

Convenience & Carwash

MARCH/APRIL 2025

 **CANADA**

SOCIAL MEDIA: Scrolling Through The Suds

DISASTERS HAPPEN: Are You Ready?

CUSTOMER SERVICE: Meaningful Connections

STORE LAYOUT: Design Strategies

HOT BEVERAGE EQUIPMENT: Considering the Options

FORECOURT INSIGHT: AST Systems

IMPULSE SALES: Novelty Items

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Vehicle Wash & Care

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Innovation. PAGE 35

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UPCOMING EVENTS

April 23, 2025,
Atlantic Convenience Expo
Halifax Convention Centre Halifax,
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April 26–28, 2025
The Car Wash
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June 8–10, 2025
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www.womenincarwash.com
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June 17–19, 2025
PEI Women Conference
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www.pei.org/women-event

October 6–8, 2025
Northeastern Regional Carwash
Convention Atlantic City, NJ

October 14–17, 2025
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JUNE 8–10, 2025
12th Women in Carwash™
Conference
Seattle, WA
www.womenincarwash.com



Welcome to Spring!

As the days get longer and the snow melts away to the glorious song of returning birds, we bring an issue filled with editorials to give you tools for changing how you service your customers: From enhancing customer service to redesigning your store, engaging with your customers through social media marketing and changing a carwash over to a small format wash, everything is here to help operators change their business to be ready for the new season.

If you're considering entering the carwashing market, or perhaps upgrading your equipment, take some time to peruse our carwash equipment chart where carwash vendors detail the product, equipment and services that they offer. Give any of these companies a phone call; they'd be happy to discuss options and opportunities for you and your site.

Is your company prepared for the unexpected disaster? The past few years have seen many challenging situations, including floods, fires, earthquakes, etc. BFL Canada shares with us that "Disasters Happen," and although we hope that you and your company never have to face one, it's great to know how and what to do, just in case.

Our cover story celebrates 75 years of Istobal S.A. and its North American presence, which began in 2011 in Bristol, VA. We love covering these stories as the continuation of a product or service leads to great businesses and communities.

No matter what you have planned for the next season and the rest of the year, this edition offers you information to keep your imagination churning out new ideas for increasing your business.

Here's to a fabulous season and an even more fantastic summer. As always, your success is my business, and as always, my open-door policy to your valuable feedback remains not only intact but stronger than ever. If there is a topic you'd like to have featured, or, if you have questions or perhaps you need an introduction, please feel free to email me at bjjohnstone@convenienceandcarwash.com or call 204-489-4215

Brenda Jane Johnstone PUBLISHER

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Feeling the Pinch

Consumers are feeling the pinch. The inflation factor, combined with the threat of U.S.-Canada tariffs, has put a lot of pressure on our wallets.

At a recent Coffee Association of Canada webinar, Nick Gibson, CPG small/medium business client business partner, NielsenIQ, noted that a \$100 basket of goods in Canada has increased 24 per cent, to \$124, from 2019.

"That is at least 10 points higher than what you would expect in a normal inflation environment," said Gibson. "Most Canadians did not receive a 24 per cent wage increase in that time period."

You can expect, in this environment, that people will be choosing where to shop carefully. Now is a good time to take inventory of what you offer to your customers. In this issue of *Convenience & Carwash Canada*, we take a look at enhancing customer service with the article *Make Meaningful Connections with Your Customers*. Making a personal connection with your customer is more important than ever as people seek places they can rely on, trust with their business and can generally make them feel a bit better during difficult days. Service with a smile really does make a difference.

The quality of the service you provide to your customers might be the reason they keep coming back. As Tom Hart, director of business development at Ready Training Online notes: "You never know how uplifting an act of kindness can be to a customer. It might be exactly what they needed that day."

We also have an article on *Boosting Impulse Sales with Novelty Items*. Having some unique items available for purchase can differentiate your store from other shopping options and persuade your customers to make impulse purchases.

Social media marketing (read *Scrolling Through the Suds* in this issue) and store design (read *Convenience Store Layout: Eight Design Strategies That Boost Sales and Improve the Shopping Experience* in this issue) also impact the customer's impression of your business.

With consumers counting their pennies (remember when we had pennies), make sure your store or carwash stands out as a place to go where the shopping experience will be pleasant. Be a place where a shopper can feel acknowledged and appreciated. When the world feels so chaotic, these qualities can make you stand out and provide a welcoming atmosphere for anxious shoppers.

