



Celebrating Our 2026 Progressive Grocer GenNext Honorees

October 15, 2026



At Ahold Delhaize USA, emerging leaders are helping shape the future of grocery through fresh ideas, curiosity and innovation. This year, four associates are being recognized for contributions that are advancing our business and creating meaningful impact for customers, associates and communities.

[Progressive Grocer's GenNext Awards](#) recognize rising professionals who are making their mark on the grocery industry through leadership, innovation and results. Four Ahold Delhaize USA associates are among the 2026 honorees:

- **Sara Qawwas**, Software Engineer
- **Erin Quinn**, BI Analytics Manager
- **Viramya Shah**, AI/ML Engineer
- **Blaine Whitestone**, Director of Channel Development

Although their career paths and areas of expertise differ, the honorees share a passion for learning, solving complex challenges and creating better experiences for the people they serve. From advancing digital capabilities and applying data-driven insights to improving the customer experience, their work reflects Ahold Delhaize USA's people-first approach.

Read on to learn what motivates each honoree and the impact they are making across Ahold Delhaize USA:

Sara Qawwas, Software Engineer

"What motivates me most to strive for success is helping my team learn and grow while learning from them in return. I care deeply about our customers and try to ensure they receive the best possible experience from us and can use our products regardless of their needs. Being disabled should never prevent someone from getting something as critical as groceries. Reinforcing that point with my coworkers, so they carry it forward throughout their careers, is very important to me."

During a transformative year for Ahold Delhaize USA's technology organization, Sara played a key role in enhancing mobile experiences. Working across product and technology teams, she helped coordinate major initiatives and keep critical releases on track. Her mentorship, technical guidance and commitment to accessibility have contributed to better customer experiences while creating opportunities for fellow engineers to grow.

Erin Quinn, BI Analytics Manager

"What motivates me most is the opportunity for continuous personal and professional growth. I know there is still a lot for me to learn, and I enjoy taking on new challenges that push me outside my comfort zone. Being able to adapt, learn new skills and apply those lessons to future opportunities keeps my work exciting and rewarding. I believe growth comes from curiosity and a willingness to keep learning, and that mindset continues to drive me every day."

Erin was a key contributor to the launch of the Edge retail media platform, helping establish the data and analytics foundation supporting the initiative. She brought together teams and aligned work across functions to help prepare the platform for launch. Her focus on accuracy, collaboration and execution continues to support results across the business.

Viramya Shah, AI/ML Engineer

"My motivation comes from genuine curiosity. I enjoy learning new things and seeing how far I can push myself. When something I've worked on makes a difference for customers, for the business, or even for the people I work with, that's very rewarding. I also really enjoy turning ideas into something real. Taking a problem that starts off a little fuzzy, building something around it, and eventually seeing people using it is very satisfying."

Viramya has helped advance AI and data science capabilities through solutions that improve how teams work. His disciplined approach, technical knowledge and commitment to continuous learning have delivered meaningful business impact. He also strengthens associate connections by organizing an annual office table tennis tournament, giving colleagues an informal way to build relationships across teams.

Blaine Whitestone, Director of Channel Development

"I spent the first half of my career at ADUSA in store operations, and during that time, I developed a passion for problem-solving and creating the best possible experience for customers and associates. I am very fortunate that my current role allows me to continue pursuing those passions. Identifying a complex problem, building a solution and seeing associates and customers engage with it is very rewarding and keeps me focused on continuing to add value for the business."

Drawing on his background in store operations, Blaine has helped strengthen Ahold Delhaize USA's e-commerce performance by identifying opportunities, developing solutions and delivering measurable results. He also builds strong cross-functional relationships and brings teams together around shared goals, helping turn complex challenges into meaningful business improvements.

Together, Sara, Erin, Viramya and Blaine show how curiosity, collaboration and leadership can create meaningful impact across Ahold Delhaize USA. We congratulate them on this well-deserved recognition and look forward to the contributions they will continue making to our organization and the grocery industry.