



GHRA In Action

OUR MEMBERS ARE OUR MISSION!

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Convenience Stores Represent a Growing Competitive Threat to Restaurants, Particularly QSRs

Page 11

Tips & Tactics to Drive Mobile App Coupons

Page 10

Emphasizing Store Cleanliness

Page 09





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We're a fuel distributor specializing in high-quality, cost-effective **unbranded fuel**. By uniting the purchasing strength of all our members, we aim to expand our supply services to a broader customer base with the primary goal of passing on the benefits to our members.

To learn more and sign up for GHRA Fuels, please contact

Imraan Nabi - Director of Fuels

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Sign up now by scanning the QR Code

What's New with GHRA Fuels



Imraan Nabi, GHRA Director of Fuels

Greeting Members,

It is a pleasure to greet you as we enter the month of August 2024. This year has been an exciting time for GHRA Fuels as we continue to increase our member base, volumes of fuel sold, and add on additional capacity from fuel terminals and carriers. We have seen growth in the volume of fuel sold each month this year, and that is a testament to not only the hard work that the GRHA Fuels team is doing, but also the support the community and its members are providing. For that, I extend my deepest gratitude.

In July, we faced one of our biggest challenges to date. Hurricane Beryl hit the Greater Houston area a lot harder than expected. Many stores lost power for many days, and the ones that remained open were left having to support the areas around them. Fuel suppliers started raising their pricing, carriers were fully booked, and many stores found it difficult to secure the supply needed for their communities. GHRA Fuels stepped up and supported its member base. We did not raise our margins, and, for many days were recognized as the low-cost supplier. We had a robust carrier network in place, and we were able to handle mostly all the orders that were requested. In total, we had a 98% fulfillment rate and 94% on-time delivery. Many members who had not ordered from GHRA started ordering, and in many cases, multiple loads per day. Members who were not signed up with GHRA had their registrations expedited and orders filled. In their time of need, GHRA was there to support them.

Going forward, I encourage members who are not registered with GHRA Fuels to contact our offices and sign up for Fuels. We offer a no-cost sign-up, with no obligation to purchase. By signing up, you will receive daily pricing for your store, which includes the cost of fuel, taxes, and delivery. GHRA offers NET10 terms for its purchases and multiple ways to order including text, email, or phone. You are welcome to also call or message me directly at (832) 755-0442 with your store details and requirements, and I can provide you with instant confirmation of your order, along with a delivery window. GHRA is in the process of developing its online and app-based portal in which pricing will be displayed, orders can be placed, order history available, and all financial details/history of your orders will be at your fingertips.

In closing, I thank you again for your support of GHRA Fuels. We stand ready to support your requirements for unbranded fuel and encourage you to sign up for our services. We will continue to hold additional town halls and one-on-one meetings for Fuels in the coming weeks. If you have any questions regarding the support we provide, I welcome you to reach out to me, and I will be happy to discuss it with you.

Warm Regards,

Imraan Nabi

(281) 295-5342
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JAY
JAY



COMING SOON...



Emphasizing Store Cleanliness

With foodservice gaining importance in convenience stores, retailers cannot afford to give customers the impression that employees have poor sanitation habits or that their standard of excellence doesn't extend to cleanliness.

By C-Store Decisions

Research consistently shows that dirty, poorly stocked bathrooms turn customers away, and that clean, sanitary bathrooms are much more important to women than to men. Clean restrooms are so desirable that one in three Americans would pay to use a restroom if they were assured it was clean and well-equipped.

Seventy-two percent of those surveyed by the National Association of Convenience Stores said they stop using the restrooms, followed by those who have to pump gas (68%) and 66% who need to buy food or drinks.

Whether you operate a restaurant, convenience store or even your corporate office, many people will use your restrooms daily — customers, potential employees, business partners, etc. A dirty bathroom will impact your business's reputation and bottom line.

According to The Facilities Group, a Tampa, Fla.-based facility maintenance and management firm, a recent survey found that 60% of Americans immediately leave a business

or are less likely to return after encountering an unpleasant restroom.

