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Media / Investor Relations Contact

Mike Bufano, Senior Vice President, Chief Financial Officer

Panera Bread

mike.bufano@panerabread.com

PANERA BREAD APPOINTS BLAINE HURST PRESIDENT

St. Louis, MO, December 9, 2016 – Panera Bread Company (NASDAQ: PNRA) has named company veteran Blaine Hurst President effective Monday, December 12, 2016, following the resignation of Drew Madsen for personal reasons.

Hurst has been with Panera since 2010 and has held a number of senior leadership positions, most recently as Executive Vice President – Chief Transformation and Growth Officer. He has been the driving force behind Panera’s biggest growth initiatives in the past few years, including delivery, catering and the evolution of Panera’s digital capabilities. In his new role, Hurst will drive innovation in the retail cafe business. He will continue to report to Ron Shaich, Panera’s chairman and CEO.

“Blaine has been instrumental in our multiyear efforts to transform Panera into a better competitive alternative with expanded growth opportunities,” Shaich said. “Blaine is well known and respected within the restaurant industry and the Panera family. Both colleagues and franchisees value his innovative thinking, the strength of the teams he’s built and his ability to drive transformative change.”

Hurst joined Panera in 2010 to work on the development of Panera 2.0. He was named Executive Vice President of Technology and Transformation in May 2013, and EVP – Chief Transformation and Growth Officer in October 2014. During his multiyear tenure at Panera, Hurst has been, at various times, the senior executive responsible for oversight of a range of functions, including manufacturing, supply chain, information technology, digital, human resources and consumer packaged goods. He has also successfully led major innovation projects impacting the retail cafe business.

Earlier in his career, Hurst was Vice Chairman and President at Papa John's International Inc.; President – Restaurant Technology Solutions at eMac Digital LLC, an enterprise backed by McDonald's, Accel Partners and KKR & Co.; and Vice President – Information Services at Boston Chicken. He has also been both an entrepreneur and independent consultant, assisting many restaurant, retail and distribution companies in their development and growth.

About Panera Bread Company

Thirty years ago, at a time when quick service meant low quality, Panera set out to challenge this expectation. We believed that food that was good and that you could feel good about, served in a warm and welcoming environment by people who cared, could bring out the best in all of us. To us, that is food as it should be and that is why we exist.

So we began with a simple commitment: to bake fresh bread from fresh dough in every bakery-cafe, every day. No artificial preservatives or short cuts, just bakers with simple ingredients and hot ovens. Each night, any unsold bread and baked goods were shared with neighbors in need.

These traditions carry on today, as we have continued to find ways to be an ally to our guests. That means crafting a menu of soups, salads and sandwiches that we are proud to feed our families. Like poultry and pork raised without antibiotics on our salads and sandwiches. A commitment to transparency and options that empower our guests to eat the way they want. Seasonal flavors and whole grains. And a commitment to removing artificial additives (flavors, sweeteners, preservatives and colors from artificial sources) from the food in our bakery-cafes. Why? Because we think that simpler is better and we believe in serving food as it should be. Because when you don't have to compromise to eat well, all that is left is the joy of eating.

We're also focused on improving quality and convenience. With investments in technology and operations, we now offer new ways to enjoy your Panera favorites - like mobile ordering and Rapid Pick-Up for to-go orders - all designed to make things easier for our guests. As of September 27, 2016, there were 2,024 bakery-cafes in 46 states and in Ontario, Canada operating under the Panera Bread®, Saint Louis Bread Co.® or Paradise Bakery & Cafe® names. For more information, visit panerabread.com or find us on Twitter (@panerabread), Facebook ([facebook.com/panerabread](https://www.facebook.com/panerabread)) or Instagram (@panerabread).