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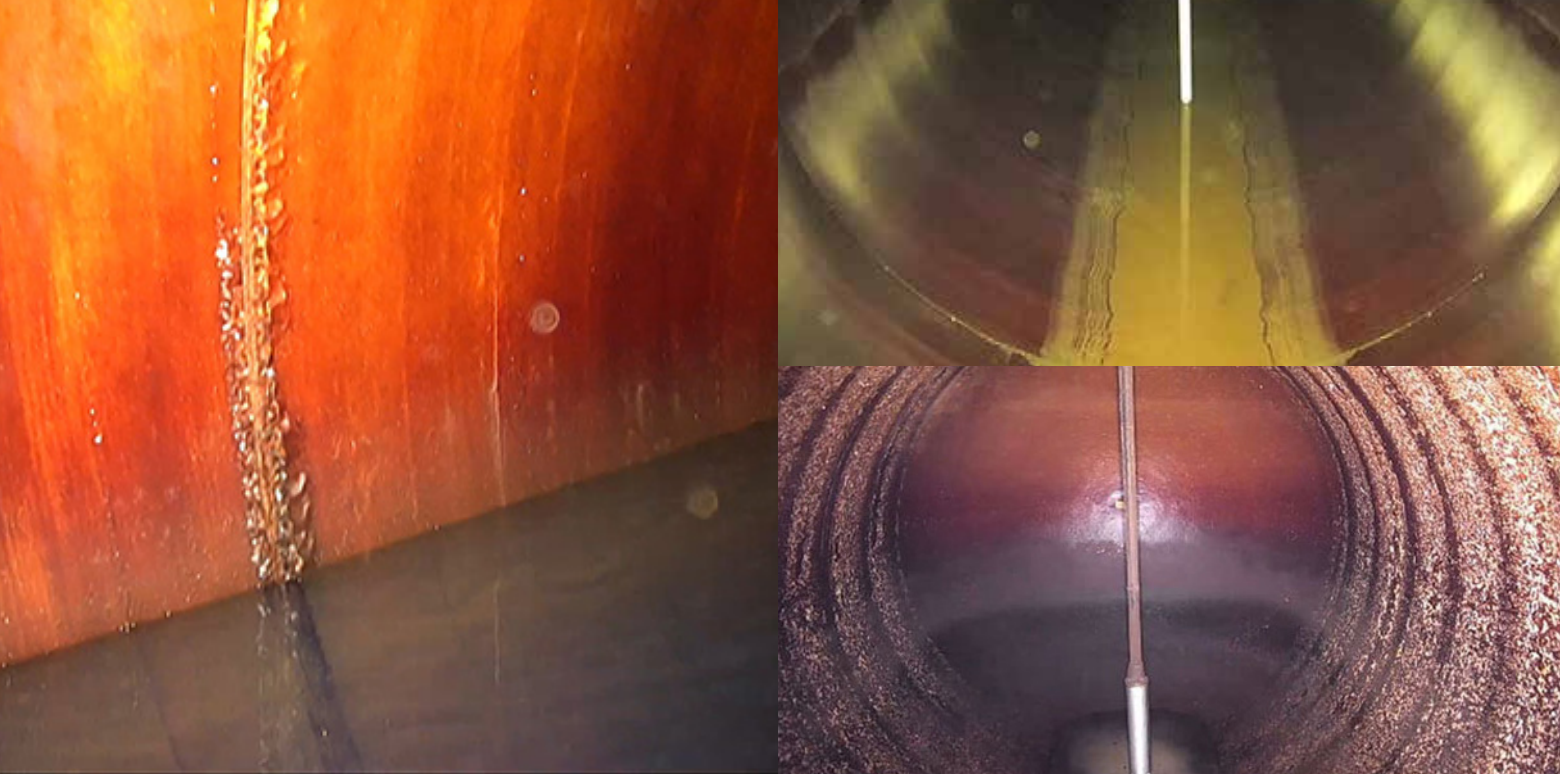
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BY ANGELA ALTASS

THE BEST HOT BEVERAGE EQUIPMENT FOR YOUR STORE

Hot beverage equipment can offer varied features and drink options per machine. Factors such as the clientele and the location of your convenience store can impact which machines will contribute the most to a successful hot beverage program.