That means for millions of Americans, the cleanliness of your facilities will define your brand and reputation. Many public restroom complaints can frustrate customers. Lack of soap, clogged toilets and dirty sinks are among the most common issues when using a business restroom.

The Facilities Group said dirty bathrooms damage your reputation in three key areas:

1) Creating a Health Hazard

Any unclean place can lead to health risks. Hundreds of people use public restrooms daily, making them the ideal setting for gathering germs. A dirty bathroom can cause bacteria and germs to linger, putting customers at risk of viruses and other health issues.

If your employees also use these restrooms, the problems increase, mainly if you sell foodservice items. Dirty bathrooms lower employee morale and cause health issues. For customer and employee safety, keeping restrooms clean is essential.

2) Reflects Poorly on Your Business

It is essential to consider the state of your bathroom as a reflection of your business image. For instance, if you own a restaurant and need to remember to clean your restrooms, customers may question the cleanliness of your kitchen.

These negative perceptions can significantly harm your business, especially in the modern age when even one online review, blog post or social media share can quickly spread the word.

Businesses in the service industry, such as hospitality, can give their customers peace of mind by maintaining clean restrooms. People encountering dirty bathrooms can develop a negative image of your stores and could begin to distrust other aspects of your company, including customer service.

Furthermore, if your competitors operate clean restrooms, which is their reputation, you will need more time to win back a customer who lost confidence in your brand.

3) Deters Potential Customers

A customer's first encounter with your business could be when they stop in to use the restroom. If they find it dirty, they will be less likely to return. People who use your bathrooms may become potential clients, but when you need to remember to maintain your restrooms, these customers stay away. First impressions are lasting.

Clean restrooms give customers a positive perception of your business. Customers will appreciate your efforts and reward your business with increased sales and positive reviews that generate interest among future customers. ■



Tips & Tactics to Drive Mobile App Coupons

ST. LOUIS — As today's convenience store retailers shift to digital storefronts that go beyond rewards programs to embrace delivery, ordering, payments and other technologies, coupons continue to be a crucial tool that links app usage with sales.

By CS News

Based on an analysis of dozens of convenience retailers from Jan. 1 through Dec. 31, 2023, Rovertown, the mobile app platform designed for convenience retailers, revealed top coupon categories, practical tips and tactics for success in a new report, "Click to Claim: Driving Sales with Mobile App Coupons."

"Coupons are one of the most direct ways to convert app engagement into sales. That's why it's essential to have an effective strategy," said Tyler Cameron, head of strategy and analytics at Rovertown. "Our analysis reveals several insights that will help retailers level-up and drive better results with coupons."

Key insights from the report include:

Coupons drive retention. Retailers see an immediate, 18 point increase in the retention rate of app users once they redeem just one coupon.

Free items resonate, but there's a catch. Coupons with free items performed 408% better than coupons with reduced price points, but retailers should exercise caution. The added cost of free campaigns means it may make sense to instead

offer meaningfully reduced prices, Rovertown reported.

Fountain drinks reign supreme. Fountain drink coupons drove 799% more redemptions in total, across the Rovertown platform, compared to the average category of coupons. Energy drinks took second place (396%) and candy rounded out third (383%).

Two tactics can drive success. Convenience retailers using two tactics — Surprise and Delight and Reduced Price Point, Limited Choices — saw increases of 460% and 780% over the average retailer based on the percent of users redeeming coupons and the number of coupons redeemed per user.

"App strategies should always compliment in-store strategies," Cameron said. "Apps are fundamentally communication platforms, and communicating about exclusive coupons on high-traffic items is one of the best ways to drive visits to your stores."

Headquartered in St. Louis, Rovertown's customizable platform empowers retailers to build branded, design-forward apps and make self-service updates in real time. ■



Convenience Stores Represent a Growing Competitive Threat to Restaurants, Particularly QSRs

Aside from economic uncertainty and rising input costs, QSR restaurants are facing intense competition from convenience stores for customers' food and beverage dollars. Furthermore, the degree of competition from c-stores promises to grow even more heated for the foreseeable future.

