahwah, NJ. "The move added a number of refrigerated loading docks and the latest triple wash and packaging equipment available," Axelrod noted.

The move to the new facility enabled Axelrod to continue to grow Supreme Cuts product offerings - and coincided with one of the most successful food service launches in history. In November 2007, Supreme Cuts introduced "Off the Cob" Fresh Kernel Corn - fresh kernel corn cut off the cob with an extended shelf life, which enabled food service distributors and their end-user customers to expand their menu offerings.

"Food service customers are always looking for new items and reliability," said Axelrod. "They want a company they can rely on and provide good quality and safe products. Food safety is really key. We just received a superior rating from the American Institute of Baking (AIB), which

we're really proud of. AIB provides standards and procedures and promotes safety. It's a whole methodology and process; they come in and perform a two-day audit, ranking you on procedures and how you manage your procedures at your facility. "Being awarded a Superior AIB rating acknowledges our strength in the important area of food safety, and highlights our commitment and dedication to providing our customers with products that continue to meet all food safety regulations," she noted. "With this rating, our customers can continue to feel confident that Supreme Cuts goes above and beyond expectations when it comes to food safety." Supreme Cuts new facility has enabled the company to maximize the support it gives to its food service distribution customer base. "The distributor is becoming more than a shopper who is looking for the best price. Their customers want to know where the product is coming from, and that it is safe. Our distributors turn to us for our leadership not only in providing an outstanding selection of fresh, pre-cut vegetables, but for our overall commitment to food safety and delivering the very best products possible" said Axelrod.

When asked to look into her "crystal ball" Axelrod concluded: "You can never rest on your laurels. We'll continue our commitment to quality and prepare for controlled expansion. This will probably lead us to an additional plant facility in the west to serve the growing needs of our customers."