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# THIS IS RETAIL

• COMMUNITY •

#thisisretail

## DeLon Mork, Owner Dairy Queen, Madison, SD

### Describe your business.

I own and operate the Dairy Queen in Madison SD. We are a franchised Quick Service Restaurant with a wide range of sandwiches and meals along with a full menu of ice cream treats. Dairy Queen originated in 1940 and the store in Madison was built in the mid-Fifties. My parents purchased the store from the Holly family in 1964.

### How did you get your start in the business?

I started working at my parents business at the age of 12. I began with washing the windows, sweeping the parking lot and mowing the lawn. A few years later I was trained to work in the kitchen as well as the front counter, and 35 years later I am doing many of the same things, along with wearing many other hats.

### Why retail for you?

I like being my own boss. I watched the fulfillment owning a business gave to my father and I wanted to carry on that family tradition.

### What advice or message do you have for others considering a career in retail?

You can be very successful in retail, but like any job, it depends on how much you want to put into the effort. Retail is a lifestyle. It can be 24/7 but it becomes your life's passion.

### What is the most common misconception about retail?

That is easy. It is very, very hard work. From the moment product shows up at the back door to when a customer makes a purchase, a retailer is involved. Like I said above, it can be 24/7 and easily consume you.



*"I am most proud of the relationships that I have established with customers over the years. Some of them come into the store multiple times a week. Many of them started as customers and now are truly my friends."*  
DeLon Mork

### What makes it a good day for you?

My best days are when people from out of town who haven't been back for a while stop by and tell me of a memory they have from when my dad ran the DQ. They remind me why I am here, and what is important. It all boils down to building relationships.

### Why is retail crucial to a community?

Retail is often the hub of the community, from providing needed services, to acting as an economic driver, to providing support. A vibrant retail trade attracts and retains the people of a community.

### Why is it important for retailers to give back to their communities?

Giving back is important because it shows a commitment to the community that supports us. Retail is often the hub of a community, and helps drive events and activities that the community depends on. Giving back lifts morale of employees by showing them they work for a business that cares. It allows those same employees an opportunity to volunteer themselves. And, other things being equal, giving back can set a business apart from its competitors.

For more information about This is Retail - South Dakota:  
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