In many ways, c-stores are evolving from just a quick-stop shop which sold "cokes, smokes, and gas." However, consistently decreasing fuel margins, as well as more

health-conscious customers, have forced c-stores to rethink their business models. They are now more of a food service destination that can satisfy customers' requirements for

speed, variety and quality.

According to Convenience Store News, in-store sales at U.S. convenience stores reached an all-time high of \$275.3 billion in 2022, up 6.6% from \$258.2 billion in 2021. Total in-store gross profit totaled \$73.35 billion in 2022, versus \$70.26 billion in 2021.

In-store foodservice sales are growing at a much faster pace. These revenues totaled \$51.7 billion and \$43.2 billion in 2022 and 2021, respectively. Foodservice sales increased 19.7% in 2022 and accounted for 18.8% of all c-store in-store sales during the year. (Merchandise sales account for the balance.) The year-over-year growth rate was 20.3% in 2021, and the 2021 ratio of foodservice sales to total in-store sales was 16.7%.

According to Food Business News, foodservice sales account for about a quarter of all in-store revenues for c-stores, and more than a third of in-store gross margins. In 2022, the average c-store sold nearly \$260,000 and \$254,000 of prepared food (prepared onsite or offsite) and packaged beverages, respectively, up 20.9% and 7.1% from 2021.

An example of a company with enormous in-store sales is Casey's General Stores, Inc. (NASDAQ: CASY), the fifth-largest convenience store chain in the U.S. and an institution in many areas of the Midwest, especially in rural America. Casey's sells gasoline and diesel fuel at almost all of its 2,600 stores in 17 states, but the attraction for many of its



customers is the pizza it makes from scratch in its in-store kitchens. Based on the number of its locations, Casey's would be the fifth largest pizza chain in the country in terms of locations, just behind the 3,180-unit Papa John's Pizza restaurants. Casey's realizes a 40+% gross margin on inside transactions.

Several factors are prompting increasing numbers of consumers to turn to c-stores for food offerings versus fast food restaurants. For example, according to a recent study by a c-store trade publication, about 50% of consumers believe convenience stores are just as capable of providing fresh food and beverages as restaurants. Furthermore, the publication reports consumers generally perceive the value of convenience stores to be higher than quick service restaurants (QSRs).

A September 2023 Convenience Store Shopper Insights Study released by the Acosta Group, a retail and foodservice marketing and data analytics firm, reinforces the growing food and beverage wallet share of c-stores. About 52% of c-store shoppers shop at such locations at least once a week, and 30% acknowledge visiting them more than they did a year ago. Most importantly, Acosta Group's Kathy Risch says for 92% of c-store shoppers, "food and drink purchases are the primary purpose of the trip." Snacks, candy, baked goods and refrigerated beverages represent the most frequently purchased items. (For the study, Acosta surveyed nearly 1,300 U.S. shoppers in July 2023.)

Furthermore, 45% of c-store shoppers purchase hot foods at least once a week, with sandwiches, breakfast foods and pizza being their most common orders. Fifty-one percent of these consumers believe c-store hot food items are at least as good as QSR offerings, and that they are more attractively priced. Interestingly, this demand for hot food is prompting some c-stores to begin carrying gourmet foods like cheeses, coffee and teas and craft beers.

Some c-stores have even taken further steps to appeal to a broader class of customer. Indeed, many stores have added natural lighting and redesigned their layouts to be more spacious and inviting. Even further along the spectrum, c-store chains like Wawa and Sheetz, Inc. (both private companies) have hired chefs, nutritionists, and food scientists to create upscale food experiences, ensuring the quality and taste of the foods they sell.

Blue collar professionals are frequent customers of c-stores. Nearly a quarter of these workers reported visiting a location every day. Even more telling and positive for c-stores, 58% of blue collar workers who frequent these locations buy lunch there, and 48% buy dinner. A whopping 42% eat the meals they purchase in-store.

QSR operators must assume c-stores will continue to offer more food and beverage options, especially as the tobacco side of their business continues to decline. How restaurants respond to this c-store onslaught will be critical to their success in an increasingly competitive market. ■

"Start where you are.
Use what you have.
Do what you can."

— Arthur Ashe



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