



# CITIZENS OF SEAFOOD

ACME SMOKED FISH CO.

2021 SUSTAINABILITY REPORT







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To watch interviews with Acme team members, click wherever you see this icon.



# ABOUT ACME

Based in Brooklyn, New York, Acme Smoked Fish Corporation is a fourth-generation, family-owned seafood company. Since our beginnings in the early 1900s, Acme has been committed to providing the highest quality seafood specialties in an expanding number of varieties.

While the company has grown significantly, with additional locations in Massachusetts, North Carolina, Florida, Chile, and Denmark, we are still deeply connected to our Brooklyn roots. It's home to us. However you are able to enjoy our products—from supermarkets and specialty stores, to bagel shops and breakfast tables—we hope you feel a part of our community for passionate lovers of great food.

For over 100 years, our traditions have marked our past, inspire our present, and will continue to shape our future. We recognize the importance of our methods in the products we make, the techniques we use, and the effect that it has on our evolving culture. While innovation and progress are important, tradition is what unites Acme Smoked Fish.

We hope the Acme legacy becomes part of your family traditions as well.



# WHERE WE ARE

OUTRUP, DENMARK

BROCKTON, MA

BROOKLYN, NY

WILMINGTON, NC

POMPANO BEACH, FL

PUERTO MONTT, CHILE



# CITIZENS OF SEAFOOD SUMMARY

**CITIZENS OF SEAFOOD** is the inaugural sustainability report for Acme Smoked Fish. At Acme, being a Citizen of Seafood means that we strive to do right by our people, our communities, and our planet by putting social responsibility and sustainability at the center of our decisions.

2021 was a formative year for the company's sustainability efforts. We started by taking a global look at our impact. We explored our value chain in detail, following our fish from the source to the plate. As we traced these movements, we discovered the many ways that our business touches the issue of sustainability. We discussed the key concerns of our day, from climate change and ocean conservation to the historical and current role of immigrants in our industry.

From there, we refined our focus to the four pillars of sustainability you will read about in this report:

**Raw Material Sourcing, Packaging, Carbon Footprint, and People and Communities.**

As we went through this process of learning and narrowing our focus, we built a common language of sustainability at Acme. This language allowed talented people from across the company to engage with the work. It was a year of establishing a cultural foundation within Acme upon which we can build long term-commitments. As with every company, we are the sum of our talented people. In *Citizens of Seafood* you will meet some of the people who are driving this work forward, and have a chance to learn their stories. If you are looking for extensive data, you won't find it in this year's report. The reality is that we don't have it to share yet. Now that our teams have been formed and our focus is set, we are spending 2022 developing baseline data in each of our four focus areas.

By the end of the year, we will have impact targets set for 2023 and beyond.

Please enjoy *Citizens of Seafood*. Acme is proud to bring you along on our journey.









## A LETTER FROM ACME'S CO-CEO

**AS A FOUR-GENERATION OLD FAMILY BUSINESS**, preserving the legacy of our traditions is paramount to the success of our company. The seafood industry is widely known for passing skills and know-how on to the next generation of stewards, and that transfer of knowledge is a staple of securing a promising future. However, we cannot afford to mortgage the resources of future generations and expect our business to continue. It is imperative that we continue to evolve and adapt to a constantly changing environment. *Sustainable growth*—through managing and replenishing the resources we utilize to fuel our success—is the only path forward for Acme to ensure our future as a family business

With over 2,100 customers worldwide, we work hard to present a diverse set of product offerings that meet the varying demands of our customers. Many of our business partners have their own requirements for sustainability and sustainable seafood sourcing. However, we realized that we had to make our own commitment to the long-term viability of seafood sourcing. In 2020, Acme released a [Sustainable Seafood Policy](#) where we outlined how we would assess, measure, and improve our sourcing practices for seafood.

Despite this important pledge, it is only one component of operating a multi-faceted and thriving business. The world around us is rapidly transforming and our commitments to the world we serve needs to reflect those changes.

Using the template outlined in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, Acme identified four areas of our business that address these goals in measurable, realistic commitments. This report will detail the progress we have made in each of these areas and where Acme's improvements have resulted in positive steps towards achieving these goals.

As both corporate stakeholders and citizens of the world, we have a moral obligation to protect our natural resources for the next generations to enjoy. Sustainable growth can be achieved by properly managing the replenishment of these resources and understanding the impact on our environment.

This is an important new chapter in our company's history. For over 100 years, we have crafted food to help families celebrate their own traditions—large and small. The connections created by food is what drives our company every day, and we are excited to begin this next phase in creating even more connections with our planet.

On behalf of over 1,000 Acme team members around the world, we invite you to join us on our journey of continual improvement and creating a more sustainable business.

Sincerely,

 A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adam Caslow'. To the right of the signature is a circular icon containing a right-pointing triangle, indicating a video player.

**ADAM CASLOW**

CO-CEO

ACME SMOKED FISH CO.





**FOUR PILLARS OF SUSTAINABILITY**

**RAW MATERIAL SOURCING**

Contributing to the long-term health of ocean and lake ecosystems.

**PACKAGING  
+ WASTE REDUCTION**

Creating a healthier environment for all.

