

Convenience & Carwash

NOVEMBER | DECEMBER 2023

 **CANADA**

DRYERS & VACUUMS: KEEP CUSTOMERS COMING BACK

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Cover Story	Petroleum and Carwash	Industry News	Instore and Nutrition
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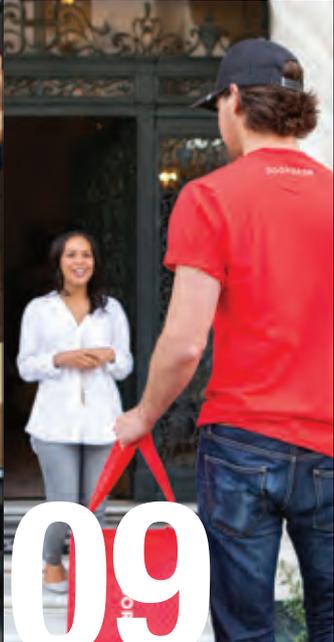
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Upcoming Events

January 15–17, 2024
9th Women in Carwash™ Conference
Fort Lauderdale, FL
www.womenincarwash.com
204-489-4215

February 20–24, 2024
WPMAExpo
Mirage Hotel, Las Vegas
<https://www.wpma.com/national-convention>

February 28–March 1, 2024
Southwest Car Wash Association
Fort Worth, TX
<https://swcarwash.org>

March 5 & 6, 2024
Carwacs
Toronto, ON
<https://www.convenienceu.ca/>

May 13–15, 2024
The Car Wash Show
Nashville, TN
www.thecarwashshow.com

June 17–19, 2024
10th Women in Carwash™ Conference
Salt Lake City, UT
www.womenincarwash.com

August 24, 2024
PetroCan Prairies Charity Golf Tournament

October 7–10, 2024
NACS Show
Las Vegas, NV
<https://www.nacsshow.com/>



JANUARY 15–17, 2024
9th Women in Carwash™ Conference
Fort Lauderdale, FL
www.womenincarwash.com

Welcome to Winter



Welcome to winter. In this edition, we bring to you a plethora of great editorial topics from distribution networks, POS contactless payments and pet washes to above ground storage tanks and order/delivery services.

What better time than the start of a new season to, well, add something new to your site?

Last month I traveled to Atlanta for the NACS/PEI tradeshow where companies from across North America showcase their products to the many operators who gather to look at new items they can add to their stable of products.

Normally at the NACS/PEI show there is one product category that stands out as the latest and greatest. For example, one year it was energy drinks followed the next year with calming drinks, or e-cigs one year followed by vapes the next. This year however there was nothing that really stood out to me, with the exception of popcorn and protein products. There was a lot of popcorn, which made me happy because it's one of my favorite food groups. I know it's not a food group but hey, it is to me. There was any flavour of popcorn that one could imagine, including protein enhanced popcorn. Who knew! Healthy food products were very prevalent at the show this year with offerings of protein bars, protein shakes, sleeves of protein to add to your water, protein everything.

I can't forget to mention my good friends at Smoodi again this year. Adam and his team have one of best new products out there, in my opinion. What could be better than flash-frozen fruits and vegetables combined with spring water resulting in a healthy drink to start your day? Nothing. If your site hasn't setup a Smoodi depot in your store, what are you waiting for?

With the new focus on healthy products assumed by many companies, I'm encouraged that the issue of obesity is being addressed. All in all, the show was a great show offering attendees the opportunity to meet and spend some time with old friends and the chance to make new friends across our industry.

The end of October I travelled to Milan, Italy for the Host Milano tradeshow. What a show it was. With 15 halls and exhibit time spanning five days, we sampled coffee, rather cappuccino or espresso, from the newest coffee machines offering the latest technology, we sampled gelato, pastries and pasta. We were introduced to the latest in foodservice equipment that included Alto-Shaam and Flexeserve equipment that left us in awe of the advancement of this type of equipment. Imagine your site offering customers a freshly made hamburger, fries, dessert and fresh cooked bacon, all cooked in the same oven, at different temperatures for different allotments of time, with no cross-contamination of flavours. Or, offering customers food products with self-serve options of colder, cold or cool, within the same cooler? Amazing advancements available to retailers.

More on this amazing tradeshow from Gretchen Matthews on page 34 along with some images for your enjoyment. During our trip to Milan, Gretchen and I walked more than 100 miles. We were awed by everything that we saw at HostMilano and thank Enrico and Francesca and the entire team for their hospitality and organizing such a fabulous tradeshow.

We hope you enjoy this edition and, as always, your success is my business. My open-door policy to your valuable feedback remains not only intact but stronger than ever. If you have comments or a story idea for an upcoming issue, please email me at bjohnstone@convenienceandcarwash.com or 204-489-4215.

Brenda Jane Johnstone PUBLISHER



We want to welcome and introduce you to Susan Stots, who has joined *Convenience & Carwash Canada* magazine to assist with advertising sales. Susan previously held the position of data integrity, time & leave manager for Canada Post. She is looking forward to meeting new people and serving this industry with the same level of enthusiasm and professionalism that she has held throughout her 30+ year career. She can be reached at 416-698-7517 or email susans@convenienceandcarwash.com



'Tis The Season

'Tis the season to promote holiday-themed products in your stores. There are some convenience stores in my area where you can find a vast array of decorations, gift ideas and Christmas-themed items and there are convenience stores in my area where you won't find any.

It's not a coincidence that the stores that carry items geared towards holiday shoppers are also very active on social media. They let you know when these items are available on their shelves and delight in showing them off in videos, pictures and posts on various social media sites. One such store recently announced an expansion – they are opening another store at a new location and town, which leads me to believe that the social media presence and their new product offerings are paying off for them.

How many festive-themed products to include in your store will depend greatly on your customer demographics. However, it might also be a way to entice some new shoppers in through your doors.

I also visited a convenience store recently that seemed to go overboard on the number of jigsaw puzzles they were selling. I admit to being puzzled by their lack of product variety and the heavy influx of jigsaws since my last visit, which was several months ago as it is in a town I do not visit very often. When I was there previously, they had a nice section of local artisan products for sale and I was looking forward to browsing through this selection again. Alas, it was no longer there.

Sometimes I find it interesting to discover the inventory being carried at different convenience stores and occasionally it seems confusing. Taking some time to ask your regular customers what they would like to see you add to your items for sale might be a good way to check and make sure you are making the most of the sales opportunities that each customer brings with them. It's about what they want and not just about what you like that will entice them to buy something and come back again and again.

At this festive season, may your store be full of happy customers discovering that you are offering exactly what they were looking for. This may not be the time of year to continue on as usual without adding some holiday items to your shelves. Indeed, keeping your inventory fresh by adding some new items as we pass through the seasons in a year will tell your customers that you are on top of things and flourishing as a business.

These are challenging times for many people and if you can offer some festive cheer on a cold winter day, it might just be enough to make a customer smile and happy customers are good for business.

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AWARDS





Do you love your wholesaler?

By Stéphane Bouchard

I hope so! Because we love you, our faithful retail entrepreneurs and suppliers!

What an industry! I've been leading sales and marketing at Regitan Wholesale for over 25 years. I left Coca-Cola to join the family business, and boy what a change that was for me. When you work for a manufacturer, your vision of the world is very different than when you are working for the wholesaler side in the industry. It's like my world exploded into an untapped universe of opportunities. A wholesaler is everything to everyone!

When my father-in-law, our president Mark Tobenstein, took over the family business some 60 years ago, he recalls easily having over 40 competitors in the local market. Today we are but a handful! I could say half a dozen of us really nationally, dedicated to the business. So, as you can imagine, it's not an easy industry.

Today, the cost of transport is very high and getting the right people is never easy. But with hard work and good partners, we managed to keep our prices competitive,

volumes growing and our employees happy. Most have worked for us as long as I have. It's all about the people, Mr Tobenstein always says. Many of our 3000 plus customers are family-owned businesses, some dealing with us for over 30 years! Our customer needs have evolved over the years, more products, more specialty foods. It's an ongoing synergy: Retailer/supplier/wholesaler. Sharing ideas and always modernizing our operations.

So back to my question. Do you love your wholesaler Mr. Retailer? Boy, I hope so! If I had a retail store today, I would certainly depend on my wholesaler in many ways. Here are the essential qualities I would look for:

A distributor that has all the technology. From online ordering to reporting that will help you run and understand your business, to live order tracking.

A flexible distributor. When it comes to your deliveries, sometimes you can't

wait for an order.

A distributor that offers the new items and selections your customers need and want. Regitan specifically has a monthly flyer that shows you everything that is new and on promotion.

A distributor that can take back the merchandise. Mistakes happen.

A distributor that has someone you can easily call to get answers and support. Having a dedicated, fluently multi-lingual, and experienced customer service agent is very important.

A distributor that is a true sales organization. Not just waiting for your order but calling you and promoting products and specials so you have everything you need at the right time and the right price.

A distributor that will not force you to sign buying contracts and leave you the ability to remain the owner of your store and free to buy where you want and when you want.

A distributor that respects you as an entrepreneur. That understands the work you do every day in your store and the long hours it takes to stay open really. Things aren't easy for the retailer. They all need support and better partnerships starting with proper levels of credit.

A distributor that is a true ONE STOP SHOP. For example, Regitan offers an array of products that truly set us apart in the industry. Tobacco, confectionary and beverages are the norm, the basics really, but then to this we add the wines. Quebec food retailers are fortunate in having the ability to sell wine in their stores. Then, the refrigerated items. Many beverages

are now refrigerated, like Rise Kombucha drinks, that has been all the rage for quite some time. Frozen foods are key as well. The items we carry are for take home, like pizzas, fries and cakes. These items bring in a certain clientèle in the convenience store. All Health and Beauty, like Tylenol, paper goods and everything in-between: 8,000 SKUs offered to our valued customers. Your wholesale has to have it all available to you. Plus, he needs to sell it to you in eches, or half cases, so that you are not overstocked.

It's what we call a full-service distributor. Rare and important to the industry. Our type of business caters to all kinds of retailers. If there is a cash register and passersby, we can help you increase your business. We also have a specialty division focused on imported and exclusive foods in Canada.

Mr. Supplier, what about you? Do you love your wholesaler? I hope you do! Because we love you as well. We need your support and the drive with which you present us your new items, well supported with specials and promotions that feed our sales organization. Because it's all about the sales! In the end it's what we all want. Growth, growth and more growth! But never at the expense of sensible business margins. We've seen giants in the wholesale industry take a knee from the pressures of maintaining volumes at the expense of their bottom lines.

The independent trade is hard to reach and most manufacturers are hesitant to invest in the independent convenience channel. That's where we come in! Our reps, our service and the broadest range of products offered make for a powerful offer to the retailers and so we are very important to

our manufacturer friends who also feel the pressures of cost increases.

If you are a retailer or manufacturer, likely you are dealing with one us few full-service retail food wholesalers in the country that have built their business on family values and old school business principles. I have been fortunate enough to have worked with many of the leading wholesalers in the country and all of us have something in common: Real world experience people that understand the business. John Carbone and his team at Coremark, Peter Kerr at Sobeys, Raymond Bouchard at Metro, The Beaudry cousins at JP Beaudry and of course, your faithful team here at

Distribution Regitan. If one of us is your partner, you're on the right track to success: Geographic reach, product diversity, high service levels, experience with a good dose of entrepreneurship, It's all there!

Give us a call today and just ask the question: How can I grow my business with you? You'll see we will have the answer you're looking for.

Thank you to all who support the wholesale industry in Canada. What an untapped universe of opportunities it is. **■**

Stéphane Bouchard is vice-president of distribution at Regitan Limited, one of Canada's largest food distribution companies. He has been a leading member of the food retail industry for over 25 years. Past board member of NACDA, ADA and many other associations, Stéphane is committed to celebrating the independent retail channel and to the continued development of the strategic network between retail-manufacture and wholesale companies in Canada. He can be reached at 1.800.667.3761 / sbouchard@regitan.com.

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Celebrating Over 30 Years of Innovative Structures





By Angela Altass



Delivering on Consumer Expectations

Online ordering capabilities, with options for delivery or pick-up, is no longer considered an extra shopping perk for consumers; it's an expectation.