“Equipment is site specific,” says Aron Bjornson, vice president, marketing and foodservice national accounts, Canterbury Coffee. “You need to make the best use of space to maintain the right speed of service and product offerings to make sure your customers return.”

For example, notes Bjornson, in a slower location, rather than making two litres at a time and having to pour it out after an hour, a bean-to-cup machine, like the Bunn Crescendo or Franke A400, are great options as they provide each customer with a freshly ground and brewed cup, eliminating waste from brewing large batches that go unused.

“However, in a high-volume location, this setup could lead to long wait times and lost sales,” says

Bjornson. “Batch brewing is the best choice where speed of service is the top priority. We recommend the Bunn Axiom as a reliable workhorse that requires minimal maintenance beyond regular cleaning.”

Knowing your customer base and selecting machine models that deliver production to meet the consumer rate of arrival at your location is important, agrees Judi Saliba, senior sales executive, TFI Food Equipment Solutions.

“For example, for c-stores that are near a high school, assure that the equipment you select has the production capacity and speed of service to quickly and consistently make the beverages that this cohort desires,” says Saliba.

>>



FRANKE'S A400 AND A800 MACHINES PROVIDE FRESH BREWED COFFEE WITH AUTOMATED EFFICIENCY, KEEPING CUSTOMERS HAPPY AND OPERATIONS SMOOTH.



Along with offering coffee, Bjornson suggests making hot chocolate and cappuccinos available for your customers to purchase.

"Canadian winters are long and not everyone drinks coffee," notes Bjornson. "Canterbury Coffee partners with a Canadian manufacturer to produce a range of hot chocolates and seasonal cappuccinos designed specifically for use in the Bunn iMix machine. The iMix stands out because it is intuitive for customers to use and easy to maintain for staff. Ease of maintenance is a key component in a successful program. The last thing you want is an out-of-order sign preventing your business from serving drinks and driving sales."

Assortment is important to a hot beverage program, says Bjornson.

"Tea and hot chocolate are among the fastest-growing beverages in convenience stores, according to Technomic Q4 2022 – Q4 2023, and even coffee drinkers appreciate versatility, like making a mocha by mixing half hot chocolate and half coffee," says Bjornson. "Young coffee drinkers frequently purchase from convenience channels and they seek innovation and personalization. By expanding options, such as flavored add-ins, alternative milks, and sugar-free choices, you can position convenience stores as a strong alternative to traditional cafés."

Hot beverage equipment has evolved over the years, becoming easier to use, more innovative and easier to maintain, notes Saliba.

"The Franke A line of equipment, both

specialty and fresh brew, are ideal for convenience stores," says Saliba. "The Franke A1000 Flex automated machine offers brewed-to-order espresso-based beverages, freshly brewed coffee, and a cold-water bypass to capture the rapidly expanding iced/cold coffee market segment. Customers receive their equipment already programed to their menu specifications so that every serving is perfect, every time."

Hot dispensed beverage equipment has seen significant advancements from automation and IoT digital solutions, transforming convenience store operations to new brewing technology, says Greg Alford, country manager – Canada, Franke Coffee Systems.

"Franke Digital Services empower multi-unit operators to monitor their



entire fleet in real time, download menu changes, and update screen images remotely,” says Alford. “Additionally, our machines can feature cold water bypass for iced coffees, which is the fastest-growing coffee choice in Canada.”

Embracing automation and IoT digital solutions enhances efficiency,

consistency, and quality while keeping costs low and customers coming back for more, says Alford.

“We encourage and support convenience store owners in staying ahead of consumer trends when upgrading their hot beverage equipment,” says Alford. “Investing in advanced machines, like

our A400 Fresh Brew and A800 Fresh Brew, ensures you meet the growing demand for high-quality, convenient coffee options. Staying current with innovations will help you attract and retain customers, keeping your business competitive.”