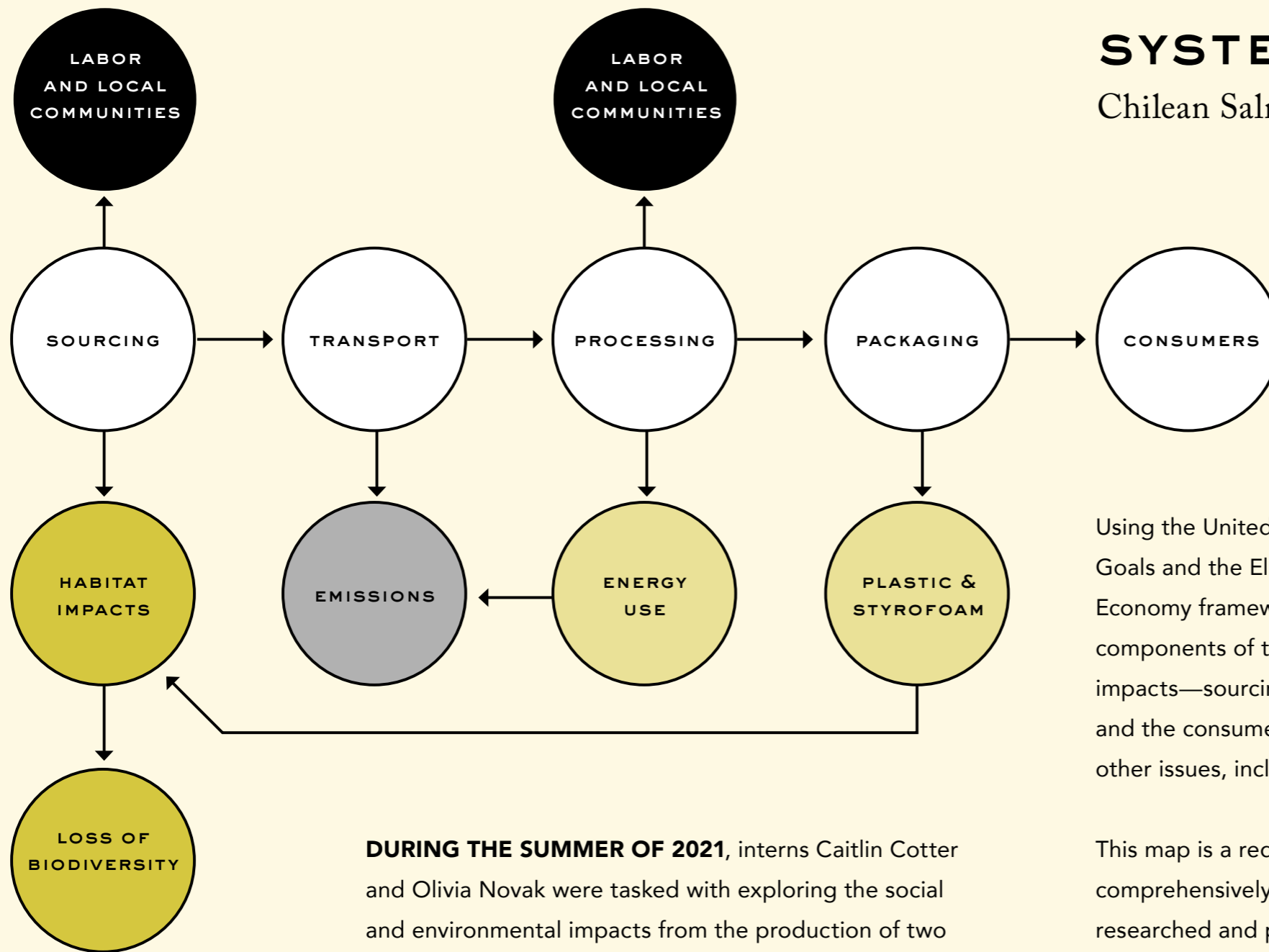
**CARBON FOOTPRINT**

Addressing the climate crisis.

**PEOPLE + COMMUNITY**

Supporting our teammates and their families.





**DURING THE SUMMER OF 2021**, interns Caitlin Cotter and Olivia Novak were tasked with exploring the social and environmental impacts from the production of two of Acme’s most popular products: smoked salmon from Chilean aquaculture farms and lake whitefish from Lake Winnipeg in Manitoba, Canada. The goal was to create two systems maps that captured the impacts across the respective value chains, to use as a roadmap for thinking about sustainability.

## SYSTEMS MAP

### Chilean Salmon and Whitefish

Using the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the Ellen MacArthur Foundation’s Circular Economy frameworks as a guide, they focused on five key components of the value chain to better understand the impacts—sourcing, transportation, processing, packaging, and the consumer—and how the process of each affected other issues, including habitat loss, emissions, and labor.

This map is a redesigned, pared-down version of the comprehensively researched maps that Caitlin and Olivia researched and presented to the Acme team at the end of their internship.

The work conducted by Caitlin and Olivia allowed Acme to take a holistic view of all the possible impacts we are having in the world and then focus down to the four pillars of sustainability that we are working on going forward.





# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

At Acme, we are aligning our sustainability efforts with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. This comprehensive set of goals address the most important impacts that are shaping the future of our planet and humankind. This is one way that Acme is thinking globally and acting locally: by setting targets that align with the UNSDGs, we are contributing to global actions that will support a world that can thrive for generations to come.



THESE NINE UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS WERE A SUBSET THAT ACME EXPLORED DURING THE SYSTEMS MAP EXERCISE.







