

Together, Win or Lose

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Our third annual NYACS Day at the Races, held August 16 at the Saratoga thoroughbred track, was a great success weather-wise, attendance-wise, and for our scholarship foundation, which received the proceeds.

But it was especially successful for eight of our attendees, who at the start of the day decided, what the heck, let's pool our money – and rattled off an incredible 8-for-8 winning streak.

These suppliers and retailers each chipped in \$20, taking turns choosing the wager on each race. Sometimes they bet a horse to win, sometimes to show, often going with the odds-on favorite. And each time, they bet it all.

As they clinked their bottles of Budweiser and Bud Light to toast another amazing victory after each passing race, envious onlookers urged them to lay aside a big chunk of the pot and bet the rest. The group wouldn't hear of it. All or nothing, we're in this together, they agreed.

As the afternoon wore on and their bankroll climbed into the four figures, it occurred to me that there was a parallel to be drawn.

Here was a group of convenience store operators and suppliers with a common goal – to make money. To achieve the goal, they decided to invest together. And they decided to stick together – win or lose – and have fun doing it.

That's NYACS. Retailers and suppliers joining together, sharing knowledge, working on issues and problems together, pooling their resources in a trade association as a vehicle for advancing the industry so they all can become more successful. And, win or lose, having fun in the process.

By the end of the day, the Gang of Eight's \$160 initial investment had mushroomed to \$2,600, or \$325 apiece. They earned a 1,600% return, plus something you can't put a price tag on – a memorable afternoon trackside at Saratoga with industry friends and colleagues for the cause of funding scholarships to help educate young people connected to the convenience store trade.

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