Franke’s A400 Fresh Brew machine, with a compact design and automated cleaning system, is ideal for mid-volume operations. This fully automated solution allows customers to choose from two different bean types and four cup sizes in three quick steps. For low-volume operations without access to 208-volt power, Franke offers the A300 Fresh Brew, a compact 120V model. For busier outlets, the A800 Fresh Brew delivers high-quality brewed coffee to meet high-volume demands. The A400 and A800 are bean-to-cup machines, designed to brew every cup of coffee fresh to order. **☑**

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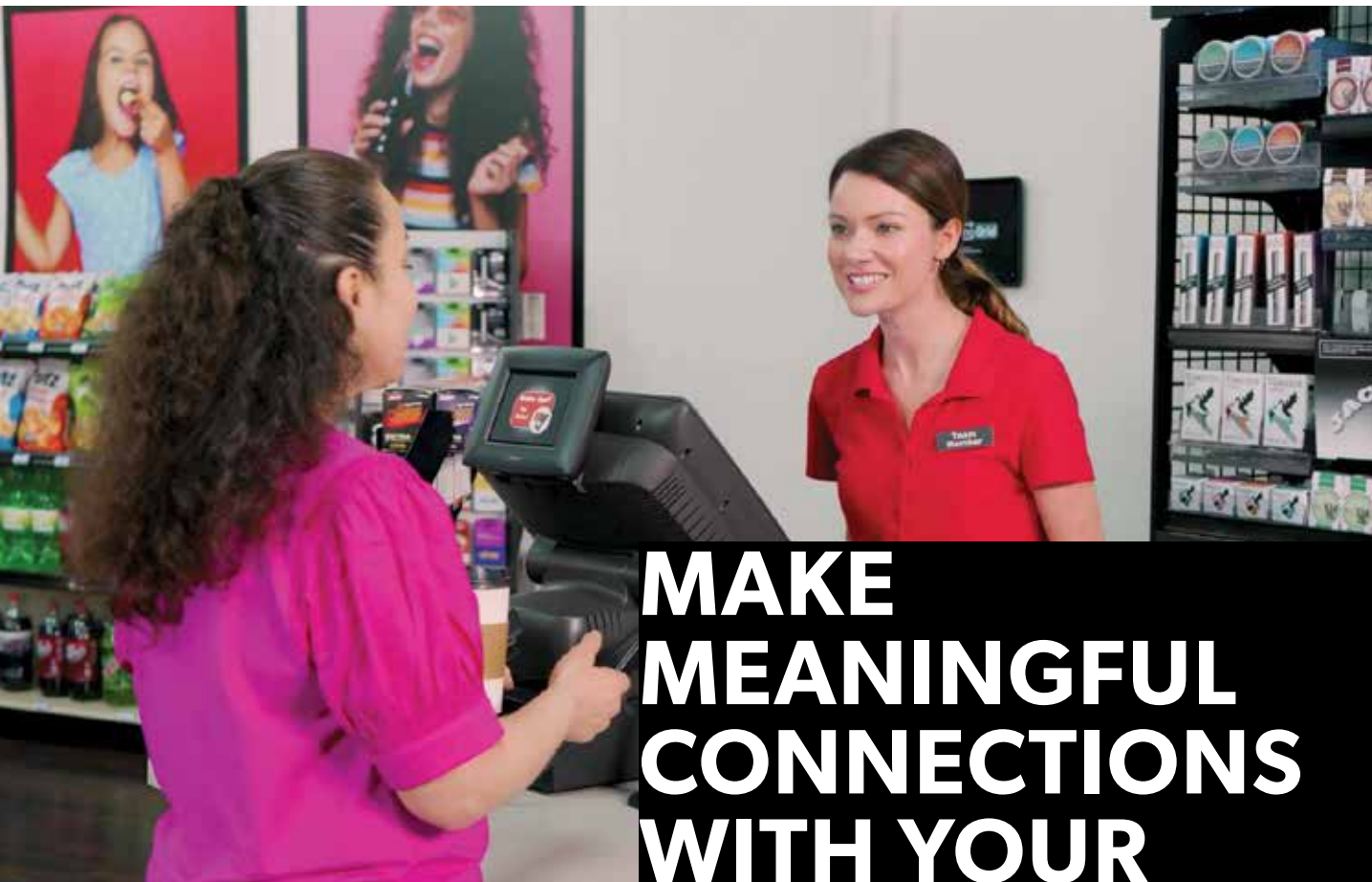


Photo courtesy of Ready Training Online

MAKE MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS WITH YOUR CUSTOMERS

BY ANGELA ALTASS

Everywhere we turn people are swiping the screens on their smartphones and engaging with their devices, however, when it comes to in-store customer service, interactions with other humans remains high on the consumer scorecard.