"It has become the industry standard for consumers to expect delivery, especially during e-commerce shopping trips," says Lyndsay Barch, vice president of business operations, StoreToDoor. "Delivery is a simple and easy solution to add to your offerings to ensure clients are met at their doorstep, not just through your brick-and-mortar location. It's a no-brainer. We can supply the tech and the drivers, so essentially delivery is free to a retailer as our delivery fees can be passed on to the end consumer."

StoreToDoor currently services the pharmaceutical, cannabis, grocery and retail industries within central and western Canada and has plans to expand into the United States in 2024.

"Consumers are aware of delivery fees and are happy to pay them to have products delivered, especially when it comes to same-day delivery," says Barch. "We offer a full delivery solution. Consumers are notified via email or SMS when an order is placed,

assigned to a driver, is on its way and is delivered. Consumers are given a tracking link and can see where their package is and when it's expected to arrive. If special delivery instructions are necessary, they are included. All messaging is custom branded with our clients' logos and names. No one even knows StoreToDoor exists. This is all part of the seamless customer journey."

Barch recommends that businesses ask the following questions when considering working with a delivery company:

- Does the delivery company have a tech solution?
- Does the tech solution integrate with their POS or e-comm platform?
- Do they have a client support line?
- Do they offer same-day delivery or, in general, how does delivery operations work from the client's perspective?
- Do they comply with provincial regulations when delivering regulatory goods?
- What sorts of features does their delivery solution provide (live tracking, signature required)?

>>



- What is the cost per delivery or what is their cost model? How are clients being charged for delivery? (Per item, per drop, per bag, etc.)
- Are there any additional costs or fees to partner with the delivery company? (Fuel surcharge, software fees, admin fees, etc.)
- Where do they operate? Do they deliver in the same areas where your customers are located?
- How quickly can they start delivering?
- What size vehicles are drivers using to transport your goods?
- How delicate are the parcels being delivered and can the delivery company meet consumer expectations?
- What are the delivery company's policies for returns, damages, and lost products?
- How many days in a week do they deliver?

Taking a deep dive into the changing landscape of consumer online ordering preferences, DoorDash recently released the third annual *Restaurant Online Ordering Trends Report*, revealing

that consumers continue to look for convenience as delivery apps have become a part of people's everyday routines from ordering food and alcohol to groceries, gifts, and more. DoorDash surveyed 1,511 consumers across Canada in April 2023 and compiled exclusive data from behaviour on DoorDash to learn how food ordering activities and preferences have changed over the past year.

The report shows that in 2023 consumers prefer ordering food via third-party apps or websites significantly more than in 2022. Comfort, convenience and time-savings are listed as the top reasons for the use of delivery services by shoppers. It also notes that consumers have become more aware of how much hard work goes into running their favourite establishments and, as a result, are continuing to choose to support local businesses.

DoorDash was founded 10 years ago, starting as a restaurant delivery platform and evolving into a global marketplace for local commerce, now delivering anything consumers need from their neighbourhoods. It has facilitated five billion consumer orders and driven over \$100 billion in sales for merchants.

"By helping merchants digitize every part of their business to drive incremental sales, by making every store in the neighbourhood more accessible to consumers, and by pioneering the future of work with new and flexible ways to earn, DoorDash is building the future of local commerce on a global scale," says Rajat Shroff, head of product and design at DoorDash.

In 2021, 7-Eleven Canada launched the 7NOW delivery app in Canada, providing Canadians with the option to order their favourite 7-Eleven products for delivery 24/7, as well as earning points on their delivery



DoorDash Canada recently released the 2023 Restaurant Online Ordering Trends Report.

To support its restaurant partners, DoorDash surveyed 1,500 Canadians to find trends in their online ordering habits. Further information on the report is available at <https://get.doordash.com/en-ca>.

Here are some key takeaways from the report:

Takeout orders are on the rise:

Twenty per cent more Canadians are ordering takeout than delivery in 2023, with the intention of getting their food faster.

Rapid growth in the late night and breakfast categories:

Late night DoorDash orders (12 a.m. – 5 a.m.) increased by 68 per cent, and breakfast DoorDash orders (5 a.m. – 11 a.m.) increased 53 per cent. Restaurant owners can consider expanding their hours to include more off-peak options for consumers who want to order outside of traditional mealtimes.

Online ordering is here to stay:

More than 50 per cent of Canadians order food on a third-party platform two to four times a month.

New tastes are driving consumer interest:

Nine in 10 Canadian consumers often or occasionally try new menu items, making online ordering marketplaces a great way for a restaurant to expand their reach.



orders and gaining entries into exclusive 7-Eleven contests.

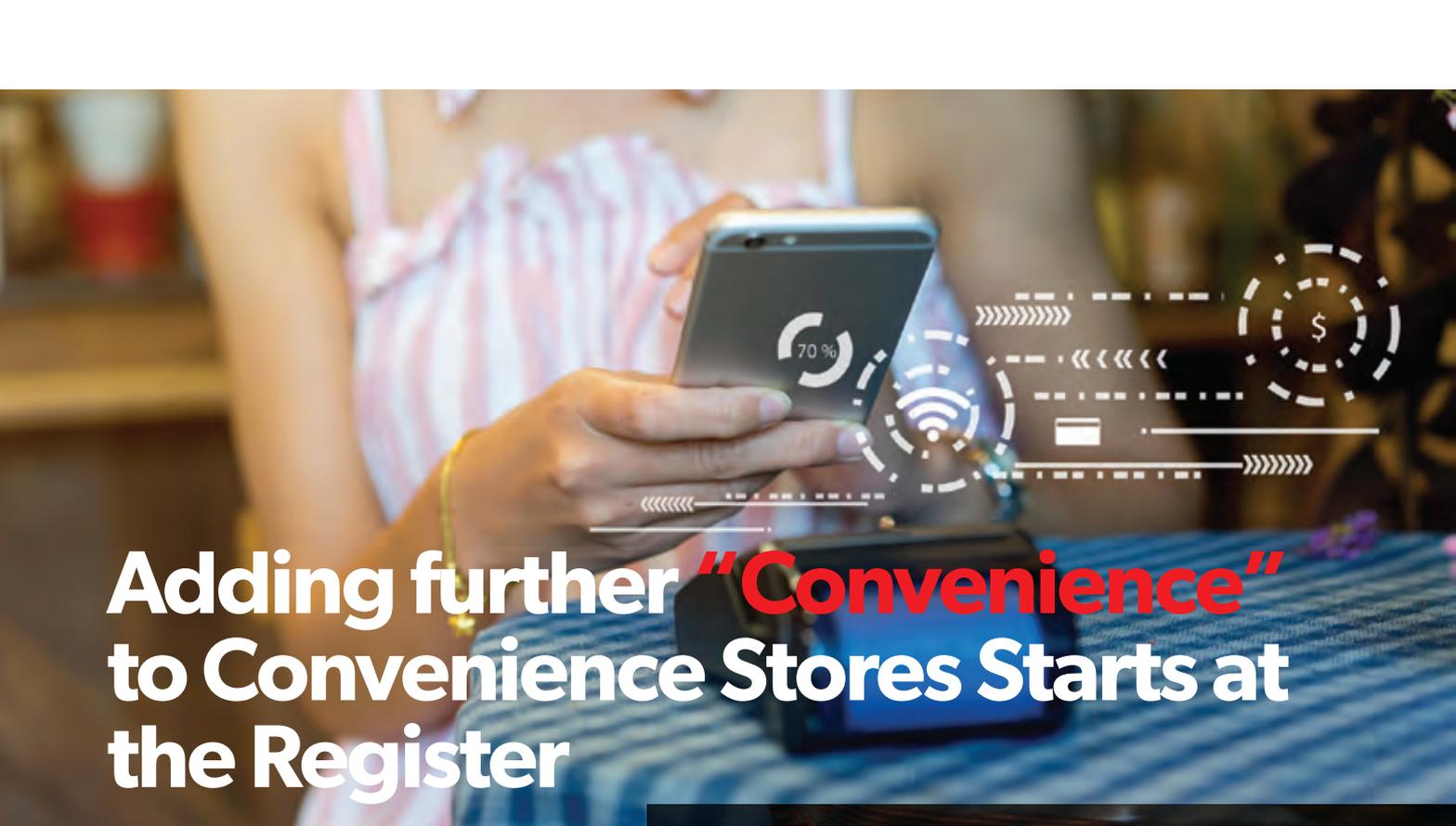
“As a business that is built around fresh craveable foods and drinks, it’s critical that we provide convenient options to access our expansive product assortment in different ways, including through online ordering, delivery, and pick-up,” says a spokesperson for 7-Eleven Canada. “We are continually evolving to anticipate and exceed the needs of Canadians and something that our guests have come to expect is a best-in-class digital shopping experience that enhances how they shop in-store and online.”

Several updates were recently made to the 7-Eleven app, including:

- Simplified login and registration, making it easier for on-the-go customers to access the app.
- An improved in-app shopping and delivery experience. Customers can browse through their favourite products and make their selection with just a few taps.
- Onboarding and homepage improvements, allowing an intuitive user interface that makes navigation smooth and effortless.
- Centralized deals and rewards with exclusive deals and discounts for loyalty members.
- Seamless user interface with a new design aesthetic and animations covering over 500 screens across the app end-to-end.

The 7NOW app is fully integrated with the 7Rewards loyalty rewards program, mobile checkout, delivery, pickup, events, contests, and in-store experiences. 📱





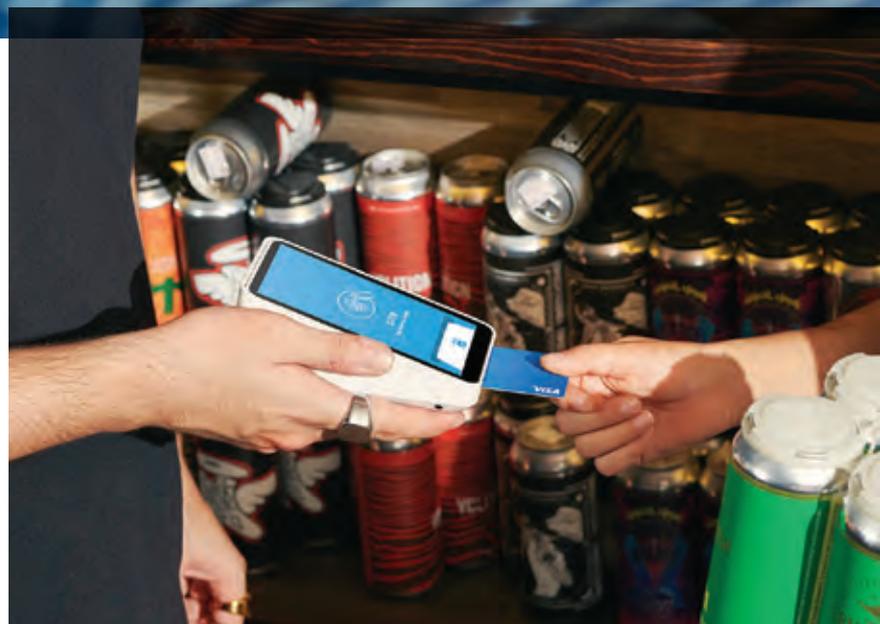
Adding further “Convenience” to Convenience Stores Starts at the Register

By Cole Baldwin

The entire purpose of convenience stores is right there in the name – convenience. These stores exist to make life easier for consumers needing a quick snack, a few household items, and maybe a magazine or two, without the need to navigate the labyrinth of modern day grocery stores.

But while convenience store operators are making life easier for consumers, it's equally important that their lives be made easier as well. Running a convenience store is hard work involving long hours and countless responsibilities; operators need some help.

Fortunately, this help is now available, as technology helps to alleviate some of the pressures associated with running a store. The rapid development of many tools and features not only benefits consumers, but also simplifies operations for business owners. And there is nowhere in the store that such changes are more evident than in the checkout process.



*The new **Tap to Pay** technology from companies like Square allows operators to turn their Android devices into registers, enabling them to process contactless credit card payments directly with their phones*

In fact, more than 80 per cent of Gen Z Canadians use their phones to pay for goods, and two thirds of Canadians anticipate it will soon become the norm to do away with physical wallets altogether.