**RAW  
MATERIAL  
SOURCING**



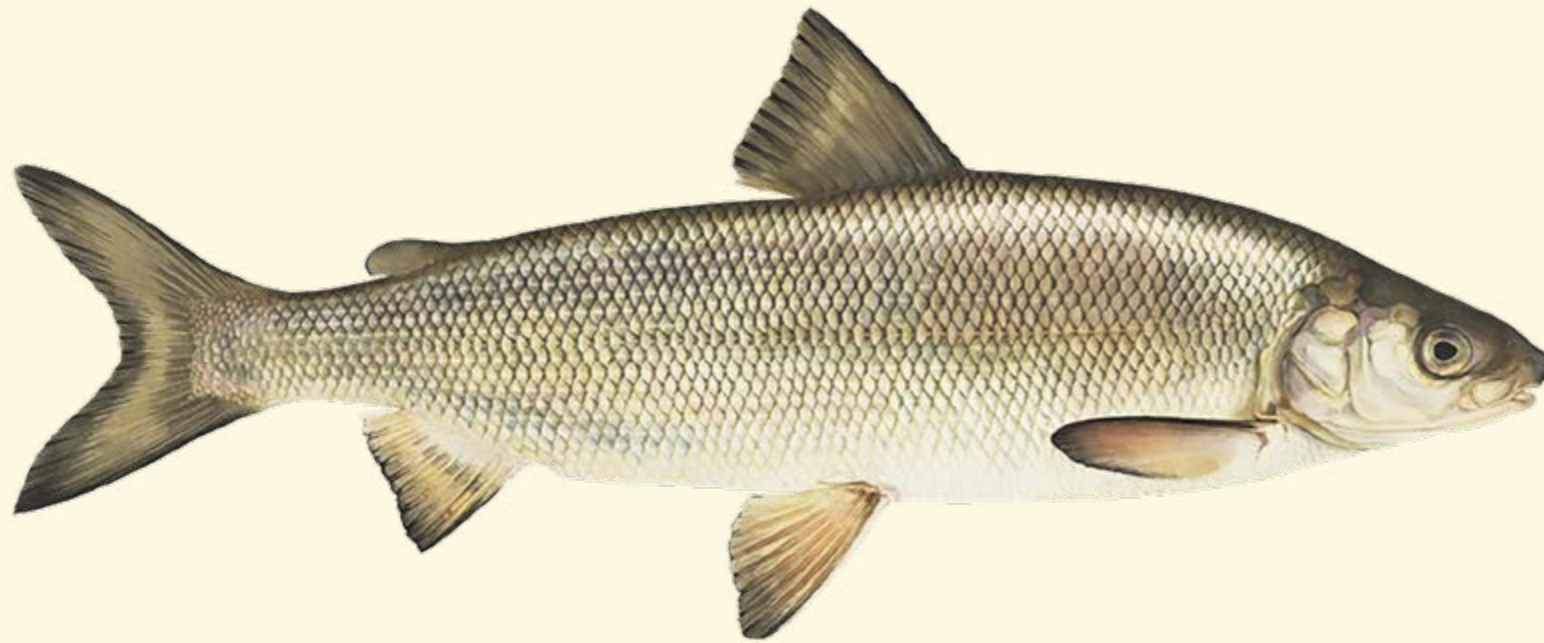


# RAW MATERIAL SOURCING

One of the longest-standing concerns in ocean conservation is the cumulative impact of commercial fishing on ocean and lake ecosystems. Increased traceability of fish from water to plate is a critical solution to this issue. In order to trace the impact of a fishery, we ask ourselves the following questions: Do we know which boat caught what fish or which farm harvested it? Do we know how that fish was caught? Does the fishery we are buying from have a solid scientific basis for management? Are the people involved in the fishery treated well? Each fishery in the world has different answers to these questions. And these answers lead to a variety of eco-certifications referenced toward the end of this section.

Our job is to buy fish where the answers are clear, and to help fisheries improve where the answers aren't. Our partnerships, technology, and experience help us make decisions every day while considering the long-term impacts on the ecosystems and communities where our fish originate.





# THE FUTURE OF LAKE WHITEFISH

BY JACOB TUPPER  
SALES AND SUSTAINABILITY

**WHAT IS LAKE WHITEFISH?** Not to be confused with cod, hake, flounder or the numerous other species referred to broadly as “white fish,” lake whitefish is the market name of *coregonus clupeaformis*, a distinct North American freshwater species, largely found in the Great Lakes and the many northern lakes of Canada. While this species has a long culinary significance to the local indigenous peoples where it’s found, it’s also a staple of the smoked fish world.

In fact, Acme Smoked Fish is the largest purchaser of lake whitefish in the U.S., to the tune of approximately two million pounds a year. As a result, we source fish for our customers broadly from the Great Lakes along U.S. and Canadian shores, as well as interior lakes throughout Canada. We sell the product as whole smoked fish, smoked portions, smoked and hand-picked meat, but are most famous for our Whitefish Salad, or spread. As such, we have a vested interest in the long-term sustainability and viability of lake whitefish fisheries.





The first place Acme is directing these efforts is towards the Lake Winnipeg whitefish fishery. Lake Winnipeg is the 11th largest freshwater lake in the world and is home to approximately 200 fishing communities that catch a cumulative four million pounds of lake whitefish a year. In November 2021, we attended the Annual Fishers Meeting in Winnipeg, Manitoba where we had the opportunity to sit with the commercial fishermen who catch lake whitefish, the companies that buy directly from the fishermen, and the regional governing body that manages the fishery.

The Fishers Meeting began with a prayer led by the First Nations communities. Shortly after, the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation presented a market report depicting sales for 2021 and plans for 2022. FFMC then segued into educating the audience about the role that eco-certifications play in attracting and retaining market share for the fish caught on Lake Winnipeg. Acme was introduced as an example of a company who is seeking to partner with local communities to support improvement in the sustainability of Lake Winnipeg whitefish.

We used our time at the microphone to give examples of what our largest customers' sustainability needs are today and where we see them going in the future. While we were warmly received by the fishing community, there was a large amount of skepticism that certification would turn into a higher price at the boat—a common sentiment you will hear around the world regarding sustainability certifications. Nevertheless, we successfully took a step forward in working with fishing communities to ensure the longevity of a healthy fishery.

This experience presented the opportunity for Acme to further engage with the fishing communities and managers to work towards better science and fishery planning into the future. Engaging directly with fishers from First Nations and other communities in Canada represents an exciting new chapter for Acme and we are eager to report on our developments in the years to come.



JACOB TUPPER SPEAKS AT THE ANNUAL FISHERS MEETING IN WINNIPEG





# THE FISH GUY

BUZZ BILLIK'S ADVENTURES  
IN WILD SALMON PROCUREMENT



BUZZ BILLIK  
CHIEF SALES OFFICER

**FISH HAS BEEN SYNONYMOUS WITH BUZZ BILLIK** nearly his whole adult life. While in college in Rhode Island, his father wanted to make sure he was working whenever he wasn't studying and Buzz took that opportunity to pursue work on the water: jobs on the back of lobster boats in the summer, dragging for blackback flounder in the winter. And although offshore fishing didn't last much past graduating from college, it didn't take long for Buzz to fall headlong into the fish world.

Armed with a business degree, he bought a few Brooks Brothers suits and spent exactly one day on Wall Street, knocking on doors and trying to talk his way into a job. At the end of that day, he walked a few blocks from Wall Street over to South Street, where the old Fulton Fish Market was located, and struck up a conversation with the owner of a company specializing in hard shell clams. Buzz was offered a job on the spot, managing inventory and delivering orders.

"I'm a survivor of the Fulton Fish Market," Buzz said. "I would come in at 11 o'clock at night and work until 11 o'clock the next morning and then do it all over again. Every day."







THE NEW YORK TIMES, SEPTEMBER 19, 1984.  
THE TIMES INCORRECTLY CAPTIONED THE FISH  
BUZZ IS HOLDING; IT IS ACTUALLY WHITEFISH.

But every day, he would also meet a variety of people connected to the seafood industry which landed him a new job at Marshall Smoked Fish Co. in Brooklyn, a mile from Acme's facility and, at the time, a very close competitor. He had never seen anything like a smokery and was fascinated by the process. This kicked off what would become nearly 40 years in the smoked fish business.