“When customers feel seen and valued, they are not only more likely to return but also to become advocates, sharing their positive experiences with others and driving further engagement with your business,” says John Shapiro, chief product and technology officer, Lightspeed Commerce. “We set up retailers with inventory management, sales insights, mobile checkout options, and more to ensure the most seamless experience offering to their customers, but if they don’t deliver a positive experience with something as simple as a smile and a greeting, the technology and support offered behind the scenes may not make it to a completed sale.”

Consumer experiences, good or bad, may find your store up front and centre on social media posts, as customers share their opinions on your business with followers, friends, and others.

“Retailers have to remember that their staff are the first point of contact for their customers and represent their business,” says Shapiro. “Staff can have an incredible impact on how your brand is perceived and whether a customer plans on returning. The best asset any retailer can put forward is a smile, positive and welcoming attitude, which they then support with a seamless technology integration throughout the shopping experience.”



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*Coffee Association of Canada. (2024). Highlights from the 2024 Coffee Association of Canada Conference. Retrieved from <https://ccentral.ca/highlights-2024-coffee-association-canada-conference>

Making a meaningful connection with customers is essential for creating a positive shopping experience, says Shapiro.

"One of the most effective ways to foster this connection is through personalization," says Shapiro. "By tailoring the shopping experience to individual preferences, businesses can make customers feel special and appreciated. This can include personalized product recommendations based on past purchases, exclusive VIP experiences, or loyalty programs that reward frequent shoppers with special perks. Personalization can take the form of one-on-one service, curated product suggestions, or even remembering a customer's name and preferences."

The checkout experience is the bow on the end of a great retail experience with people looking for freedom of choice regarding payment options, says Shapiro.

"There are still a large majority of consumers who prefer to pay with debit or credit and even cash," says Shapiro. "Having the flexibility to pay as they choose helps to go a long way in the consumer experience."

Good customer service consists of sincerity, being able to satisfy the reason for the visit, and operational excellence, which means equipment that operates, clean and safe facilities, well-lit locations, and easy-to-navigate stores or paths to the carwash, says Tom Hart, director of business development, Ready Training Online.

"I'm a believer in the personal touch," says Hart. "If you create a fixed greeting or standard thank you, it will absolutely be received as insincere. Give staff the freedom to naturally greet people. Encourage staff to pause what they are working on and provide a warm greeting or an offer of help to customers. You never know how uplifting an act of kindness can be to a customer. It might be exactly what they needed that day."

Your staff are the key to providing the ultimate customer experience, says Hart.

"We are rightly focused on creating ways to increase visits through rewards and promotions," he notes. "That same effort needs to be extended to the customers when they are right inside your front door."

Foodservice is an opportunity for convenience store owners to differentiate from their competition, says Hart, noting that while competitors can copy your menu and match, or beat your price, customer service can offer opportunities to make your location stand out.

"While competition is everywhere, a focus on notable ingredients such as a local bread provider or an unexpected offer for 'lunch on us,' can create an experience that sets you apart and connects with your customer in a memorable way," says Hart. "You can spend millions of dollars building a location but that can all come tumbling down with poor service. I had the opportunity to work with one of the best carwash operators in the business and he taught me a >>

few things. First, everyone who went through the tunnel received a towel to wipe the inside, and an air freshener. He also had free vacuums all year round. I wondered if he was just giving up revenue on the vacuums, but they always had full lots with lines out to the street for a wash and were the clear runaway choice for customers. Sometimes, simple things make the biggest difference for customers.”

The best way to support your front-line team members is to create a culture that inspires them to be their best, says Hart.

“Recognition, learning new skills, mentoring them for career opportunities, and treating them as individuals are all part of that effort,” says Hart. “It takes effort and consistency from the top. Frontline employees deal with the public every day and their responsibilities are significant. They deserve face-to-face recognition.”

Most customers expect to get the service or product they intended without any hassles or obstacles, says Hart.

“That’s the minimum expectation,” he says. “Miss that and you may see a reduction in visits. I have a favourite Saturday morning coffee spot in town. Their coffee is not as good as their competitor, but their crew is always happy to see their customers and they seem to really enjoy their work. That vibe makes me look forward to seeing them as much as the coffee. The people make the difference.”

The best customer experience is built on a strong and engaging service culture, says Guy Caron, vice president, client strategy, CXE, Inc.

