
Best Practices

to Expand General Merchandise Sales

Sponsored content from our partner





After the pandemic's onset, convenience stores stepped up to the plate to offer everyday essentials beyond foodservice and fuel. With consumers looking to check more items off their lists on each shopping trip, basket averages increased and bulk-buying became the norm. These patterns endured through 2021; according to market research from the NPD Group, average c-store basket totals reached \$34 in March 2020 and remained at or above that amount through July 2021. And sales of profitable household essentials, such as lighters, have seen a boost, too.

Indeed, beyond changing how much consumers purchase, the pandemic affected what they purchase as well. Consumers have jumped on the opportunity to skip a trip to a big-box store by purchasing other essentials while they stop at the c-store to pay for gas or pick up a quick bite. According to Technomic's Q4 2021 *C-Store Consumer Marketbrief*, 57% of shoppers say they purchase household items from the c-store at least weekly,

and 44% say the same of general merchandise, meaning these rates remained consistent from earlier in the year. And for many of these shoppers, a trip to the c-store means picking up a BIC lighter. The brand is No. 1 in the category, boasting 4X the household penetration than compared to the next lighter brand.

These trends mark an opportunity for retailers to sustain high sales in these categories in the long term—or even expand sales as consumers resume their com-

mutes to work and school and potentially increase foot traffic in the store—and best merchandising practices can help c-stores compete for sales amid market recovery.

Visibility

For many consumers, picking up everyday essentials at the c-store will mean spontaneously adding an item they need to their basket before checking out. Maximizing visibility for these merchandise categories—especially for shop-

pers approaching the register—is crucial. What's more, utilizing larger displays can increase sales volumes and help avoid out-of-stocks. For example, IRI reports that displays of lighters with more tiers sell at higher velocities.

Branding

It's difficult to understate the importance of offering brands consumers trust, especially in general and household merchandise categories; shoppers don't want to sacrifice product quality for



convenience. It's for this reason, among others, that BIC is retailers' go-to supplier for lighters.

According to IRI, BIC represents 92.3% of dollar sales in the non-refillable pocket lighter category for U.S. convenience stores. What's more, in the 52 weeks ending Dec. 26, 2021, BIC expanded sales by 5.7%, outpacing category growth at 5.1%.

Assortment

Variety is another major sales driver; according to BIC, increasing the variety and visibility of the lighter set can drive up to a 35% increase in unit sales per store per week. After visibility at No. 1, BIC cites variety of formats and variety of designs as the No. 2 and No. 3 most important characteristics



of an effective lighter set. BIC's offerings include the BIC Classic, Mini, EZ Reach and Special Edition formats, as well as more than 50 different series of popular designs to choose from, including BIC's Tattoo, Retro

Wave, Rock Bands, Fashion and EZ Reach Camo lines.

In short, BIC is the clear choice for c-store retailers looking to convert and retain loyal shoppers looking for quality lighters on the go.

To learn more about how BIC can help retailers drive sales in 2022, visit mybiclighter.com