In the summer of 1982, Marshall asked Buzz to travel to Kotlik, a small town on the Yukon River in Alaska, and spend three weeks buying king salmon directly from indigenous fishermen gillnetting from skiffs. He would set up shop on the banks of the river with cash and a scale, waiting for boats to come ashore. Once there was enough fish to transport, it was loaded on small bush planes on dirt airstrips close by and sent on a 30-minute flight to St. Mary's. There, it was transferred to DC-4 cargo planes which flew east to Sea Catch Fisheries in Kenai where it was processed, frozen, and dispatched to Seattle. At that point, it'd be loaded onto freezer trucks and sent across the country, back to Marshall where the smoking would begin. In Alaska, Buzz traveled with the fish every step of the way.

In those few short weeks, he purchased over 240,000 pounds of salmon and his company was so impressed, they sent him to procure wild salmon in different parts of Alaska every summer for the next 10 years, one experience leading to another. He started spending more time with suppliers and with each visit he learned something new about logistics, shifts in prices, and developments in processing. He also continued to learn about the fish and the land, how certain rivers would yield different colors and sizes and fat content.

But most importantly, he began to lay the foundation for the myriad relationships he'd continue to foster for years to come, many of which he was able to bring over to Acme when he joined to lead the sales effort in 1999. In an industry built on trust and long-term connections, Buzz is proud of the time he spent in Alaska and the opportunities those trips afforded him. Acme now sources five different species of wild salmon from Alaska: king, pink, coho, chum, and sockeye—the latter of which yielded over a million pounds in 2021.

"The procurement work I was involved with in the early 1980s still plays a role and collectively helps me with the decision-making as to what fish, what region, what company, and what techniques are going to help us most."

Every salmon Buzz and his team buys for Acme from Alaska is Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certified, meaning that it has achieved the highest sustainability certification available for a wild-caught species.

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"The procurement work I was involved with in the early 1980s still plays a role and collectively helps me with the decision-making as to what fish, what region, what company, and what techniques are going to help us most."

BUZZ BILLIK

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## CERTIFICATIONS + TRACEABILITY



### **GSSI**

The seafood industry and consumers struggle to make sense of eco-certification schemes because of their complexity. To help address this challenge, Acme Smoked Fish joined the Global Sustainable Seafood Initiative (GSSI) in 2021.

GSSI is shaping the future of sustainable seafood through creative and impactful public-private partnerships that include 90+ organizations across the sector. Acme is pleased to bring our history and experience to GSSI to help align and amplify a path forward for sustainable seafood certification that will benefit the ocean and industry.







## MSC

The Marine Stewardship Council is a certification organization that works with fisheries, seafood companies, scientists, and conservation groups around the world to promote best environmental practices. Many of Acme's wild caught seafood is MSC certified.



## ASC

The Aquaculture Stewardship Council is an independent non-profit organization and labeling organization that establishes protocol for farmed seafood while ensuring sustainable aquaculture. The ASC provides sustainable and responsible aquaculture producers with a stringent certification and labeling scheme, guaranteeing to consumers that the seafood they are purchasing is sustainable for the environment, and socially responsible.





## **BAP**

The Best Aquaculture Practices certification system ensures that aquaculture practices are followed using standards that are socially and environmentally responsible. The program combines site inspections and ample sampling with sanitary controls, therapeutic controls, and traceability. Acme is committed to working with salmon suppliers that adhere to BAP standards.



## **TRACE REGISTER**

For more than 15 years, Trace Register has been the leader in traceability software for the global seafood industry, helping every member of the seafood supply chain ecosystem. Acme employs Trace Register so that our customers can be certain about where their fish comes from.

If you're interested in learning more about our sustainable seafood sourcing policy, [click here](#).







**PACKAGING**

**+**

**WASTE REDUCTION**





# PACKAGING + WASTE REDUCTION

When looking across Acme's value chain, one of the most challenging aspects of delivering safe, high-quality seafood to you is reducing the amount of packaging and waste. In 2021, we began to educate ourselves on the complex issues surrounding the polymers in our consumer packaging, the styrofoam that insulates our fish while it is transported, and how we can better repurpose fish trimmings. We've made great progress on repurposing our fish trimmings, and we can already see some opportunities to change packaging materials and dimensions to decrease the carbon footprint attached to our goods. We have a long way to go, but we have a great team helping to make progress on the issue.





PERSPECTIVE

## Ben Schwartz

### SUPPLY CHAIN SENIOR MANAGER

Our 2030 vision for packaging at Acme is to provide sustainable packaging to our customers and consumers without compromising food safety, product quality, and sales. As the head of Acme's supply chain, part of my job is to be on the lookout for efficiencies that are good for both the company and the planet.

Our short-term goals include conducting a baseline assessment of our packaging to gain a holistic understanding of the impact of our current packaging situation. Once we know where we stand, this will help our efforts to reduce overall packaging and/or increase the amount of recyclable content in our packaging. In particular, we are looking into corrugated box standardization and optimization, plastic film gauge and thickness reduction, and polyethylene single stream plastic film.

Educating ourselves and consumers about packaging sustainability and recyclability will be important as well. We are now closely following sustainable (compostable, biodegradable, bio-based, etc.) packaging technology developments, assessing technical and financial feasibility of new technology, and we intend to eventually help consumers understand ways to recycle Acme packages.

We'll be presenting a summary of findings and impacts in the 2022 Sustainability Report, but for now, I'm excited to be working with my team on this exciting journey.





PERSPECTIVE

# Jo Qiao

## PACKAGING ENGINEER

Why do I care about sustainable packaging? Growing up in one of the most polluted cities in China, I did not understand “pollution” and thought that it was typical of what everyone lived with. My hometown of Taiyuan is known for its coal mining industry. And while it brought jobs and income to people, it also generated enormous amounts of air pollution. I remember there were days where the smog was so thick that I could not see the color of the sky.

All I knew was that I needed to get out of there.

I later studied Packaging Science at Rochester Institute of Technology in Rochester, NY where I began to understand sustainability and how to use my knowledge of packaging to reduce packaging waste and pollution, in places like my hometown. I wanted to use my expertise to help better the environment.

Packaging is an integral part of our day-to-day life. From the produce you buy in the grocery store to the cars you purchase at dealerships, every product requires packaging. However, the environmental impact of packaging is pressing. Nearly two-thirds of plastics end up in landfills, natural environments, and the ocean. Plastic packaging is a large component to the waste. There’s an increase in consumers’ demands for brands to offer more sustainable packaging. And local and state legislators have passed laws to modernize the recycling industry and to promote a more circular economy.

