



**RAMAPO COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY**  
**Office of Media and Public Relations**  
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Contact: Angela Daidone  
[adaidon1@ramapo.edu](mailto:adaidon1@ramapo.edu)

## **Ramapo College Alumnus Jim Klein's Career Has Been a Sweet Success**

*Jim Klein earned his bachelor of science in business with a minor in marketing from Ramapo College in 1984. His career in the food and confection industry spans more than 40 years and has included sales and management positions with some of the largest companies in the world. Klein currently is the Chief Customer Officer (CCO) for Ferrero USA, whose headquarters are in Parsippany, N.J. The Ridgewood resident graciously took time from a busy schedule to discuss his career and offer words of advice for students who wish to pursue a similar business path.*

### ***Why did you choose to attend Ramapo?***

I needed to work while going to school and Ramapo was local, so it was the best option for me. I also had friends who were a little older than me who went to Ramapo. They loved the culture of the school and gave it a high recommendation. It was a great opportunity for me to study and work full-time.

### ***How did your career get started?***

I worked in a food store for six years, including while I was a student at Ramapo. The sales reps from companies like Unilever and Proctor & Gamble would come in and I learned about displays and merchandising the products in the store. I ended up working for Unilever for eight or nine years; the company had great brands in the CPG (Consumer Packaged Goods) industry. I later worked for Wrigley Mars for almost 15 years. I made lateral moves within the company, which proved valuable because I learned so much. I spent three years in Toronto and joined Ferrero USA as its CCO in May 2016.

### ***What is the role of a CCO?***

The chief customer officer is a senior vice president of sales. I'm responsible for 160 employees in the various sales departments that engage with customers in big companies like Walmart, Walgreens, Stop and Shop, ShopRite, etc.

[Ferrero USA](#) is the fastest growing confectioner in the U.S. and the world. My chief responsibility is to transform the company's business model through a transactional and strategic approach. I've been able to use that data in how we approach customers by applying the knowledge and expertise I've gained over my career.

***Have consumer habits changed a lot since the pandemic began?***

Consumers' purchasing habits have changed, not only since the pandemic but with the increase in online shopping. Candy is very often an impulse-buying business, so we've carefully looked at how consumers' behavior in the stores have changed. Are they making trips to the stores? Indulging more? There has been an increase in demand and consumption, and definitely an increase in food and beverage sales online. We needed to invest in that space. Ferrero's e-comm team had to shift from a traditional sales approach to digital and build quickly. As a result, Ferrero USA business in the United States has tripled over the last three years.

***What career advice can you offer Ramapo students who are majoring in marketing or related fields?***

I've been in the supermarket business for 43 years. The one word of advice I have is patience. It's a continuous learning process; those lateral moves I made in my career paid off but because I was patient. I would tell students to join an organization that has a growth trajectory, good brands, a good work culture. Get the knowledge base and expertise and take the time to learn. Always show good work ethic, demonstrate agility, network, and be effective in your communication. Those are the keys to success.

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Ramapo College of New Jersey is the state's premier public liberal arts college and is committed to academic excellence through interdisciplinary and experiential learning, and international and intercultural understanding. The College is ranked #1 among New Jersey public institutions by College Choice, has been named one of the 50 Most Beautiful College Campuses in America by *Condé Nast Traveler*, and is recognized as a top college by *U.S. News & World Report*, *Kiplinger's*, Princeton Review and *Money* magazine, among others. Ramapo College is also distinguished as a Career Development College of Distinction by *CollegesofDistinction.com*, boasts the best campus housing in New Jersey on *Niche.com*, and is designated a "Military Friendly College" in *Victoria Media's Guide to Military Friendly Schools*.

Established in 1969, Ramapo College offers bachelor's degrees in the arts, business, data science, humanities, social sciences and the sciences, as well as in professional studies, which include business, education, nursing and social work. In addition, the College offers courses leading to teacher certification at the elementary and secondary levels, and offers graduate programs leading to master's degrees in Accounting, Business Administration, Creative Music Technology, Data Science, Educational Technology, Educational Leadership, Nursing, Social Work and Special Education, as well as a post-master's Doctor of Nursing Practice.