“Owners should prioritize a well-defined service standard framework and provide structured training and ongoing coaching to ensure employees consistently meet these standards,” says Caron. “Technology integration is also key: Mobile payments, loyalty programs, and contactless transactions streamline service and encourage repeat business. A well-designed loyalty program with real value fosters long-term customer relationships, while unique promotions, such as bundled discounts on fuel, snacks or car washes, drive repeat business. Additionally, data-driven insights help refine service strategies, ensuring continuous improvement.”

Employee engagement and recognition programs also play a vital role, says Caron, noting that frontline employees are the face and personal connection of the business, directly influencing

customer satisfaction and loyalty.

“Friendly, knowledgeable staff who feel valued, empowered and appreciated will create a welcoming atmosphere and keep customers returning,” says Caron. “A key competitive advantage is an engaged, well-trained workforce. Providing structured learning and coaching opportunities ensure front-line staff deliver outstanding service. To attract and retain top talent, owners should offer competitive wages, career development opportunities, and incentive programs. Employee recognition, whether through reward programs or personalized appreciation, fosters motivation and enhances service quality.”

In a convenience store or carwash, consistency, professionalism, and responsiveness are essential, says Caron.

“Staff should anticipate customer needs, utilize data-driven insights to enhance service, and resolve operational issues efficiently,” says Caron. “Today’s consumers expect speed, efficiency, and consistency. Clean, well-maintained facilities, hassle-free transactions,

and friendly, knowledgeable staff are non-negotiable.”

AI and digital tools are transforming customer service by enhancing convenience, operational efficiency and employee training, says Caron.

“AI-powered chatbots handle common inquiries, while data analytics help businesses anticipate and understand customer needs and optimize service offerings,” says Caron. “Social media plays a dual role in customer service and marketing, allowing businesses to showcase promotions, engage with customers, and collect valuable feedback.”

Technology can also enhance employee training and development, says Caron.

“AI-driven learning platforms, personalized digital training paths, and gamified learning experiences ensure employees are well equipped to handle customer interactions with confidence,” says Caron. “Ultimately, well-trained and engaged employees lead to higher customer satisfaction, increased retention, and a stronger brand reputation.”

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DISASTERS HAPPEN. IS YOUR BUSINESS (AND YOUR INSURANCE) READY?

BY LINDA BUCKTON & GINA SEITZ

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Fires, floods, and earthquakes don't just destroy buildings, they disrupt businesses, wipe out inventory, and leave owners scrambling for financial recovery. Even if you're lucky enough to avoid direct damage, the ripple effect of natural disasters can hit your bottom line in ways you might not expect. One of the biggest aftershocks? Rising insurance premiums. As catastrophic events increase in frequency and severity, businesses across Canada are seeing higher insurance costs, stricter policy conditions, and reduced coverage options.

If you own a small business, now is the time to understand these risks – before they cost you more than you expect.

Natural Disasters Are Driving Up Insurance Costs

The reality is clear: insurance rates are going up—and extreme weather is a major reason why.

- Water damage is now the number one insurance claim in Canada – Floods, burst pipes, and leaks now make up 44 per cent of total claims, surpassing fire. As losses pile up, insurers are raising premiums and adjusting policies.
- Wildfire risk is increasing across Canada – With longer and more intense fire seasons, insurers are tightening coverage

requirements. In some high-risk areas, businesses are even struggling to secure policies at all.

- Earthquake preparedness is a growing concern – British Columbia, in particular, faces an increased risk of a major seismic event, which could lead to catastrophic losses. Insurers are adjusting deductibles and requiring businesses to prove they have contingency plans.

The result? Even businesses that haven't made claims are seeing higher rates as insurers adjust for rising risks and catastrophic payouts.

What This Means for Small Business Owners

1. Higher deductibles: Businesses in high-risk areas are now facing steeper deductibles – sometimes 10-20 per cent of their insured value for earthquake policies.
2. More coverage exclusions: Some insurers are limiting coverage for flooding and wildfires, leaving businesses to pay out-of-pocket for certain damages.
3. Premium increases across the board: Even businesses outside of high-risk zones are seeing year-over-year rate hikes as insurers spread the cost of major claims across policyholders.

>>

How to Protect Your Business (and Keep Insurance Costs Down)

1. FIRE: Plan for Recovery Before You Need It

Fires remain one of the most devastating risks to small businesses. While insurance can help with rebuilding, the biggest danger isn't the flames – it's the business interruption.