The primary function of packaging is to provide protection for the product, so complete elimination of packaging is simply not a solution. However, packaging can play a critical role in reducing the amount of material used. As technology advances, there are more bio-based materials commercially available and the recycling industry is increasing its capability to wash, sort and recover more plastic packaging material. We are in an exciting era to revolutionize packaging and Acme is proud to be exploring this forefront of innovation.





# CARBON FOOTPRINT



BROOKLYN  
SINCE  
**ACME**  
1906  
SMOKED FISH



ACMESMOKEDFISH.COM  
718 383 8585

SINCE  
1906  
BROOKLYN

49750





# CARBON FOOTPRINT

Climate change is a relatively new topic of concern for the seafood industry. Until recently, most of the efforts of non-profits, government agencies, and industry focused on improving the science available to inform fisheries management schemes.

It is true that seafood has one of the lowest carbon footprints of any protein. Nevertheless, the climate crisis requires that we do all that we can. At Acme, we have identified partners and built a talented team that can begin to assess our carbon footprint in accordance with the World Resource Institute's Greenhouse Gas Protocol. Once we've assessed our carbon footprint, we will be able to set targets for reducing our impact in the future. The work itself is quite technical. As such, in this section you will meet some members of our engineering team, along with our partner Climate Smart.

We aren't just working on climate change internally. We hope to inform change in the seafood industry as a whole through the first ever Seafood Climate Change Innovation Awards.







Acme is committed to taking action to address climate change. One of the key aspects to achieve thoughtful and targeted action is through conducting a greenhouse gas assessment. This assessment, which will be conducted in 2022, will quantify our emissions and allow us to determine where we can make the most progress.

Our partner in this work is Climate Smart, a subsidiary of Radicle.

The Climate Smart training programs allow businesses to achieve their business goals and lead in their industry while cultivating a climate-conscious culture internally at the same time.

The combination of training, tools, and technical assistance enable small, medium, and large businesses to measure and reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, make informed decisions to invest in efficiencies, and communicate compellingly about the action they're taking on climate change.











# Michael Carpenter

**DIRECTOR OF ENGINEERING**



Mike Carpenter is always looking for ways to lower Acme's carbon footprint. He likes to think about Acme's manufacturing plants as organisms, each one having its own needs and peculiarities, each with its own opportunities to address climate change. He is responsible for making sure all of the technical pieces are working as they should—from heat recapture to refrigeration—at Acme's four North American plants. Not an easy task, but he's someone that is always up for the challenge of figuring out how to make things run more efficiently.

"I look at it from a materials and energy management standpoint," Mike said. "When I build things, I want it to last a long time. If you're putting short-term Band-aids on it, you're always having to put more effort into fixing it. That's sustainability, making lasting improvements."

Mike started out his career in offshore oil exploration in the Gulf of Mexico, sometimes working 72 hours in rough environments on a well. He decided it wasn't an ideal way to build a family and he began his time in the food industry, first at Jack Pack Foods in New Hampshire and then Oscar Meyer Foods in South Carolina. He's now been with Acme for seven years and oversaw the entire creation of the Wilmington, North Carolina plant, from groundbreaking to its current operation with 250 people working throughout the facility.

"People think, 'Oh, a new plant, everything's going to run great,'" he said. "But it really takes about two years to get all the equipment up and running just the way you want it. And then it's up to you to maintain it all."

Mike is eyeing retirement soon and is looking into a succession plan, keeping in mind the skills and best practices of the Acme systems that need to be passed on. Mike is also looking for someone that can bring knowledge of reducing our carbon footprint to the work ahead. He's not worried though: there's plenty of members of his team who are eager to learn.

"There's just some things that an instruction book will never accomplish."





# Siddartha Shafin

## PLANT ENGINEER



Sid Shafin brings broad and current knowledge of greenhouse gas management to his role as a member of the carbon reduction team at Acme. After interning with Acme during his years at New York's City College, he rejoined as the plant engineer in Brooklyn after he graduated in 2019 and got right to work on capital engineering projects.

"I've been growing up with this company both personally and professionally," Sid said. "I feel very connected to my team members and I'm proud when I see all of our amazing products on the shelves. It makes me feel like, 'I was part of that!'"

His role is dynamic and he works with multiple departments, from maintenance technicians and quality assurance teams to sales and marketing. His tasks range from construction work, designing, purchasing, and installing new equipment, and supporting new product launches as they tie in with the equipment. Most of all, he's focused on plant management in terms of food safety.

"Refrigeration is a major part of my job," he said. "We have very specific guidelines on maintaining temperatures in our cold storages and in our processing areas, ensuring that our refrigerants and refrigeration systems are not only running properly, but maintained. We're making every effort to keep those temperatures under control to make sure the fish is safe every step of the way."

Refrigeration is a large driver of Acme's carbon footprint. We will learn just how large in the year ahead. Having Sid on board will help maximize the efficiency of these systems as we look for ways to improve.

When Sid isn't traveling to food science expos or looking into possible renewable energy initiatives at Acme's new facilities in Florida and New Jersey, he can be found competing professionally in multiplayer video game tournaments.





In 2021 Acme Smoked Fish created the Acme Smoked Fish Foundation. More details about this can be found in the next section, but a key element of the Foundation's work is to identify and celebrate efforts to lower the carbon footprint of the seafood industry. The Climate Change Innovation Awards will become the platform for this work.

We are proud to announce that TD Bank has become a Catalyst Level supporter of this award.

Click [here](#) to learn more and watch for updates on the application process in spring 2022.

"At TD, we are committed to helping create a more vibrant planet by supporting the transition to a low-carbon economy and improving green spaces to reduce the impact of climate change. We're proud to support the Acme Smoked Fish Foundation launch the Climate Change Innovation Awards and work with them to identify and celebrate innovations that lower the carbon footprint of the seafood industry and help elevate the quality of the environment so that people and economies can thrive."

**AMANDA BATTEN FOSTER**

VIBRANT PLANET RELATIONSHIP MANAGER

OFFICE OF CHARITABLE AND COMMUNITY GIVING

TD BANK









# PEOPLE + COMMUNITY



# PEOPLE + COMMUNITY

Acme is made up of an ever-growing community of passionate, hard-working people who love preparing and enjoying our products. We are over 1,000 employees spread across six facilities in three countries. When you visit our locations, you meet some of the most dedicated aficionados of smoked fish in the world. Our values and our history are the critical cultural glue that allow us to celebrate our differences while we grow together. After all, the Acme story is a story of immigration, perseverance, and lending a helping hand. We are proud of who we are as a company, and it shows through the dedication and hard work of the people at Acme who are focused on building a culture that will allow us to pass the passion on to future generations.