As Canadians increasingly carry less and less cash, gone are the days of long lines and, for many operators, the need for endless hours to manage it all. Instead, Canadians are seeking safe and quick methods to pay beyond physical currency and technology is delivering in droves.

First came the early 21st century innovation of chip and pin technology, followed by contactless payments, and now Canadians' mobile phones now function far beyond communication devices. Digital wallets, for example, have enabled Canadians to pay from their phones since 2011, but their usage has really taken off in the past three years, particularly among members of Gen Z. In fact, more than 80 per cent of Gen Z Canadians use their

their phones to scan barcodes and pay directly through its mobile app, enabling customers to skip the checkout line altogether.

Self-serve kiosks, long popular with grocery stores and quick-service restaurants, are now popping up in convenience stores as well, with some stores now operating 24 hours a day, with no cashiers on staff.

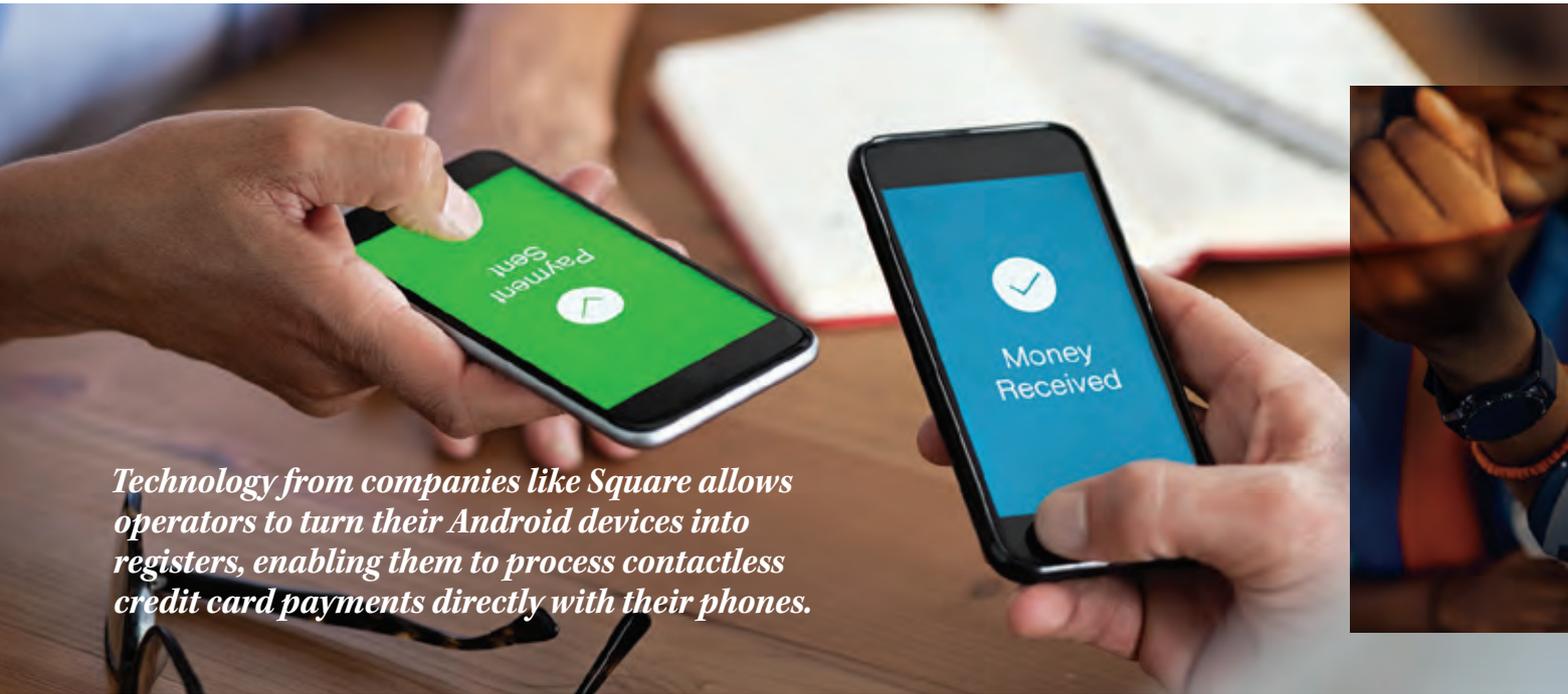
Toronto and Calgary sports fans will soon be able to enjoy Amazon's Just Walk Out technology, at Scotiabank Arena and Scotiabank Saddledome. Customers simply scan a credit or debit card to gain entry to participating stores within the arenas, and sensors, cameras and AI keep a rolling tab of selections.



phones to pay for goods, and two thirds of Canadians anticipate it will soon become the norm to do away with physical wallets altogether.

But mobile payments are just the tip of the iceberg. Taking it even further, global chain 7-Eleven allows customers to use

But as groundbreaking and paradigm-shifting as such technology can be, it is also expensive, preventing mass usage by independent stores. Fortunately, there are options for stores of all shapes and sizes, and even small, independent stores can now leverage emerging technologies to >>



Technology from companies like Square allows operators to turn their Android devices into registers, enabling them to process contactless credit card payments directly with their phones.

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While Canadian customers have rapidly adjusted to using mobile payment options, Canadian businesses haven't necessarily had the hardware to accept such payments. However, the new Tap to Pay technology from companies like Square allows operators to turn their Android devices into registers, enabling them to process contactless credit card payments directly with their phones, eliminating the need for investments in additional hardware.

Innovations like Tap to Pay are helping to lower the barrier to entry for Canadian entrepreneurs, ensuring they can continue to have a fast, secure, and accessible way to take payments, at no additional cost.

From manual card imprinter machines to digital registers to an entire POS in the palm of your hand, technology is evolving rapidly to help businesses thrive. In the end, everyone – businesses and customers alike – wins. **■**

Cole Baldwin, sales lead and business expert, Square Canada, leads a team of sales and payment consultants at Square Canada. Working directly with Canadian business owners, Cole strives to enable merchants to succeed with the right tools and resources. The child of two entrepreneurs, Cole has an ingrained passion for Canadian SMBs and understands the important place business owners hold in our economy.

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or contact Brenda Jane Johnstone: phone 1.204.489.4215 email bjj@womenincarwash.com



By Meline Beach

Unleashing Convenience: The Rise of Self-Serve Pet Wash Stations in C&G Retail

Pet wash stations have become a welcome addition to the convenience and gas channel, offering a unique and convenient service that caters to the needs of pet owners on the go.

These self-serve pet washes have gained popularity in recent years, as more people consider their pets not just as companions but as part of the family.

Traditionally, pet owners relied on groomers, which can be expensive and time-consuming, to tend to their pets. However, current economic conditions are driving pet owners to find cost-cutting measures and reallocate spending to necessary purchases. As

a result, self-serve pet washes are gaining attention as a cost-effective and accessible alternative. Whether on a road trip, returning from a hike, or just in need of a quick cleanup, self-serve pet washes provide an ideal solution.

This article explores the innovative features and benefits of two leading pet wash companies within the convenience and gas channel, and how their self-serve operations not only meet the needs of

pet owners but also drive foot traffic and customer loyalty to C&G retailers.

User-Friendly Convenience

Pet wash stations prioritize user-friendliness, featuring a waist-high tub, and a handheld sprayer with options like all-natural shampoo, conditioner, and flea treatment, all complemented by temperature-controlled water. The ergonomic design makes it convenient for owners

to wash their pets without straining their backs, offering a more comfortable bathing experience.

“Our K9000 is widely embraced for its exceptional features and accommodates dogs of all sizes, even miniature ponies, while the Twin model boasts dual tubs on either side of the dog wash cabinet, enabling the simultaneous washing of two dogs,” says Evelyn Rutherford, director of Furever Clean Dog Wash Inc. based out of British Columbia, Canada. “Additionally, the entire process of washing, conditioning, and drying a dog typically takes just 10-15 minutes, minimizing wait times for customers. Moreover, our contemporary pet wash stations provide a range of payment options, including card payments and loyalty cards, ensuring that customers need not carry cash with them at all times.”

For customers who are uneasy at the thought of cross-contamination, both iClean >>



Pet wash stations offer a unique business opportunity. They attract customers who may not have visited the store otherwise, generating foot traffic and additional sales.

and Furever Clean Dog Washes offer the option for a free disinfectant spray to eliminate any concerns about the dog before them, or just to clean the tub before they put their dog in.

“We provide EZ steps to follow for shampooing, using crème rinse and a flea and tick rinse,” says Phillip M. Cooper, president & CEO of iClean Dog Wash USA. “Our liquids are biodegradable, tearless, safe for dogs or cats and safe for the local water supply. There are two convenient tethers to clip on your dog’s collar to prevent them from jumping out of the tub.”

The Business Advantage

For convenience stores, these pet wash stations offer a unique business opportunity. They attract customers who may not have visited the store otherwise, generating foot traffic and additional sales. Plus, the self-serve nature of these pet washes means they require minimal staff supervision, making it a cost-effective investment.

“Business owners typically offer extended operating hours for their pet wash facilities since they require minimal staff oversight,” says Rutherford. “The C&G channel represents a lucrative market for pet washes, as more than 40 per cent of dog-owning households actively seek gas stations with dog wash amenities when refuelling, making it a significant competitive advantage.”

Pet wash stations do not require a large footprint

and require amenities that are already in place at carwashes, including power, water, and a standard drain. Retailers are encouraged to follow the specifications provided to ensure convenience and safety.

“It’s imperative to enlist the services of qualified plumbers and electricians for these installations,” says Cooper. “With a fully functional pet wash station in place, we find all customers come back often and retailers find most customers spend additional dollars on other merchandise. Some dog wash owners have vending machines with dog treats and related dog products available, some offer free towels to help with drying.”

Emerging Trends

Pet wash stations in the C&G channel represent a win-win opportunity. They offer a convenient and cost-effective solution for pet owners while driving business growth for convenience and carwash retailers. This trend is likely to continue growing as more people recognize the value of these pet washes in their busy lives. As pet ownership continues to rise, the demand for pet-friendly services will soar as well.

“Modern consumers prioritize convenience in their daily lives,” says Cooper. “Self-serve pet wash stations offer flexibility without the hassle of scheduling appointments with professional groomers. Many households are now embracing rescue dogs, some of which may have special needs, making

owner-led bathing a more suitable option. Moreover, the cost-effectiveness of pet wash facilities allows owners to provide their furry friends with regular baths, a practice they might otherwise limit if relying solely on grooming services.”

Convenience stores are diversifying their services to include additional revenue streams such as bottled water machines, restaurants, laundromats, car washes, gas stations, propane gas, gift stores, and more. Given that a substantial portion of their customer base includes pet owners, tapping into this underserved market makes excellent financial sense. Plus, the return-on-investment potential is impressive with a great profit margin.

“This market presents ample room for expansion

with huge growth potential as a single pet wash caters to just a few thousand people,” says Rutherford. “Looking ahead, the market is evolving to encompass bike-washing services. Our Australian-based K9000 manufacturer has introduced a bicycle wash that mirrors the functionality of our K9000 dog wash, complete with its own payment devices for independent operation. These bike wash units are now available for purchase across Canada, opening up new avenues for business owners.”

To maximize success, high-traffic placements, eye-catching signage, incentivized marketing, and a strong online presence are essential for attracting repeat customers.

Both iClean Dog Wash and Furever Clean Dog Wash are committed to continuous innovation, energy efficiency, convenience, and overall profitability. With an ever-growing interest in self-serve pet wash solutions, these companies are poised to lead the way into a future of sustainable experiences for both pet owners and C&G retailers. 📺

Meline Beach is a Toronto-based communications practitioner and frequent contributor to Convenience and Carwash Canada. In addition to freelance writing, Meline provides communications and public relations support to businesses across Canada. She can be reached at www.mlbcomms.ca.



“Looking ahead, the market is evolving to encompass bike-washing services. Our Australian-based K9000 manufacturer has introduced a bicycle wash that mirrors the functionality of our K9000 dog wash, complete with its own payment devices for independent operation.”



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Established over a century ago, Core-Mark began its journey serving national chains and independent businesses with tobacco and nicotine products.