Did you know? A moderate fire forces 43 per cent of businesses to close permanently, and of those that reopen, nearly a third fail within three years.

Reduce Your Risk:

- Review your fire safety plan and train employees on emergency protocols.
- Upgrade outdated electrical systems and maintain fire suppression equipment.
- Check your insurance policy for business interruption coverage—not all policies include it!

2. Earthquakes: The Hidden Financial Risk

In BC, experts predict a 30 per cent chance of a major earthquake in the next 50 years. But even if your business survives the shaking, you may not escape the financial impact.

Many businesses are shocked to learn that earthquake insurance deductibles are calculated as a percentage of their total insured value – often between 10 per cent and 20 per cent.

Reduce your risk:

- Consider an earthquake deductible buy-down policy – This lowers your deductible, reducing financial exposure.
- Review your business interruption insurance – Does it cover supply chain disruptions caused by an earthquake elsewhere? Many policies don't.
- Secure heavy equipment and inventory – Simple retrofits can prevent thousands of dollars in damage.

3. Water Damage: The New Fire

With extreme weather events on the rise, flooding is now a leading cause of business losses. From storm surges to burst pipes, water damage claims are growing – and so are premiums.

Many commercial policies now exclude certain types of flooding, meaning businesses without specialized coverage may face unexpected repair bills.

Reduce your risk:

- Upgrade plumbing and leak detection systems – Install shut-off valves and moisture sensors to catch leaks early.
- Know your coverage – Check your policy for exclusions related to flood damage.
- Understand your lease obligations – If you rent your space, determine whether you or your landlord is responsible for water damage repairs.

4. Wildfire: The Spreading Threat

Longer and hotter wildfire seasons are putting more businesses at risk – even those outside traditional danger zones. As a result, some insurers are tightening coverage restrictions or increasing premiums for businesses located near wooded areas.

Reduce your risk:

- Create a defensible space around your business – Remove dry vegetation and store flammable materials away from the building.

- Check your coverage annually – Policies can change, and coverage for wildfire damage may be limited.
- Have an evacuation and continuity plan – Know how you'll protect your employees, data, and inventory if a fire approaches.

How to Keep Insurance Costs Manageable

While natural disasters may be out of your control, your insurance strategy isn't. Here are a few ways to stay ahead of rising rates:


- ✓ Work with a broker – A good broker can compare policies, find gaps in coverage, and negotiate better rates based on your specific risks.
- ✓ Invest in risk reduction – Insurers reward businesses that take proactive steps to mitigate damage.
- ✓ Review your policy annually – Don't assume last year's coverage is still the best fit for your needs.

The Bottom Line: Don't Just Insure – Prepare

Disasters will keep happening. Insurance rates will keep rising. But small businesses that plan ahead, understand their risks, and take preventive action will be in a stronger position to weather the storm – both financially and operationally.

The best time to prepare? Before the next disaster hits.

Key Takeaways for Business Owners:

- Expect insurance rates to continue rising due to increased natural disasters.
- Review your policy carefully – check for exclusions, high deductibles, and business interruption coverage.
- Take steps now to reduce risk – better fire protection, plumbing upgrades, and disaster planning can lower your premiums and prevent losses.
- Work with an insurance broker to find the right coverage for your business's unique needs. 



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BOOSTING IMPULSE SALES WITH NOVELTY ITEMS

BY MELINE BEACH

From quirky gadgets to unique collectibles, novelty items is a popular category in the convenience and gas (C&G) channel. C&G retailers are seizing the opportunity to stock up on eye-catching products that enhance their customers' experience, boost sales on impulse and maximize revenue.

Air Fresheners, Lighters and Tire Rotation Identifiers

A1 Distribution is a Canadian company celebrating 21 years as an importer and distributor of renowned consumer products in Canada. With over 20 product lines within its portfolio, impulse products, such as *air fresheners, lighters, and tire rotation identifiers*, are popular items sold in the C&G channel.

According to Marie-Eve Amesse, vice president of sales and partner at A1 Distribution, Mirror Critter air fresheners continue to trend as a popular novelty product for customers of all ages. With witty character designs and enticing fragrances like candy, new car, fresh pine, linen, and ocean breeze, they offer both fun and function. Their cute, eye-catching design makes them easy to display in a counter box or on a clip strip,

positioning them perfectly for impulse purchases.