THE CASLOW FAMILY  
(FROM L-R: EMILY, ADAM,  
ROBERT, ERIC, AND DAVID)



# ACME

## SMOKED FISH™ FOUNDATION

**THE MISSION OF THE ACME SMOKED FISH FOUNDATION** is to ensure that the seafood industry thrives in a rapidly changing world, by supporting innovation and education in the regions where the company operates.

“We learned as kids from my dad, Robbie, and my uncle, Eric, that giving to charity was something we did at home, not in the business,” said Emily Caslow, president of the Foundation, customer service manager, and a member of the family’s fourth generation. “It wasn’t because they didn’t believe in the idea of giving away money from the business. It was just that there were months and years that making payroll at the end of the week was what was first and foremost on their mind and there often wasn’t anything left over. But as the business became more successful and as the idea of corporate philanthropy grew, I think they had a change of heart, that not only should we be participating in corporate philanthropy, but it was a must.”



The Eric Caslow Innovation Fund was created in 2021 to honor Eric Caslow's lifelong commitment to the seafood industry. Eric loved the seafood industry. He poured his time and energy into building a network of friends and colleagues that would allow Acme to grow and thrive. Eric dedicated his entire career to Acme Smoked Fish, a leader at the company for more than 50 years. He passed away at the age of 75 surrounded by his family, whom he worked with every day.

The Eric Caslow Innovation Fund is launching the Climate Awards in North and South America. The Climate Awards have a singular purpose: to identify the most promising innovations that will lower the carbon footprint of the seafood industry.

"We are ready to make a contribution to affect climate change in the seafood industry," Emily said. "I'm looking forward to the opportunity for us to make the world a better place, however we can. And we're honored that we're able to do that in memory of my uncle Eric."

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**"I'm looking forward to the opportunity for us to make the world a better place, however we can. And we're honored that we're able to do that in memory of my uncle Eric."**

**EMILY CASLOW**  
PRESIDENT OF ACME SMOKED FISH FOUNDATION

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In addition to addressing innovation, the Foundation is focused on educational outcomes for the families who are the foundation of our business. The Caslow family remains very connected to their immigrant history and the role that education played in their success. Today, Acme

is successful in part because of new immigrants to the United States who are working hard to make their way here and support families in their sending communities.

The Foundation will honor this history through the Acme Education Fund. The Education Fund will provide educational grants to dependents of Acme employees located across our locations in North America. Education Awards in Chile and Denmark will be made in a way that is consistent with the local culture of giving.

"The fund is for the Acme families who have been with us forever, as well as those who are newer to our company," Emily said. "I think many of us take access to education for granted and whatever we can do to help people further their education is something we'll really be proud of."

The Education Fund will launch in the Spring of 2022.

To learn more, [click here](#).











# FOR THE LOVE OF FISH

RICHIE SCHIFF'S MANY LIVES AT ACME



RICHIE SCHIFF  
VICE PRESIDENT OF NORTHEAST SALES

**IT'S NOT MUCH OF AN EXAGGERATION** to say that Richie Schiff has taken on almost every job at Acme over his nearly 30 years with the company. It started in December of 1992, while he was pursuing a fine arts degree at Hofstra University, when his friend David Caslow asked him if he wanted to come help sell fish on a part-time basis at Fish Friday.

"And I said, uh, no thanks," Richie laughed. "But I did it and now I'm vice president of sales."

He joined full-time two weeks after graduation and quickly started his career inside the plant, first as a manager of the slicing department, then moving on to purchasing and packaging design. At the time, there were three typewriters and one computer in the office and with his graphic design experience, he became the de facto IT director. He also learned





pretty quickly that if a truck driver didn't show up to work, he was the one making deliveries to Connecticut and New Jersey that day. There was something exciting to him, though, about moving through different roles in a growing company. It meant he understood how everything worked, which was a boon for his transition into sales.

"Sales was something I was certainly always interested in," Richie said. "But it wasn't until Robbie Caslow sent me out one day with an older salesman to visit customers that I learned how to be an outside salesman, how to interact with customers and build relationships."

For Richie, creating those connections has always come through his love for food, and fish in particular. He's the type of person who loves to cook for others, to have people over to share his creations, including "the best brunch in town," his calling card.

"Brunch is one of my most favorite things in the world," Richie said. "It's a very relaxed meal and it's not only about the food but the company and taking the time to catch up with one another."



RICHIE ON THE PLANT FLOOR WITH ADAM AND DAVID CASLOW

One of his sales approaches has been to throw the ultimate brunch for prospective customers. They'd have an initial conversation in the conference room of the Brooklyn offices and then, while giving them a tour of the plant, members of his team would put out a beautiful brunch spread so that when they came back, a magical feast awaited them.

"I called it our 'innovation brunch,' where we'd come up with great ideas together over great food," he said. "And making that connection with the customer through this meal that we share is an incredible experience for everyone."

In addition to his sales role at Acme, he performs guitar/keyboard/vocals with his band Rock Steady and spends as much time as he can fishing offshore on his boat "Loxy Lady" with his family, friends, and customers.

"People think I'm nuts that I'm around fish all day and then in my personal life, I can't wait to go fishing," Richie said. "The craziest thing is that I've fished all over the world and I have never caught a salmon!"





# FISH FRIDAYS

ACME'S LINK TO ITS BROOKLYN COMMUNITY



COREY DINEEN HANDS OFF AN ORDER  
TO ANOTHER HAPPY CUSTOMER

**COREY DINEEN IS UP AT 3 A.M. MOST FRIDAYS**, excited. As Acme's Ecommerce Coordinator in charge of running Fish Fridays, he'll spend the morning hours hurriedly packing orders, moving box after box of Acme products, and handing them off to their fish-loving neighbors of Greenpoint.

"The customer facing part of the job is honestly my favorite," Corey said. "It's not just the fish of Fish Friday, it's the people of Fish Friday."

Fish Friday has been operating out of the Brooklyn plant for over 20 years now, a beloved weekly sale that used to be held in the packing room but is now offered curbside. Corey started his role at Acme a few weeks before COVID-19 closures in 2020 and one of his first to-dos was to help move Fish Friday sales online.





“We’re really thankful for our customers that they still continue to come out every week,” he said. “You talk to people and they’ll say ‘I’ve been coming here for 20 years.’ They’ve known people at Acme who retired long ago. It’s multigenerational now!”