John Carbone
Senior Vice-President
Canadian Region

As times changed, the company transitioned towards food-centric items and other consumer goods, evolving into North America's largest consumer goods marketer.

"One of our biggest challenges is that the convenience industry is one of the most government-regulated industries in Canada, with a lot of guidelines and restrictions on what we can and cannot sell," says John Carbone, senior vice-president Canadian region for Core-Mark. "Having said that, our biggest opportunity is that we're well-positioned to serve customers as they and the industry evolve with our unconventional products and solutions to meet their needs."

Today, Core-Mark has 45 operating centres which serve over 50,000 retailers in Canada and the U.S., ranging from traditional convenience stores, grocers, and drug stores to mass merchants, liquor and specialty stores. With four operating companies in Canada, Core-Mark handles

various consumer goods, including general merchandise, confectionary, groceries, retail beverages, health and beauty, tobacco, dairy, bread, fresh food, and foodservice products.

The company's focus on foodservice expanded after being acquired by Performance Food Group. Core-Mark is now committed to provide its customers with pioneering foodservice programs and solutions to expand their offerings beyond traditional convenience. Core-Mark's value proposition is based on three key competitive advantages: First, through the *Core-Mark Innovation Centre*, a lab created to collaborate with corporate and independent industry leaders and decision-makers on the latest products, technology, and equipment solutions to grow their business. Second, through *Category Management Solutions* with a Smart Stock program that includes quality racks and consultation services to improve sales and profitability. A Smart Set program that provides strategically sourced inline sets, featuring the best sellers for customers to leverage and influence a shopper's purchase. Third, through Technology that offers customers a comprehensive range of applications that can enhance their interaction with us, along with a retailer analytics dashboard that provides them with valuable metrics to drive sales growth.

An acquisition and strategic foresight

may have led the company to expand its operations, but Core-Mark's true success lies in its unified culture and shared mission.

"We are a family-first, customer-centric company guided by our core values that frame our actions," says Carbone, who's particularly proud of the company's recent recognition with a humanitarian award by the Convenience Industry Council of Canada. "Respect is the cornerstone of our culture, and influences how we interact with one another, strive to reach our full potential, and contribute to our shared pursuit of excellence. It is also equally important to give back to the communities in which we live and work, as it is to run a sustainable and profitable business."

Core-Mark exemplifies resilience, adaptability, and an unwavering commitment to excellence. The company is well-prepared for further growth and success, capitalizing on its extensive history to navigate future opportunities and challenges. **CM**

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By Angela Altass

Dryers and Vacuums Keep Customers Coming Back





Oasis Wash Systems offers a new Eclipse drying system, which Wade says features a dry environment, controlled speed and front-to-back and back-to-front drying.



A carwash experience involves more than just washing a car. To satisfy today's consumer, the drying systems and vacuums need to be top-notch as well.

"Vacuums are extremely important," states Travis Feller, director of product management, National Carwash Solutions. "Certain customer segments value the vacuum solutions at a site higher than the wash. Adding additional value for the carwash consumer is becoming more important in recent years. Providing premium vacuum solutions that are high performing and easy to use can help differentiate you from your competitors."

Vacutech has recently launched the C-Vac, which was developed specifically for the c-store market, says Feller.

"The C-Vac, compared to other canister vacuums, offers up to two times the performance and five times the vacuum life," says Feller. "It offers the longest motor life in the industry at approximately 5,000 hours or on average three to five years based on use. It also offers a long-lasting pleated filter that can be washed for easy maintenance. The C-Vac also incorporates a maintenance light to notify your staff when the filter needs to be cleaned or replaced."

When looking to upgrade or invest in new vacuums, carwash owners should concentrate on product performance, reliability and site aesthetics, says Feller.

"Customers will keep coming back to a site that allows them to easily and effectively clean the inside of their vehicles," says Feller. "Pick a high performing vacuum system that has the required CFM to perform the task at hand. Nothing is worse than when a customer is frustrated with the performance or does not believe they received value for what they paid. Make sure your system is made from quality materials and components as well as being easy to maintain and service."

Make your carwash site inviting and easy for customers to use, says Feller.

"Your vacuum systems should enhance your site's aesthetics and not be a deterrent," states Feller. "Customers are looking for easy to use, high performing and reliable solutions. These key metrics will drive customer satisfaction and five-star reviews at your sites."

Central vacuum systems have been a key driver for growth in >>

Tommy Car Wash System, Tommy 2.0 Vacuum



the express carwash market in recent years, notes Feller.

“Bundling additional value into the wash process has allowed the express wash to drive additional consumer value and retention,” says Feller. “This has crossed over into the c-store market where we are now seeing a larger focus on vacuum stations, both revenue-generating and free.”

Customers expect a clean vacuum stall, superior suction and vending kits, says Michael Van Wieren, sales manager, Tommy

Car Wash Systems.

“The vending kits we use at our sites include a glass wipe, surface cleaner wipe, super absorbent disposable towel and two vent clip air fresheners,” says Van Wieren. “This is a great all-in-one solution for those who want a clean, shiny car inside and out.”

Tommy Car Wash Systems has multiple types of vacuums available, notes Van Wieren.

“Our most powerful and reliable is the Tommy 2.0, followed by

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the Tommy Dual Motor Vacuum,” says Van Wieren. “Our most popular, the Tommy 2.0 vacuum, boasts a robust 5hp motor for superior suction and an industry leading five-year warranty on the motor. Our Dual Motor Vacuum has a smaller motor but still very good suction and does not require three-phase hook-up. Both units offer a single containment on each vacuum stall for easy removal of dirt and debris. Depending on site size, we have as many as 20+ vacuums on each site. This alleviates any wait time as customers want to get in and out.”

Tommy’s dryers at the end of the carwash tunnel are 10hp and are strategically placed on patented round arches to push water down and away, says Van Wieren.

“Most of our washes use a combination of about 18 of these blowers,” says Van Wieren. “In colder weather climates, such as Michigan where we are located, we use two massive heated blowers at the end of the wash to help as well.”

The carwash industry is currently experiencing many changes, states Cheryl Ehmen, chief executive manager, Aerodry Systems, who stresses the importance of continuing to make system improvements based on conversations with carwash operators.

“Our industry is going through so many changes and consolidations,” says Ehmen. “There is definitely huge frustration that the result is personnel that have no clue about their products and cannot help with trouble shooting if a customer needs help with problems or failures. At Aerodry Systems, we realize time is money. I plan to start an ad campaign that tactfully uses various phrases to emphasize that we know our products and, in the unlikely event of failure, we are here to troubleshoot.”

Sound levels have become a major issue for carwashes and manufacturers have to address noise while maintaining performance, says Ehmen.

When considering upgrading or changing the drying systems at their carwash locations, owners should determine the type of improvements being sought, whether that be uptime, performance, maintenance, sound levels, space, or customer perception, says Ehmen.

“Following that lead, the owner needs to assess their facility power to determine if a new system can be supported,” says Ehmen. “Equipment specifications and manufacturer claims can be complicated. Only deal with a reputable brand that has a history of quality. The owners must research and talk to other operators as assurance the expectations of the new equipment can be met.”

EQUIPMENT SPECIFICATIONS AND MANUFACTURER CLAIMS CAN BE COMPLICATED. ONLY DEAL WITH A REPUTABLE BRAND THAT HAS A HISTORY OF QUALITY.

When it comes to vehicle washing and drying, cars aren’t the only potential customers.

“We felt the industry was really not taking care of the people who have large trucks, the 18-wheelers,” says Jeff Reichard, president, Proto-Vest Dryers, “so, we invented a machine to take care of trucks. It’s been a big hit and has been a bit of a breakthrough.”

Reichard encourages carwash owners to take into consideration the cost savings associated with energy efficient drying systems.

Challenges with stand-alone dryers that people drive under is the variable speed at which drivers pass through them, says Curt Wade, vice president, Oasis Wash Systems.

“Some drivers go too slow while others go too fast, which can affect the quality of drying,” says Wade. “In contrast, other on-board drying systems typically operate within the wash bay where the car has just been cleaned. This can result in water dripping onto the vehicle, leaving visible water droplets that may not meet customer expectations.”

Oasis Wash Systems offers a new Eclipse drying system, which Wade says features a dry environment, controlled speed and front-to-back and back-to-front drying.

“Our drying process takes place in a dry space, eliminating any chance of water dripping from the ceiling or equipment onto the vehicle,” says Wade. “This ensures a dry and spotless finish. We have precise control over the speed at which the dryer moves over the car, which allows us to optimize the drying process for maximum efficiency and effectiveness. Our unique drying method involves drying from front to back and back to front. This comprehensive approach ensures that every part of the vehicle receives thorough drying, leaving no water residue behind.”

Keeping carwash customers happy includes providing them with not only a clean exterior vehicle but also a dry one and efficient vacuum capabilities for interior care as well. 



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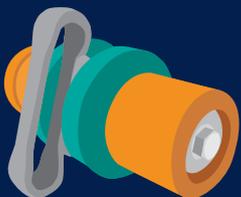
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Pre-Plumbed Products Can Help Optimize Fueling-System Cost And Installation

By Ed Kammerer



DSE pre-plumbed



OPW Retail Fueling, Smithfield, NC, USA, has worked to identify ways that can streamline the process. This has led to the development of a series of products that the company has termed “pre-plumbed” solutions. Or, simply put, “plug and play.”

If you’re a parent, there’s an excellent chance that you have fond memories of the unbridled joy that appeared on your child’s face when he or she received their first bicycle as a Christmas or birthday gift. “Joy,” however, may not be the first emotion that comes to mind when you reflect on assembling said bicycle; rather, emotions like “frustration” and “confusion” may have been more prevalent as you reflect back on reading those fateful words: “Some assembly required.”

You may have even thought, “why can’t they sell these confounded contraptions pre-assembled?” Well, today many stores do sell pre-assembled bikes, meaning the parent’s toughest task is now finding a way to make it fit into the back of the family’s sedan for the ride home. But how much fun is that when you used to have to get out the toolbox, pore over oftentimes indecipherable instructions and wonder why there were four extra bolts and five extra nuts left over after the bike was ostensibly “assembled?”

Now imagine you’re the owner or operator of a retail-fueling location. There’s joy in your heart and a smile on your face as the components that will outfit your forecourt are delivered to the site and the contractor arrives to assemble and install them. Typically, that process would require intimidating amounts of measuring, sawing, drilling, threading, inserting, bending, shaping, twisting, gluing, bolting and, yes, time.

You may even think, much like your

bicycle-assembling counterpart, “why can’t all of this stuff come pre-assembled?” Well, fear not, the answer to that question is becoming more and more attainable than you might have thought.

A Predetermined Solution

Recognizing the time and cost that can be associated with in-the-field fabrication, installation and testing of the various forecourt systems and components that make up a successful retail-fueling operation, OPW Retail Fueling, Smithfield, NC, USA, has worked to identify ways that can streamline the process. This has led to the development of a series of products that the company has termed “pre-plumbed” solutions. Or, simply put, “plug and play.”

The latest addition in this realm is the Pre-Plumbed DSE Dispenser Sump. As the newest member of the OPW E-Series Containment Sump family, the Pre-Plumbed DSE fiberglass sump boasts all the features of the standard DSE model – quality manufacturing processes, consistent wall thickness, smooth sides for watertight seals, easy access to all piping connections and at a value price – but with factory-assembled and tested fittings. The fittings are installed in a controlled environment at the factory by a trained installer, which helps eliminate field-installation errors and ensure that all entry points are located in the correct configuration, allowing for quick and easy connection to the dispenser. That helps make the Pre-Plumbed DSE

PREMIUM QUALITY MEETS PRE-PLUMBED EFFICIENCY



- Peace-of-Mind Installation
- Factory-Assembled and Tested
- Customizable

OPW’s new Pre-Plumbed DSE Dispenser Sump offers all of the premium quality, extraordinary value and optimized delivery lead times of the original DSE model, but with the following factory-tested components pre-installed prior to shipping:

- Dispenser Top (Wayne Ovation or Gilbarco Encore)
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- Stabilizer Bars
- OPW 10Plus Emergency Shear Valves
- Flex Connectors or NPT Pipe Nipples (Rigid Risers)
- Elbows and Tees
- Secondary Test Kits and Test Jumpers for Double-Wall (DPC) Couplings



To learn more, visit us at
opwglobal.com/opw-retail-fueling

sump ideal for use by fuel-site operators who are looking to minimize construction time, reduce installation variability and reduce installation costs.

