

Gimme! Coffee Now Employee-Owned Cooperative

New Operating Structure Benefits Employees, Customers, Communities

ITHACA, N.Y. – Effective July 1, 2022, Gimme! Coffee transitioned to an employee-owned cooperative, strengthening their hyper-local focus and commitment to serving their employees, customers and communities. In less than one month, more than 40 percent of eligible employees have signed on as co-owners of the cooperative, which is now led by a Board of Directors that represents them.

“The co-op builds on Gimme’s commitment to provide stable, dignified careers by giving employees a stronger voice in how we serve our customers, community and each other,” said Kate Smith, Gimme! Board of Directors President and Bakery Director since 2011. “This new structure can become a model for other businesses, especially in the service industry, that a dedication to quality products, employee enrichment and local community investment can increase the health and wealth of everyone involved.”

Moving to a democratic, mutually beneficial co-op structure was a natural evolution for Gimme! Coffee. The company already provides a certified living wage and predictable schedules for its 53 employees and uses sustainable practices at every step in its supply chain, offering customers exceptional Fairtrade, organic, and shade-grown coffees at their cafes in Ithaca and Trumansburg, and with wholesale customers across the country.

The process to become an employee-owned cooperative involved multiple steps, following a management transition from Gimme’s owner and founder to two co-leaders in 2020. Believing

the co-op structure aligned with Gimme!’s values, they launched a feasibility study and formed a transition team consisting of a cross-section of employees. Their employee-ownership transition process included consultation from cooperative experts and a law firm that specializes in co-op structures.

“From the beginning, our goal was to be inclusive, keep ownership local and create an operating structure that benefits everyone involved,” Smith said. “Our Board and employee-owners represent a true cross-section of Gimme!, ensuring our connections to customers, suppliers, and communities translate to decisions and actions that best serve the staff and the greater good.”

The Board and employee-owners have collaborated on a detailed decision matrix and equitable operating model to grow the business. Colleen Anunu and Claire Christensen continue to run the day-to-day operations as Co-Managing Directors, reporting to the Board of Directors. Consistent with their commitment to transparency, they’ve involved the full team in numerous all-employee meetings to ensure understanding of the new structure.

“I’m so excited to see what we all can do as a cooperative,” said Wendell Roth, a member of the Board of Directors, employee-owner and Lead Barista who has worked for Gimme! for 4 years. “I joined Gimme! because I was inspired by its commitment to sustainability and focus on the local community, and now look where we are! We have employee-owners at every level of the company. I feel very proud of that.”

Gimme! Coffee is a specialty coffee roaster / retailer founded in 2000, with a wholesale business and cafes in Ithaca and Trumansburg, N.Y. From the beginning, Gimme! Coffee has

been a leader in the high-quality specialty coffee industry. Gimme! earned Roast Magazine's Macro Roaster of the Year award in 2013 in recognition of its commitment to quality and sustainability and was a finalist in the Sustainable Café category of the 2021 Sprudgie awards.

CONTACT Kate Smith, Board of Directors President and Bakery Director

COMPANY Gimme! Coffee

PHONE 607-273-0111 x406

EMAIL kate.smith@gimmecoffee.com

WEB <https://gimmecoffee.com/>