Corey grew up in a small business family and has been impressed by how closely the family members at Acme work with the business. To him, it does feel like one big family. Especially on Fish Fridays. He loves sitting down with longtime Production Manager Gary Brownstein early in the mornings, cracking jokes and comparing golf scores and hearing stories from the old days. He loves the flurry of activity in getting orders sorted and the challenge of running a well-oiled operation. And he loves talking to new customers and catching up with the regulars.

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“It’s not just the fish of Fish Friday,  
it’s the people of Fish Friday.”

COREY DINEEN

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“Being able to meet people from the community, who come from all walks of life, is incredible,” Corey said. “It shows you how powerful the neighborhood is and we’re really proud to be a part of it.”

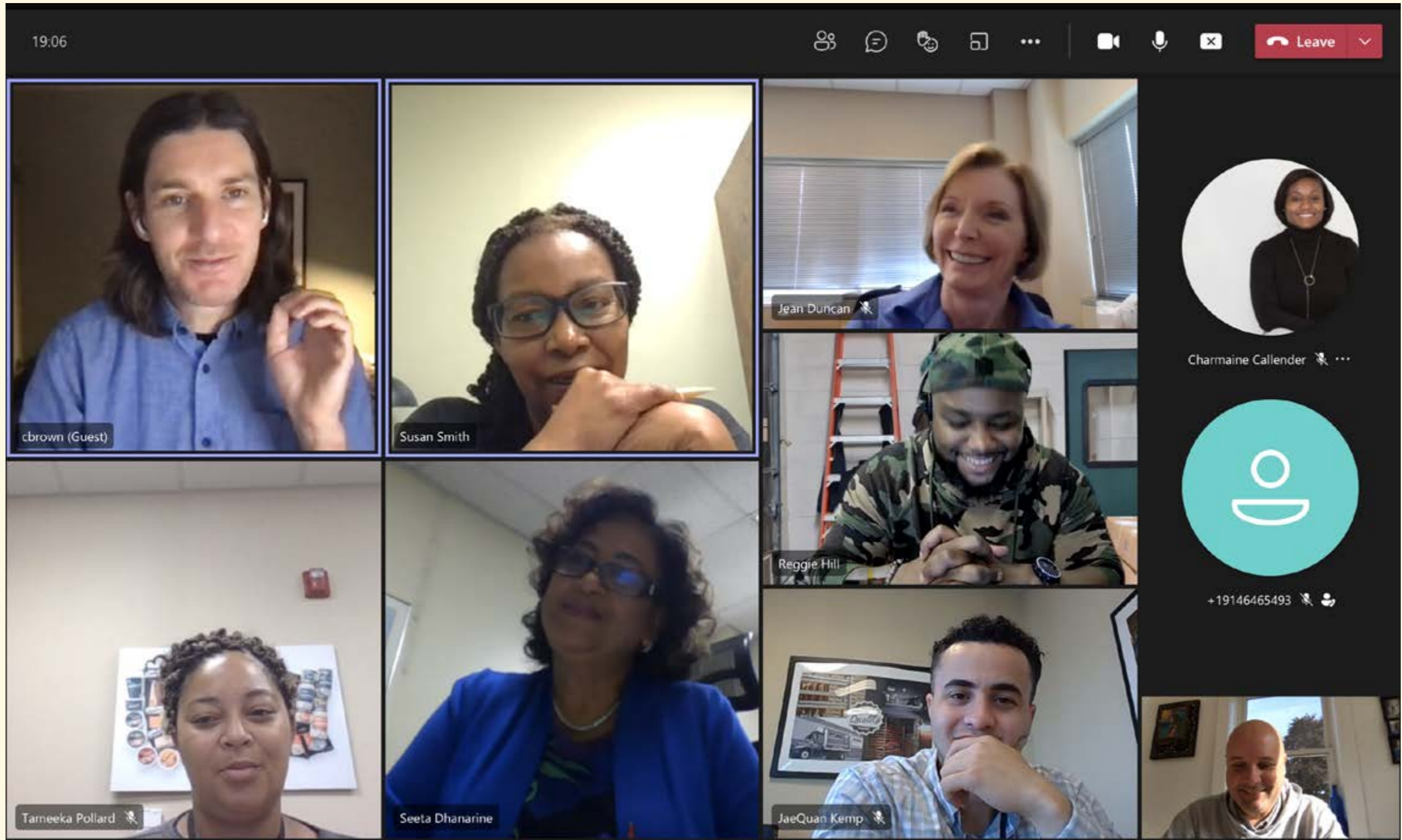


COREY DINEEN  
ECOMMERCE COORDINATOR



# ACME'S CULTURE TASK FORCE

REFINING COMPANY VALUES 



19:06

Leave

cbrown (Guest)

Susan Smith

Jean Duncan

Reggie Hill

Tameeka Pollard

Seeta Dhanarine

JaeQuan Kemp

Charmaine Callender

+19146465493

The image shows a Zoom meeting interface. At the top left, the time is 19:06. At the top right, there are icons for participants, chat, mute, video, and a red 'Leave' button. The main area is a grid of video feeds. The top row shows 'cbrown (Guest)', 'Susan Smith', and 'Jean Duncan'. The middle row shows 'Reggie Hill'. The bottom row shows 'Tameeka Pollard', 'Seeta Dhanarine', and 'JaeQuan Kemp'. On the right side, there is a sidebar with a profile card for 'Charmaine Callender' and a large teal circle containing a white person icon, with the phone number '+19146465493' below it.



**ON A WARM JANUARY AFTERNOON**, a small group gathered—both virtually and in-person at Acme’s Wilmington, North Carolina plant—to discuss the values of the company. Not in terms of cost savings, but what it means to have a framework to help guide Acme day in and day out, for everything from processing the fish to strengthening the relationships among team members.

This was a meeting of Acme’s Culture Task Force and it was not the first time they had met to talk through these big ideas. In fact, they had been meeting every few weeks for six months to develop a new set of values for Acme, ones that are simple but reflect the reality of the work being done and that apply to all employees at all locations.

To do this, they created a plan for each Task Force member to interview several plant associates and anonymously document their responses. These conversations gave people the opportunity to open up about their day-to-day experiences, both positive and negative, and the collected data and stories helped the team decide what the most important principles were to focus on.

The Culture Task Force findings were presented to the Executive Team with a series of recommendations about how to strengthen the company’s culture. These recommendations included restating Acme’s values, but they also called for greater attention to internal communication, staff recognition, and staff development. The Executive Team agreed to move forward and act on these recommendations.