Compatible with the popular Wayne Ovation and Gilbarco Encore dispenser models, the Pre-Plumbed DSE sump is shipped to the retail-fueling site with 10 Plus Emergency Shut-Off Valve, dual-sided Rigid (REF) or Hybrid (HEF) Entry Fittings, flex connectors or NPT rapid-riser pipe nipples, and secondary test kits and test jumpers, making for a streamlined and cost-effective installation process that helps reduce the risk of installation errors occurring.

In actuality, the creation of the Pre-Plumbed DSE Dispenser Sump is just the latest example in what has been a steady stream of pre-fabricated and tested systems and components that OPW has developed in recent years. Other notable examples include:

- **FlexWorks Loop System:** Believe it or not, it has been 15 years since OPW introduced the revolutionary FlexWorks Loop System to the retail-fueling market. The Loop System made headlines because it was

the first to fully realize the vision of the “station in a box” concept that enabled all of the retail site’s piping and containment components to be manufactured and shipped by one supplier. Specifically, all of the Loop System’s dispenser sumps are shipped complete with factory-installed pipe-entry fittings, OPW 10 Plus Shear Valves and Stabilizer Bars. Each sump is assigned a custom Sump Configuration Number based on the site’s piping layout, as well as the number and position of the pipe entry fittings. This allows distributors to order one part number for multiple components while eliminating missing parts and fewer loose fittings for the contractor to keep track of on the job site. In addition to saving installation time, this pre-fabrication helps ensure that the sump is essentially watertight, which reduces the chances that leaks will develop.

- **ElectroTite No-Drill Dry Sump:** The ElectroTite sump requires no on-site drilling or the cutting of holes into the sump’s exterior for conduit entries because the UL-listed and explosion-proof Kwik Wire junction box is factory-installed, which eliminates the need for field-installed conduit penetrations. The junction box allows both high-voltage and communication wires to run in the same box. The junction box also doubles as the location to pour seal-off kits to block vapor from entering the conduit. This puts all electrical work needed into one box. As a result, the ElectroTite sump is the most watertight system currently available to the retail-fueling market. Other time-saving benefits of the ElectroTite’s design include the positioning of the conduit threads on the outside of the sump and above the water table, the ability to inspect and repair conduit lines high up in the sump and the ability to reach into the box for inspection without having to enter the confined sump area.

Conclusion

Sure, there is a sense of pride and accomplishment that comes with taking a box of parts and turning them into a fully functional bicycle, but the ability to completely revel in that accomplishment can often be dampened by the time and effort it took to produce the finished product. The same can be said for the outfitting of the forecourt at a retail-fueling location. The old days would typically need the site to be shut down for four or five days while the installation process was completed. With the advent of pre-plumbed components, as OPW has demonstrated within its portfolio of industry-leading piping and containment and underground-storage systems, that installation time can be reduced to as little as one day, which means that site operators can more quickly, and with much less aggravation, get back to doing what they do best – serving the needs of their customers. **■**

Ed Kammerer is the director of global product management for OPW, based in Cincinnati, OH, USA. He can be reached at ed.kammerer@opwglobal.com. For more information on OPW, go to opwglobal.com.

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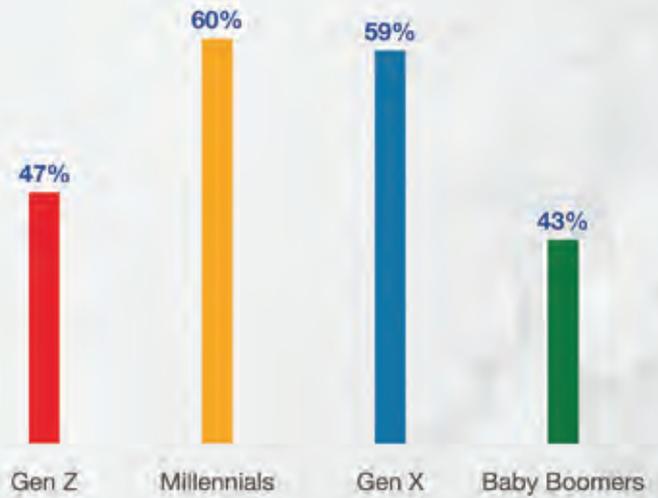
Report: The Future of Fueling Is Better Consumer Experiences

Retaining frequent fuelers and earning new customers requires fuel and convenience retailers to maintain a competitive edge. Today's consumers demand faster, more seamless and more personalized retail experiences, but are those qualities enough to win over new fans at the pump?



50%

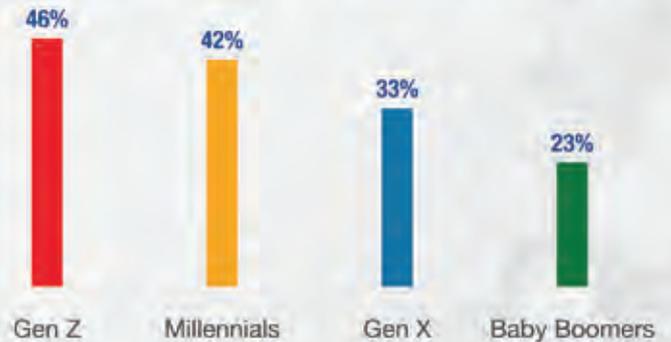
of consumers are “somewhat likely” or “very likely” to switch fuel stations if a competitor offered a significantly enhanced customer experience.



From Dispenser Media to the C-Store



Consumers Convinced by Fuel Pump Ads to Enter the C-store



In a recent report, Dover Fueling Solutions (DFS) surveyed 1,003 U.S. consumers to explore their current fueling experiences and their expectations of an optimal experience. Five major themes about consumer behavior and preference emerged from the research. The results serve as a call to action for the industry to raise its experience standard.

1. Experience Makes a Greater Difference Than You Think

DFS found that 50 per cent of consumers will likely switch fuel stations if a competitor offers a significantly enhanced customer experience. Among millennial consumers, this number increases to 60 per cent. Additional data from younger consumers indicates they might be willing to drive further for high-quality service. While location and price remain most critical to consumer

choice, these findings illustrate the importance of retailers delivering stand-out customer experiences to grow market share.

2. Concern About Payment Security Is on the Rise

Protecting consumers' payment data should still be top of mind for all fueling retailers. For the second year, consumers ranked payment security (79 per cent) as their most valued feature when making gas station purchases. This is up from 70 per cent in 2022, showing even greater consensus. To address this growing concern, fuel station owners should look to educate consumers on payment security protocols and implement the latest payment and security technologies to attract new customers and retain frequent fuelers.

3. Ads at the Pump Are Driving C-Store Foot Traffic

Over half (51 per cent) of consumers notice advertisements on or around the fuel pump, with close to one-third (32 per cent) saying fuel pump commercials and ads have convinced them to enter a convenience store. Among younger generations, that number goes up even more, with nearly half (46 per cent) of Gen Z and millennial consumers citing they are more likely to be swayed into a c-store based on ads shown on or around the pump. To encourage more c-store foot traffic, retailers should capitalize on dispensers as prime real estate for displaying media and advertisements.

4. Younger Consumers Are Eyeing Self-Service Solutions

More than 40 per cent of all consumers are likely to use self-ordering technology for their c-store food and drink purchases.

That percentage is higher for younger generations, with Gen Z (57 per cent) and millennials (59 per cent) much keener to do so than Gen Xers (45 per cent) and baby boomers (30 per cent). This enthusiasm for self-service sets the stage for fuel stations to adopt cutting-edge technology focused on delivering fast and convenient experiences. And based on respondent feedback, retailers can convince more customers to self-order if they integrate loyalty programs or rewards.

5. Fuelers Are Ready to Multitask If It's Fast and User-Friendly

DFS asked respondents to predict how innovation might improve their fueling experience in the future. Consumers aren't picturing a complete technology overhaul at gas stations. Most want an improvement on their current experiences to be faster, easier, more productive and more accessible. Consumers envision greater convenience while refueling, such as having options for an email or text receipt, a more automated fueling process, and smart pumps that know their preferences without asking. Others predicted that technology can make gas stations accessible for a wide variety of people, abilities and needs.

Enhancing Experience at the Pump

In the ever-changing landscape of fueling and convenience retail, competition is fierce. And with one in every two consumers willing to visit a different gas station for a better experience, retailers must evolve with consumer expectations. By delivering on crucial services while exploring emerging preferences like

self-service, advanced payments and tailored pump experiences, retailers can level up their experience to be faster, more reliable and more convenient — qualities many of today's consumers are seeking. **C**

To explore the full report, visit reports.doverfuelingsolutions.com/future-of-fueling-2023.



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HostMilano Showcases Innovations for C-Stores

For five days in mid-October, the population of Italy's fashion and financial capital swelled by 300,000 to welcome HostMilano 2023, the biennial international hospitality expo featuring more than 2,100 exhibitors from 50 nations showcasing products across the professional catering, vending, and restaurant technology sectors. Walking the show's 14 exhibition halls of the FieraMilano Rho convention center was like strolling through the most cosmopolitan of marketplaces. The air thrummed with convivial energy as two dozen or more languages tickled your ears. Everywhere you looked, there were delectable tastes to try and new delights for your eyes.

Searching for a new refrigeration system? New packaging? Modular kitchen components with plug-and-play capability? This was the place to find it. Ask any of the 180,000 attendees from 166 countries and they would tell you the same: HostMilano 2023 was a magnificent assembly of the world's finest foodservice innovations and a perfect reflection of the industry's most exciting trends.

Since the last Host in 2021, the demand for high-quality fast food and the return to out-of-home work has stimulated innovation in three key areas affecting c-stores: individual choice artisanal coffee machines, high-speed ovens, and next-level hot-holding units. It has also opened the doors to entirely new products such as fresh food vending machines and unique packaging options. Let's look at these categories one by one.

Artisanal Coffee

Today's consumers expect personalized beverages everywhere they go. The newest automatic coffee systems by Middleby, Franke, Schaerer, Melitta, and Rancilio Group won't disappoint. They come ready for cashless self-payment systems, make between 180 and 360 cups per day, and boast up to four grinders, individualized brew-by-bean temperature systems, hundreds of mix-and-match drink options including powder flavor additions, customizable touch screens ready for branding and promotional materials, and multiple milk, foam, froth, steam, and cooling options too. The Franke and Schaerer machines, as well as the Egro machines from the Rancilio Group, also have internal telemetry to be used with paid subscription plans so

that real-time data and other advanced metrics can be exported to an API. Specific technical requirements and capabilities of the machines differ slightly.

If you're wondering how to make the right choice in a world of coffee machine options, the experts at Host advise that you consider the needs and tastes of your customers. A long, slow grind, for example, would yield a smoother coffee taste. But also consider—in a fast-paced environment—is the tradeoff worth it? The choice is yours, and personal choice is the name of the game.

At Host, Schaerer showed it can offer customers plenty of choices and solve the counter space dilemma with one machine—the Soul C—a compact, robust,

modular unit that produces delicious coconut lattes. Just 13 inches wide with three bean reservoirs, the Soul C is fully self-cleaning for 300 days, requires no tools for installation, and is picture- and video-capable, ready for brand content. Every machine contains a 4g modem, so Schaerer can run diagnostics remotely to ensure smooth functioning. Operators wishing to change recipes or display new art across fleets can upload materials to Schaerer to be pushed out immediately.

Also in this category, Franke brought a wide range of "front of the house" systems to HostMilano 2023, including its most popular self-serve machine, the A800. The A800 brews a tasty cappuccino with freshly roasted beans and cools it from 89 F to 32 F in just seconds for the customer who prefers the iced version. Franke's shiny new Mytico line, developed to help short-staffed businesses deliver high-quality coffee without spending hours to train baristas, takes things up a notch and was one of 15 products awarded a SMART Label by the HostMilano jury for performance. Mytico Vario can produce up to four cappuccinos at one time and could be used in

HostMilano 2023, the biennial international hospitality expo, featured more than 2,100 exhibitors from 50 nations showcasing products across the professional catering, vending, and restaurant technology sectors.



Publisher Brenda Jane Johnstone with Gretchen Matthews at the Canada Restaurant Association reception.

A. Uwe Busse from Franke was happy to provide me, Gretchen Matthews, with details about the company's wide range of machines serving c-stores.

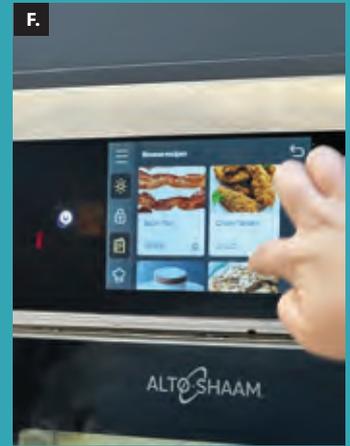
B. Franke's Mytico line won a HostMilano SMART Label award for its performance.

C. Publisher Brenda enjoying some samples.

D. Displays in all 14 exhibit halls were exquisite.

E. The Alto-Shaam Vector VMC-H4H can cook up to four dishes at once with no flavor transfer.

F. The display of the Alto-Shaam Vector VMC-H4H oven is easy to read.



A. Between exhibitors, potential buyers, and journalists, 300,000 people attended HostMilano 2023.

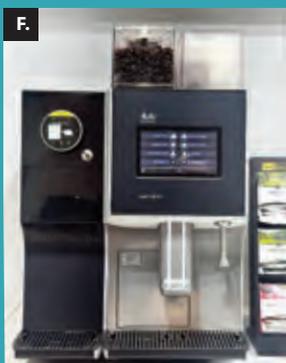
B. Flexeserve units circulate air in zones at programmable temperatures to keep food fresh longer.

C. Bicom powdered tea and coffee dissolves instantly. Packaging can be branded according to a company's needs.

D. The Schaerer Soul C is fully self-cleaning and needs no tools for installation, meaning there will be few to no calls required for maintenance.

E. With new Jordao lockers, customers can purchase hot or cold food in advance and collect it at a time that's convenient for them.

F. The Melitta CaFina XT4 has programmable features for branding and promotions, as do similar machines from Middleby, Schaerer, Franke, and Rancilio Group.



a high-traffic c-store. Mytico Uno, ready for distribution in August 2024, will feature a fully automatic cleaning program. Franke machines have cameras to assess each cup's capacity before dispensing a beverage, thereby reducing waste. Uwe Busse, business development director EMEA says, "Franke has one of the most comprehensive and complete ranges of coffee machines. This enables Franke to be the right choice for all sorts of different applications and situations in the c-store environment. Because of this, Franke has already been established as the number one choice by many c-store companies around the globe."

High-Speed Ovens

If you're preparing hot food, you're in the market for high-speed ovens. While companies such as UNOX are using convection to produce high-speed baking ovens such as the Speed.Pro Countertop in a small footprint, in ovens, the real innovation at HostMilano was the Vector multi-cook with structured air technology from Alto-Shaam. The most popular model, the VMC-H4H, made mouth-



The Franke A800 is a popular choice for c-stores, providing nearly unlimited hot and iced drink options.

watering pork schnitzel, bacon, and peas simultaneously in seconds on the show floor. With four independent cooking chambers, each with its own catalytic converter, the Vector can produce up to four dishes at the same time, at differing temperatures, without flavor transfer. There is no air flow between its inner stacked shelf sections. C-stores can easily cook the eggs, sausages, croissants, and muffins needed to assemble breakfast sandwiches on a busy morning without

sacrificing space or drying out the bread. An easy-to-read picture-filled touchscreen helps multilingual staff make quick choices and short order of long lines. Rachel Brueser, product marketing manager says, "Our multi-cook ovens are perfect for introducing a foodservice program that offers customers a high-volume and variety of food without sacrificing quality. Not only are the ovens intuitive and very simple to use for staff, they're ventless and waterless, which allows them to be placed and operated anywhere."

Hot-Holding and the Future of Fast Food

For hot food on go, Flexeserve brought excitement to HostMilano with its air holding displays. While most hot-holding units keep food warm by keeping stagnant air a consistent temperature, Flexeserve has broken the mold and designed units which hold multiple food products at differing temperatures. Within each cabinet, recirculated air moving front to back and side to side in preprogrammed Flexeserve Zones creates microclimates on the shelves to protect food texture, humidity, and taste. Cloud-based control ensures that temperature changes can be made at any time. In the Flexeserve case at Host, French toast sticks stayed crisp and fluffy for hours. LED lighting illuminates items on each shelf, and double-glazed end panels increase efficiency by preventing heat from escaping. At the show, each Flexeserve cabinet was cool to the touch.

Pizza lovers take note: you can now order a pie from a vending machine. Just select one from the touch screen on a Pizza Ammor machine and your scrumptious pre-loaded pizza will be baked on the spot and delivered to you in 90 seconds. Pizza Ammor makes its machines in Naples and sends them worldwide. Similarly, Jordao has created a smart Click & Collect Automated Locker to keep freshly prepared food hot until pickup. Expect to see more of these trends.

Good, Green, and Growing

HostMilano is a menagerie of delights and a foretaste of things to come in all

realms of hospitality. Bicom is an Italian food technology company selling instant soluble powdered teas and coffees to restaurants and hotels. The compact, individualized packaging can be branded to any business and Bicom's wide variety of flavors will please any palate. Ecobean from Poland is partnering with companies

to turn spent coffee grounds into new products such as compostable straws, BBQ briquettes, and flower pots. And Too Good to Go works to eliminate food waste. Businesses can register with Too Good to Go to be placed on its app and turn surplus food into extra income. Consumers use the app to find unsold food at the end of every day and purchase it for 1/3 off the original price.

Thanks to the innovations shown in Italy at this tremendous event where the hospitality industry's best and brightest came to mingle and share their work, consumers need not fear they'll be let down.

Excitement Continues

HostMilano's reach will last. When people stop for gas, they expect gourmet coffee and a sandwich that's fresh and hot, even if the kitchen is closed. Thanks to the innovations shown in Italy at this tremendous event where the hospitality industry's best and brightest came to mingle and share their work, consumers need not fear they'll be let down. The future is gleaming and bright. ☑

Gretchen Matthews founded Chesapeake Quill to help businesspeople become better writers. She is a regular presenter at the biannual Women in Carwash conference and the copy editor for its newsletter, L.E.A.R.N. Contact her at gmatthews@chesapeakequill.com.

Dealing with Absenteeism

By Renee Boyda



If your employees are not showing up to work, it can be frustrating. Here is the definitive guide to dealing with the problem so you can set expectations, make decisions that are compliant with employment regulations and get staff in your stores!

Chronic absenteeism is the habitual pattern of frequent, unplanned and unauthorized absences from work, as well as any failure to report for scheduled work, or to stay at work when scheduled. Chronic absenteeism represents a breach of the implicit social contract between employee and employer – the employee is expected to be available and able to work when scheduled and that the employer pays the employee in exchange for work. Absenteeism can cost an organization greatly, but often the costs are not well understood and easily dismissed.

Cost of Absenteeism

The absenteeism costs that are easiest to figure out are things like overtime costs and replacement worker costs. But what many employers overlook are the indirect costs such as lost productivity, work delays, decreased morale, dealing with fatigued staff who have to frequently cover for absent workers, as well as the drain on time for managers who have to deal with both discipline and finding staff to cover.

Controlling absenteeism starts with assessing how big the problem is, so that the proper controls can be put in place. In order to assess, you will need to review your attendance records and determine the number of culpable vs non-culpable absences for each of your employees. You must differentiate between the two in order to determine a correct response as well as mitigate the risk for a discrimination claim. Be sure to track culpable and non-culpable absences separately.

Culpable Absences

When an employee calls in sick to spend the day golfing (or other activity reserved for the healthy), this is referred to as a culpable absence. The employee was scheduled and able to work their shift, but chose not to. Managers will likely notice absences occurring just before or after holidays; repeated absences on the same day of the week (every Monday or Friday) or on pay days; absences during known busy times; or absences after negative experiences such as receiving an unsatisfactory performance review, being denied a requested day off, or after

an incident such as an argument with a coworker. One occurrence of this may not be that significant, but more than three occurrences would equate to a pattern. The appropriate response to culpable absenteeism is progressive discipline.

Non-Culpable Absences

A non-culpable absence is one where the employee is absent for reasons outside their control such as an illness or injury. Non-culpable absenteeism must be handled very carefully as there are human rights considerations. Discipline is not the focus here, rather non-culpable absenteeism must be monitored and managed in cooperation with the employee and medical professionals.

Meeting With Your Employee

If your employee's absenteeism exceeds the organization's standard, then it is time to have a meeting. This is your opportunity to find out if the employee can provide a reason for their absences, so that you, as the employer, can identify if those absences were culpable or non-culpable. You should also take this time to clarify that the employee is aware of the policy and reporting requirements. You will want to explain to the employee what impact the absences are having on the workplace, their coworkers, and their job. Ask what support you can provide to help the employee attend work, and if you have an employee assistance program, provide information on it. Clearly state your expectation regarding attendance and plan future attendance goals with timelines. Alternatively, you may need to discuss a request for medical documentation and accommodation if the employee divulges a medical disability that may affect their ability to come to work in the future.

Requests for Medical Information

An organization may need medical information from the employee's medical practitioner in order to assess whether their absences are related to a disability. In order to do this, the employer must obtain consent from the employee first. The amount of medical information requested should be in line with the level of the accommodation requested – the employer should only collect as much medical information that is reasonably necessary to accomplish the purpose. It is important to note that an employer should not be privy to an employee's

diagnosis, only basic information such as the general nature of the employee's illness, date of most recent medical practitioner's visit, if a treatment plan is being followed (but not the details of the plan) and when the employee is likely to return to work. In order to fulfill this duty, employers can request additional medical information including the details of the employee's physical restrictions and limitations that may affect their work, and the expected duration of those restrictions and limitations. If the absences are related to a disability, and the employee has requested an accommodation, then the employer has a duty to accommodate to the point of undue hardship.

Accommodation

The employer's duty to accommodate is the process the employer takes to remove barriers that limit opportunities based on a protected characteristic as per the Human Rights Code. In relation to absenteeism, that protected characteristic is usually a physical or mental disability. Both the employer and the employee have responsibilities in the accommodation process.

The employer's responsibility in the accommodation process is to treat requests for accommodation seriously and assess each request individually to determine possible accommodations without causing undue hardship. Employers should consult with medical practitioners who can assist in identifying employee needs for their specific set of circumstances. Employers must keep the details of all accommodation requests confidential. When an accommodation plan is in place, the employer must monitor the situation and be prepared to adjust the plan if it no longer meets the needs of the employee.

The employee's responsibilities in the accommodation process include: Providing the information required to medically substantiate their restrictions or limitations, making suggestions for accommodations, and trying out employer suggested ideas even if they aren't the employee's preferred solution. It is important to remember that a reasonable accommodation is not necessarily a perfect solution to all parties.

Duty to Inquire

Generally, the duty to accommodate is not triggered until an employee communicates that they have an accommodation need. But if an employer observes behaviour that would lead them to believe that the >>

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employee has a medical condition or disability requiring accommodation, they have the duty to inquire as per the Human Rights Code. Failure to make a reasonable inquiry would be seen as a breach of the duty to accommodate.

Termination

An organization may be faced with the decision to terminate an employee that just cannot seem to attend work. Just know that it can be a very slippery slope. When making a termination decision regarding culpable absenteeism, employers should be prepared to show that no accommodation was requested or required, that the attendance policy and expectations are reasonable, that there has been a documented history of absenteeism that has been consistently addressed, progressive discipline measures (coaching, verbal and written warnings) have not worked, and what the impact was to the employer. If tested in court, lawyers and other entities will look at the seriousness of the absenteeism, taking into account the employer's work environment and the nature of employment, if and/or when the employee has been warned in the past for similar conduct, the employee's length of service and job description, how the employer has tolerated similar conduct in the past, the reason for the absences, and the employee's honesty and intentions regarding the absences.