As the new values were soon going to be shared company-wide, the Task Force used time during the meeting to give final feedback on how they were being presented. The word “quality” was still a question mark. There was the quality of the fish, of course, and everything it took to make sure it was produced at a high standard. But there was also the quality of the work being done by staff outside of production, as well as the quality of life for the people doing the work. Which one was it?

“It’s all of them,” said Charmaine Callender, Senior Human Resources Manager from the Brooklyn office. “Once all the other values are checked off, that will equal quality across the board.”

The quality of caring for one another is on full display each morning at the Acme plant in Brockton, Massachusetts. Jean McLain, General Manager, pops her head into the doors of the cutting room floors and calls out “good morning” to everyone in six different languages—English, Spanish, Portuguese, French, Polish, and a dialect of Portuguese from Angola. The cavernous rooms resound with a cheerful echo as everyone calls back, almost in song.

Jean has been working at the Massachusetts plant longer than anybody: 2021 marked 30 years. And from the beginning, her hope was that people would come through the door and feel welcomed and appreciated for the work they do. It’s small things that seem to go a long way in treating people with respect and creating opportunities for deeper connections.

“I know it’s really corny,” Jean said, “but we approach this work as a family.”

Family is a word that comes up often in talking to people from Acme and it means different things to different people. For Tameeka Pollard, Quality Assurance Technician, it’s togetherness.

“Two employees left and we all took it hard,” Tameeka said. “We’re one unit. When something happens to you, it happens to us and we all want to be there for each other.”

For their part, members of the Culture Task Force are excited about this new chapter. It’s showing them, and their teams, that initiative is being taken in both celebrating growth and addressing things that can be improved.

“I’m constantly telling my team that I want to be proactive, not reactive,” said Jae Kemp, Supply Chain Manager in Wilmington. “What we’re doing now, focusing on culture, is proactive. It means we’re going in a better direction, getting better every day.”







## ACME VALUES

### **WOW THEM WITH QUALITY**

We hold ourselves accountable to exceed expectations and deliver the highest quality outcome across everything we do.

### **IMPROVING IS WINNING**

We believe in getting a little better every day, quickly learning from our experiences, and acting on opportunities to grow.

### **EVERY RELATIONSHIP MATTERS**

We're proud to uphold our long legacy of making connections personal and interactions meaningful for our coworkers, teams, customers, partners, and communities.

### **PASS THE PASSION**

We're obsessed with bringing passion to the table, celebrating our traditions, and inspiring each other to innovate.

### **CITIZENS OF SEAFOOD**

We strive to do right by our people, our communities, and our planet by putting social responsibility and sustainability at the center of our decisions.



# WHAT'S NEXT FOR ACME

2021 was a formative year at Acme.

We reached out across the company and found an overwhelming level of interest in helping to work toward greater sustainability in all we do. We formed diverse teams that care deeply and work hard.

2022 is the year we take this energy and momentum and establish our baseline data so that we can measure our successes, set targets for improvement, and share our challenges and opportunities. It is an exciting time to be at Acme. We have the people and resources to leverage tremendous good while providing fantastic seafood to share around the kitchen table.

For more information, please visit [www.acmesmokedfish.com](http://www.acmesmokedfish.com) or email [sustainability@acmesmokedfish.com](mailto:sustainability@acmesmokedfish.com)









**TO ACHIEVE THE AMBITIOUS GROWTH TARGETS OUTLINED IN ACME'S 10-YEAR PLAN,**

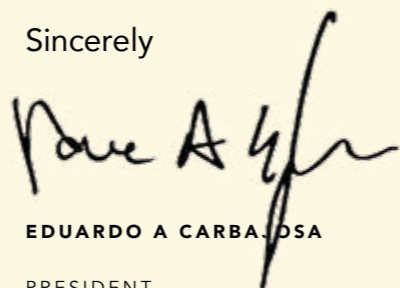
we know sustainability must be at the center of our decisions. We have committed to taking our sustainability efforts to the next level and making this a priority area for our business.

In 2021, we took a big step forward in our sustainability commitment by hiring Rob Snyder as our company's first Culture and Sustainability Officer. Rob's work goes far beyond helping Acme adjust our practices to address current seafood and sustainability issues. He is helping us determine what sustainability means for our business, and how to make it a pillar of our culture that informs everything we do. Rob brings two decades of experience leading large-scale sustainability efforts that range from renewable energy projects to diversifying fishing community economies, and he's already proven himself to be an immense resource for Acme.

With Rob's leadership, we have recently added a new corporate value at Acme that commits us to being "Citizens of Seafood." To us, this means doing right by our people and our planet by making responsible, sustainable choices. This value will guide Rob's work to evaluate our environmental impact, set our sustainability targets, and help Acme define what it means to be responsible leaders in this industry.

Our sustainability journey is just beginning. We must keep pushing ourselves to do more in this space. If we do it right, everyone at Acme will see sustainability as part of their jobs—whether they drive our trucks, work at our plants, source our fish, or procure our packaging materials.

Sincerely



**EDUARDO A CARBALOSA**

PRESIDENT

ACME SMOKED FISH CO.







## Rob Snyder, PhD

### **CULTURE AND SUSTAINABILITY OFFICER**

As Culture and Sustainability Officer at Acme, Rob is responsible for ensuring that the culture at Acme propels the company forward while benefiting people and planet.

Rob has dedicated his career to culture and sustainability. For the past two decades he helped communities, organizations and businesses make progress toward sustainability goals through investments in renewable energy, workforce housing, working waterfronts, and broadband infrastructure. Rob also developed numerous private/non-profit partnerships focused on innovation in the seafood sector. During his eight years as president of Island Institute, he established a shared vision and strategy across the organization in order to scale economic, social, and environmental outcomes for the coast of Maine. These efforts solidified the organization's national and international reputation. As a leader, Rob strives to be a clear communicator, deep listener, a consummate explorer, and someone who seeks understanding.

Rob has a Ph.D. in cultural anthropology focused on the intersection of community economies, seafood, and ocean policy. Rob used to run, but now jogs. He loves to read and explore new places and lives with his family in Maine.



Thank you  
to all Acme Smoked Fish Co.  
team members who are working on sustainability.

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We would also like to thank our partners at Bristol Bay Regional Development Association for the use of the following photos in the report.

Cover - Christopher Miller

Page 17 - Nels Ure

Page 47 - Kai Raymond