Terminating an employee for excessive non-culpable absenteeism is extremely risky, given the liability to the organization for a potential discrimination complaint. Only if there is clear medical information indicating that there is no reasonable prospect of regular attendance from the employee and that the employer can prove undue hardship pertaining to accommodation.

Job Abandonment

So, what happens if an employee just stops coming into work altogether? If it has been a few consecutive shifts and your employee does not call in nor attends work, you may be able to assume they have abandoned their job.

Job abandonment is the failure to report to work for consecutive days without notice and the employee cannot be reached, otherwise called a no-call no-show. Job abandonment is considered a voluntary termination – quitting without

telling the employer. An employer must be justified in terminating an employee for abandonment and it is often tested in court. The employer has a high threshold that they must meet in order to prove that the employee abandoned their job. A resignation must be clear and unequivocal. Terminating the employment relationship with an absent employee is not impossible, but it definitely puts an organization at risk. Anything less than an employee's objective statements or actions showing an obvious desire to leave and not return will be construed against the employer. As well, there are human rights obligations in relation to accommodations that must be considered, and employment standards laws do not specify a time after which an absence becomes abandonment. Therefore, each situation must be handled very carefully on a case-by-case basis. If your organization is faced with instances of job abandonment, we encourage you to reach out to a professional HR consultant or employment lawyer for guidance.

Strategies for Managing Employee Absences

Check your Attendance Policy. If you have HR support, contact them for any questions you may have to ensure that you are applying it correctly and consistently. If you do not have HR support, it would be wise to reach out to a professional, especially if you do not have a policy in place! A good policy sets attendance expectations, explains the follow-up process, outlines the disciplinary process that will be followed, distinguishes between culpable or non-culpable absences and is consistent with human rights legislation.

Educate your supervisors and staff on the policy, reporting and discipline procedures. Be sure that your people know what is expected of them and what steps will be taken.

Be consistent. Employers must apply their workplace rules consistently. If an organization has excused this same behavior in the past, then it would be viewed as condoning it.

Keep thorough records. Document everything! This will help with transparency as well as your consistency when handling attendance issues.

Address attendance issues promptly. Do not wait! Waiting only causes problems later on, such as poor morale, burnout and possibly increased absenteeism. Inaction on the part of the employer is construed as condoning the poor behaviour.

Discipline appropriately. If a pattern of culpable absenteeism has been established, then discipline should follow. Remember to gauge the level of discipline to the specific offence. Following progressive discipline is best practice.

But don't rush to discipline until you have the facts. Be sure you have all of the relevant information first. Don't act on anything out of anger. This could decrease morale and land an organization in litigation.

Consider reward and recognition strategies. An attendance program should not simply be punitive. Try rewarding efforts by offering a certificate, a gift card, free lunch, an extended lunch break or small prize to those with excellent attendance (or improved attendance). Whatever you choose to do should be something you can sustain over time.

Conclusion

In these pressing times where it is difficult to find workers, it may feel like employers have their hands tied when dealing with absenteeism. But in the long run, managing absenteeism could save your organization a lot – financial costs, morale, productivity, the list goes on. If you have HR support, I encourage you to lean on them to guide you through the process. If you do not, and are unsure where to begin or have a really sticky situation, then please seek the help of a professional HR consultant or employment lawyer. 📌

Renee Boyda is a human resources consultant and CPHR candidate with 10 years of experience in all aspects of human resources in her past roles in both union and non-union environments. Renee received her Bachelor of Arts in Sociology from the University of Manitoba, and received both Human Resource Management and Management Development Certificates with Honours from Red River College. Renee is a proud Metis and a highly adaptable personality with a focus on customer service.

What's New



It's like steaming milk, only better

Latte Art Factory's patented air flow technology unlocks endless milk textures from liquid to solid. Whether using dairy or plant milks, hot or cold, the settings are fully customizable, delivering perfectly smooth microfoam every time.

Baristas of all skill levels can now make pro-level foam, from day one.

The acclaimed milk frother has been engineered to:

- Optimize workflows
- Save time and money from staff training
- Cut costs from milk waste by up to 25 per cent
- Inspire fresh menu ideas with cold foam

While also making the cleaning process quick and easy. It's an absolute game-changer for café owners and baristas alike.

Winner of the HOST 2023 Smart Label Award

Latte Art Factory's mission is to empower baristas and café owners, enhance the overall coffee experience for customers, and contribute to the evolution of the coffee industry.

We are thrilled that our commitment to delivering intelligent solutions to the coffee industry has been recognized through this award.



Atlanta, GA – Bluefin, the integrated payments pioneer in PCI-validated encryption and tokenization technologies that protect payments and sensitive data, announced partnering with Invenco by GVR, a worldwide leader in convenience retail solutions, to bring PCI validated P2PE solution to the retail petroleum forecourt in North America.

Bluefin is Invenco by GVR's PCI P2PE solution provider and has listed its own tailored solution for Invenco by GVR's Certificate Authority (CA) and hardware, integrating P2PE into Invenco by GVR's FlexPay IV and FlexPay 6 outdoor payment terminals. P2PE can reduce the PCI DSS compliance burden by more than 70 per cent and PCI control scope reduction at the point-of-sale environment by more than 90 per cent.

"Invenco by GVR is committed to providing frictionless and secure self-service payment technology for retail fueling convenience stores," said David Schuster, senior director, portfolio manager-devices at Invenco by GVR. "Working with Bluefin is an easy choice—they have a particular focus on retail petroleum, and they were the first to market with PCI validated P2PE solutions in North America."

"The Invenco by GVR team understands that delivering the highest level of payment security to the self-service retail fueling forecourt is vital to customer protection," said John Perry, Bluefin's chief executive officer. "The added security and scope reduction benefits of PCI-validated point-to-point encryption gives them a significant customer protection and satisfaction advantage."

Mechline Showcases Products at HostMilano

Mechline was showing these latest kitchen equipment and innovations at HostMilano 2023 recently.



BaSix range of hand wash basins. Products designed with hygiene at their heart.

User friendly, in-sink, drop-in food waste strainer in the grease management range. Products designed to solve operational inefficiency.

HyGenikx air and surface sanitizer. Products that benefit the environment.

OPW Vehicle Wash Solutions Highlights Latest

System and Payment Innovations at PEI/NACS Show 2023

Northville, MI – OPW Vehicle Wash Solutions exhibited its industry-leading vehicle wash equipment and payment systems at the recent PEI/NACS Show 2023 in Atlanta, GA.

On display were the following vehicle wash technologies from OPW VWS product brands PDQ Manufacturing, Belanger and Innovative Control Systems (ICS):

LaserWash 360 Plus IBA Vehicle Wash System with LaserGlow Arch: The iconic LaserWash 360 Plus touchless IBA system can now be outfitted with the new LaserGlow Arch, giving it one of the most advanced lighting options currently available to the industry. In addition to improving driver navigation and throughput rates, the eye-catching lighting of the LaserGlow Arch can be used to attract potential customers from the street or parking lot, and with infinite color and lighting patterns available, the LaserGlow Arch becomes a reliable 24/7 marketing tool.

FreeStyler Soft-Touch IBA Vehicle Wash System: The FreeStyler soft-touch wash from Belanger improves loading times for increased throughput rates thanks to its five-brush ClearBay overhead gantry design that creates a more open, less intimidating wash bay for drivers. Once the vehicle is positioned in the bay, the system's closed-cell foam wash media delivers a thorough, gentle and quiet cleaning process with little chance for damage to occur to vehicle components. From an efficiency perspective, the FreeStyler is powered by variable-frequency drive (VFD) motors that produce soft equipment starts for enhanced service life and reduced peak energy costs, leading to a more robust ROI.

Auto Sentry Petro Payment Terminal: From ICS, the Auto Sentry Petro terminal is a cost-effective solution for providing drivers with the convenience of a cashless express lane. By dedicating a lane for drivers paying by credit card or utilizing a wash-club membership, upfront costs can be reduced while improving throughput and creating a more customer-friendly wash experience.

Additionally, ICS will be debuted its new SmartStart Pro Payment Terminal, which is one of the most affordable payment terminals available to the market. Powered by the ICS WashConnect wash-management software, the SmartStart Pro features a 10.4" touchscreen and multiple cashless payment options that have been designed to help securely speed drivers through the purchase process to increase throughput rates.

To learn more about the complete range of vehicle wash equipment and payment systems offered by the companies of OPW Vehicle Wash Solutions, visit opwws.com.



ElectricFish Launches Next-Generation Rapid EV Charger with Backup Energy Capability: Advancing Convenience in Electric Fuel Retailing

ElectricFish, a climate tech company in the sustainable energy solutions sector, unveiled its latest generation of their flagship 350sqared product: the next-generation “Dory” at the NACS Show in Atlanta. Dory is a powerhouse of computational prowess and energy capacity, advancing industry standards, and engineered to be more powerful and versatile than prior systems. It has the ability to provide up to 48 hours of backup energy, while delivering best-in-class EV charging of up to 200 miles to EVs in just 10 minutes of charging.

According to ElectricFish, these are the key features of this next-generation of their hybrid product:

- a) Unmatched Computational Power with cutting edge AI technology: The next-generation is armed with an NVIDIA computation chip that meets the most demanding energy management and optimization needs. Running locally and on cloud machine learning inferences, it can process data and make real-time decisions, ensuring cost-efficient energy utilization while significantly reducing the carbon footprint of EV charging operations.
- b) Unprecedented Energy Capacity: ElectricFish has supercharged Dory with an expanded energy reservoir, sized at 400 kWh. This means multiple days of energy resilience, and enhanced support for various applications ranging from emergency power backup to grid flexibility programs.
- c) Dual Charging Ports: To further enhance convenience and compatibility, Dory is equipped with two charging ports supporting NACS and CCS. These ports are universally compatible with all EVs on the road built after 2020, making EV charging more accessible than ever.
- d) Sustainability at Its Core: Just like its predecessor, the company’s next-generation Dory is built with sustainability in mind. It contributes to a greener, more resilient energy ecosystem, reducing carbon footprint using domestic supply chain and promoting more renewable energy usage.
- e) User-Friendly Interface: ElectricFish has ensured that Dory is user-friendly for the conventional gas station experience, making it accessible to a broad spectrum of customers. Its intuitive interface does not require downloading of an app and simplifies the user experience using a digital payment interface including card payments. The unit optionally comes with an appealing, separate digital display screen to run store and other promotions.

Anurag Kamal, ElectricFish’s CEO, said: “In our next-generation Dory we’ve harnessed the latest technologies to provide a product that not only meets the energy challenges of today but also sets the stage for future-proofed EV charging speeds in an environment where our grid infrastructure significantly lags electrification demand. With enhanced computational power, increased energy capacity, and universal charging compatibility, Dory empowers our customers like never before.”

For more information on the next-generation Dory and ElectricFish’s sustainable energy solutions, visit www.electricfish.co.



OPW Retail Fueling Features New Products at PEI/NACS Show 2023

Smithfield, NC — OPW Retail Fueling, a global leader in fluid-handling solutions, exhibited at the recent PEI/NACS Show 2023 at the Georgia World Congress Center in Atlanta, GA. The PEI/NACS Show is the largest annual industry event for all things retail fueling in North America.

At the show, OPW Retail Fueling featured three of its newest products for the retail-fueling industry:

FlexWorks V20 Vent Pipe: This flexible vent-pipe solution is UL and ULC-listed for use with both tank-venting and Stage II vapor-recovery piping with all fuel types and alcohol blends for underground storage tank (UST) systems. It is a double-wall

pipe manufactured similarly to best-in-class primary fuel piping from OPW with bonded extrusion of all layers while utilizing the same swedge-on or bolt-on coupler fittings. The stainless-steel fittings are corrosion-resistant, making them an ideal alternative for direct-bury fiberglass pipe. The V20 features double-wall construction and is available in 2” diameter on either a 250’ or 500’ reel. The V20 vent pipe is also orange in color so it cannot be mistakenly used for product piping.

Pre-Plumbed DSE Dispenser Sump: As the newest member of the OPW E-Series Containment Sump family, the Pre-Plumbed DSE sump boasts all the features of the standard DSE model, but with factory-assembled and tested components that make it ideal for use by fuel-site operators that are looking to save time, reduce installation variability and reduce installation costs. Compatible with popular Wayne Ovation and Gilbarco Encore dispenser models, the Pre-Plumbed DSE is shipped with 10 Plus Emergency Shut-Off Valve, dual-sided Rigid (REF) and Hybrid (HEF) Entry Fittings, flex connectors or NPT rigid pipe nipples, and secondary test kits and test jumpers, making for a streamlined and cost-effective installation process that helps reduce the risk of installation errors occurring.

TSE Dispenser Sump: Also a member of the E-Series Containment Sump product family, the TSE Dispenser Sump is part of the industry’s first all-composite

containment system manufactured using advanced fiberglass Sheet-Molded Compounds (SMC), which results in a high-quality sump that increases peace of mind for fuel-site operators. The SMC manufacturing process also gives the TSE sumps the shortest delivery lead times in the industry, consistent wall thickness and smoothness for a watertight seal, and a value price when compared to competitive fiberglass tank sumps.

Additionally, the hosts of The Fueling Station Podcast, Ed Kammerer and Jonathan Stong, were on hand to interact with visitors to the OPW booth. Known as the “Pod-troleum Guys,” Ed and Jonathan bring a listener-friendly touch and years of industry experience and expertise while discussing issues that are of critical importance to retail fueling.

“The annual PEI/NACS Show is always one of our favorite and most-anticipated events of the year,” said Kammerer, director of marketing and global product strategy for OPW Retail Fueling. “We always appreciate the opportunity to visit in-person with all of our customers and distributors who will be attending the show. As usual, we are bringing with us a strong and wide array of fuel-dispensing and storage systems and equipment that have been expressly engineered to help optimize all retail-fueling operations.”

To learn more about OPW Retail Fueling products and expertise, visit opwglobal.com.

What's New



Flexeserve's new cloud-based service, Connect



Self-service Micro Market featuring Flexeserve Zone Countertop, with a range of hot grab and go.

Sell even more hot food with new Flexeserve Zone Xtra

The world-leading hot-holding manufacturer and food-to-go specialist will help c-stores sell even more and waste even less from the counter, with the launch of Flexeserve Zone Xtra.

Currently transforming hot food operations for major brands – including Circle K, QuikTrip and Buc ee's – Flexeserve's dedicated team of U.S. experts tackle hot food challenges head on. They recently revealed their new high-capacity heated display and demonstrated the first ever cloud service for hot-holding – Connect by Flexeserve at the recent NACS Show.

Featured in the NACS Cool New Products preview room, the company launched its latest heated display – Flexeserve Zone Xtra.

Perfect for the convenience market and express food-to-go, Xtra is designed to provide high-capacity merchandising and true hot-holding with Flexeserve's unique hot air recirculation technology.

With Xtra, operators can display 60 per cent more hot food, along with a range of premium accessories that increase the appeal and visibility of their grab and go offer – all within the same footprint and power supply as Flexeserve's two-tier countertop models.

With two multi-temp zones, capable of hot-holding products with different temperature requirements in the same unit, operators can sell an unrivaled amount of high-quality hot food throughout the day, from hot breakfast sandwiches to warm bakery and crispy snacks.

President Dave Hinton, said: "With the launch of Xtra, we can help customers embrace true hot-holding like never before. Operators can cook less often whilst selling more, by maintaining just-cooked quality with unmatched hold times. Xtra also delivers incredible energy efficiency with easy integration into existing operations – making it ideal for the convenience market."

Introducing ... Connect by Flexeserve
Visitors to the NACS Show saw the future of hot-holding with a demo of Flexeserve's new cloud-based service, Connect. Recent winner of a Gold Innovation Challenge Award, Connect's ability to control and automate units remotely enables operators to see their hot food operation "like never before" – and sell more and waste less at every location.

Hinton said: "We're constantly showing customers what's possible with true hot-holding and introducing new products and an evolved Flexeserve Solution that directly address industry needs. With Connect, we're taking Flexeserve Solution to the next level, and transforming hot food operations forever."

Flexeserve also showcased its recently-launched Flexeserve Hub Undercounter. Supporting operators back-of-house with operational efficiencies at its core, Flexeserve Hub is the only unit that can hot-hold batch-cooked ingredients, complete dishes and entire packaged food orders – for unrivaled hold times, versatility and energy efficiency.

An "extra pair of hands" for your kitchen team, Hub Undercounter empowers your staff and eases the pressure at peak service times.

Franke Coffee Systems Awarded the CSP 2023 Retailer Choice Best New Products Contest at NACS in Atlanta

Smyrna, Tennessee – Franke Coffee Systems – Americas was selected as the CSP 2023 Retailer Choice Best New Product Contest winner in the Foodservice Equipment: Dispensed Beverages product category for its latest innovation in hot coffee. Now in its 20th year, the Best New Product Contest honors top product innovations and solutions, focusing on the most successful product launches from the past year.

At the NACS Show in Atlanta, CSP Magazine awarded Franke Coffee Systems the 2023 Retailer Choice Best New Product in the Foodservice Equipment: Dispensed Beverages product category. This win is particularly exciting because retailers had the opportunity to vote on their favorite finalists in CSP magazine's 20th annual Retailer Choice Best New Products Contest (BNPC). The editors of CSP identified finalists in 23 product categories from products nominated by convenience store industry members. Then it was left to convenience store retailers to select the winners of the BNPC coveted award.

In the c-store channel, foodservice category sales growth is driven primarily by prepared food and hot dispensed beverages. A good coffee program is critical to the hot dispensed category – today's consumers expect high quality coffee, wherever they go. Franke's product innovation around bean-to-cup equipment, most recently introducing the A400 Fresh Brew, grind whole beans fresh for each cup – delivering on consumers expectations for high quality while also reducing waste by brewing on-demand. This type of innovation contributes to category sales growth and allows Franke to customize coffee programs to meet the specific needs of its customers.

"We are incredibly honored to be named the CSP 2023 Retailer Choice Best New Products Contest Winner and especially thrilled by the fact that our c-store partners voted us as their favorite," said Brittany Tresemer, marketing director at Franke. "This award is a reflection of the hard work and dedication of our entire Franke team. We have always strived to provide our partners with innovative professional coffee machines, and this recognition motivates us to continue to stay ahead of category trends and our c-store partners' needs in terms of quality, performance, and innovation."

Through the development of innovative technologies, Franke is proud to receive this award in 2023 along with the Convenience Store News (CSN) Category Captains Award announced earlier this year. Both awards align with its commitment to its customers to be innovative, creative, and insightful to meet the needs of the evolving consumer.



Greenridge Naturals Shines at NACS 2023

The all-natural Chicago-based meat brand exhibited new flavors and size formats for the annual convenience store and fuel retailing show Elk Grove Village, IL — Greenridge, the Chicago-based brand (formerly Greenridge Farm) specializing in all-natural uncured meat snacks, deli meats, sausages, cheeses, and condiments made a splash this year at NACS, the National Association of Convenience Stores' annual show. The event brings together thousands of major industry players across convenience stores and fuel retailing.

As new exhibitors, Greenridge sampled thousands of their new c-store friendly all-natural meat stick snacks, available in four flavors including the brand-new Italian Style Grass Fed Beef and Buffalo Chicken, in addition to their popular Classic Beef and Jalapeño & Cheddar Grass Fed Beef Sticks. Retailers, distributors, exhibitors, and guests enjoyed all four snack sticks, which are part of the brand's larger Naturals line of meat products that have zero sugar, low sodium, free of fillers, MSG, gluten, and soy, with no added nitrates, nitrites, phosphates, and artificial colours or flavourings.

Each flavor was displayed in a new one oz stick format, across multiple snack pack options including a one-pack, two-pack, and four-pack, all in new packaging following the company's recent rebrand.

"We were thrilled to share our newest creations as first-time exhibitors this year at NACS. Sampling and receiving feedback on our new flavors in convenient on-the-go sizing options makes us excited for next year as we continue to redefine what natural meat can be in the c-store space", notes Mike Shannon, vice president of sales and marketing.

Greenridge's presence at NACS marks a continued dedication to innovation and excellence in the natural meats category as they continue to expand with exciting new products and in retailers throughout the country.

Invenco launches FlexPay 6 line of Outdoor Payment Terminals

Greensboro, North Carolina – Invenco by GVR, a worldwide retail and payment technology leader, announced today the launch of the FlexPay 6 line of outdoor payment terminals (OPTs) for fuel dispensers. The FlexPay 6 offering will be the latest addition to Invenco by GVR's powerful portfolio of payment and convenience retail management solutions.

"We are excited about the FlexPay 6 line of OPTs as they underscore both Invenco by GVR's and Gilbarco Veeder-Root's commitment to delivering top-tier products that elevate consumers' experience and drive retailers' success," said Dave Coombe, president, Gilbarco Veeder-Root. "This first of its kind offering of a payment terminal available factory-installed into dispensers, combined with these being the only terminals that are PCI 6 certified, provides our customers a truly connected solution."

The FlexPay 6 payment terminals from Invenco by GVR are built to be ready for the future, to maximize consumer engagement, and to lower total cost of ownership. FlexPay 6 payment terminals are available in Encore 700S dispensers, as well as retrofit kits for Gilbarco Veeder-Root, Wayne and Tolkeim dispensers.

FlexPay 6 features two distinct product lines: the All-in-One and the Modular payment terminals. All FlexPay 6 outdoor payment terminals are or will be PCI 6 compliant, the latest EMV contactless standard (at least 3.0), and have native cloud connectivity, 2-D bar code readers and contactless as standard features.

The FlexPay 6 product line includes:

- FlexPay 6 M1-15: A modular terminal designed to maximize consumer engagement with a large, full touch experience, dedicated PIN pad, hybrid card reader, and optional 80mm thermal printer.
- FlexPay 6 A2-09: An all-in-one terminal designed with the latest technology for dependable performance and customer engagement with an integrated printer, capacitive PIN pad, and a split card reader.
- FlexPay 6 A1-05: An all-in-one terminal that offers a fully customizable user experience with dynamic multi-media, integrated printer, dedicated PIN pad and a secure manual hybrid card reader.

For more information about FlexPay 6, visit invenco.com or follow Invenco by GVR on LinkedIn.

OPW Vehicle Wash Solutions Highlights Latest System and Payment Innovations at PEI/NACS Show 2023

Northville, MI—OPW Vehicle Wash Solutions exhibited its industry-leading vehicle wash equipment and payment systems at the recent PEI/NACS Show 2023 in Atlanta, GA.

On display were the following vehicle wash technologies from OPW VWS product brands PDQ Manufacturing, Belanger and Innovative Control Systems (ICS):

- LaserWash 360 Plus IBA Vehicle Wash System with LaserGlow Arch: The iconic LaserWash 360 Plus touchless IBA system can now be outfitted with the new LaserGlow Arch, giving it one of the most advanced lighting options currently available to the industry. In addition to improving driver navigation and throughput rates, the eye-catching lighting of the LaserGlow Arch can be used to attract potential customers from the street or parking lot, and with infinite color and lighting patterns available, the LaserGlow Arch becomes a reliable 24/7 marketing tool.
- FreeStyler Soft-Touch IBA Vehicle Wash System: The FreeStyler soft-touch wash from Belanger improves loading times for increased throughput rates thanks to its five-brush ClearBay overhead

gantry design that creates a more open, less intimidating wash bay for drivers. Once the vehicle is positioned in the bay, the system's closed-cell foam wash media delivers a thorough, gentle and quiet cleaning process with little chance for damage to occur to vehicle components. From an efficiency perspective, the FreeStyler is powered by variable-frequency drive (VFD) motors that produce soft equipment starts for enhanced service life and reduced peak energy costs, leading to a more robust ROI.

- Auto Sentry Petro Payment Terminal: From ICS, the Auto Sentry Petro terminal is a cost-effective solution for providing drivers with the convenience of a cashless express lane. By dedicating a lane for drivers paying by credit card or utilizing a wash-club membership, upfront costs can be reduced while improving throughput and creating a more customer-friendly wash experience.

To learn more about the complete range of vehicle wash equipment and payment systems offered by the companies of OPW Vehicle Wash Solutions, visit opwws.com.

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