"Retailing at \$1.99 each, Mirror Critter air fresheners are popular because they combine fun, personality, and function at an affordable price year-round," says Amesse. "Their uniqueness serves as a form of personal expression."

Slick lighters is another popular year-round novelty item. Slick Deluxe lighters have a very unique electronic mechanism: they are refillable with butane and are all exceptional with their design. Their bold aesthetics, including metallic finishes, cool patterns, and built-in gadgets, like laser pointers, easily stand out as small items that are often displayed in a tower at check-out counters.

Retailing at \$16.99 each, these lighters attract customers >>

for their quality craftsmanship, including premium alloy casings, height-adjustable and wind-resistant flames, and appealing artwork designs, which make them great as a collectible item that drives repeat purchases.

Tic Tag – Tire Rotation Identifiers is a seasonal high-margin, low-effort novelty item that is sure to attract vehicle owners in need of a quick, practical fix. As tire rotations become essential during seasonal changes, Tic Tag is an easy-to-use, universal identification system that attaches directly to tire valve stems. This simple yet effective product is compatible with most vehicles, allows for easy visual identification of tire position, simplifying the tire rotation process during seasonal changes or maintenance, making it a convenient solution for drivers preparing for winter or summer tire changes.

Retailing at \$5.99 retail, Tic Tag provides a cost-effective way to prevent tire mix-ups. As a seasonal best-seller, Tic Tag offers an innovative seasonal best seller.

“Tic Tag is a seasonal must-have as a perfect impulse buy for convenience stores and gas stations,” says Amesse. “As one of our top-selling items, Tic Tag is must-have addition to any retail lineup.”

Hand Warmers, Toe Warmers and Cake Fountains

With offices in British Columbia and Ontario, Mystical Distributing Company has been providing exciting and impressive products that amaze people across Canada for over 25 years.

Hand and toe warmers are classic novelty

items that encourage impulse buys, driven by immediate consumer needs, particularly in frigid weather. Strategically placed near the register, customers who feel the chill are sure to grab these at checkout.

“While typically considered a seasonal product, demand for warmers exists year-round in colder regions,” says Bill Raynault, general manager – Western Branch of Mystical Distributing. “Some customers use them for outdoor activities, while others stock up during sales for muscle pain relief.”

Retailing at \$1.99, a two-pack of hand and toe warmers is a convenient and affordable solution for instant warmth. Their compact size makes them an easy grab-and-go purchase perfect for pockets, gloves or boots.

Cake fountains, also known as indoor-safe sparkling candles, have become an increasingly popular item in the C&G channels as a fun and exciting alternative to traditional wax candles and sparklers. These sparkling displays provide a visually stunning effect for any celebration, adding an element of surprise and joy to the occasion. With their safe indoor use and impressive appearance, they are perfect for birthdays, anniversaries, corporate celebrations, or national holidays – making them a great year-round novelty item for C&G retailers.

“To maximize impulse sales, retailers can strategically place cake fountains near other celebration-related products, such as balloons, streamers, sparklers, and party plates,” says Raynault. “This placement will encourage customers to grab everything they need for a memorable event.”

Retailing at \$2.35 for bulk orders, cake fountains bundled with other party essentials can also drive higher sales. Raynault adds, “Make it easy for the customer to buy their full celebration. If they buy one of each, then here’s the bundled price.”

Fireworks

BLAST-OFF Fireworks, a Canadian-owned, family-run business with over 26 years of experience in the fireworks industry, offers over 200 exclusive BLAST-OFF branded products and other major fireworks brands, to the Canadian market.

Fireworks are a popular novelty item sold in the C&G channel that offers customers a fun and exciting way to celebrate special occasions with quick

Hand and toe warmers at \$1.99 and cake fountains at \$2.35 make for affordable, impulse buys that add warmth and excitement to any occasion.





Slick Deluxe lighters have a very unique electronic mechanism; they are refillable with butane and are all exceptional with their design.

and accessible purchase options.

“Traditionally, fireworks were centred around Victoria Day, Canada Day, and New Year’s Eve,” says Matt Bialek, *president*, BLAST-OFF Fireworks. “The traditional selling model has exploded over the past few years. We’re seeing fireworks being used for more niche celebrations, like family reunions, gender reveal parties, memorial gatherings, weddings, and anniversary celebrations.”

Many newer holidays across the calendar have emerged for fireworks, including Lunar New Year, Family Day, and Diwali.

“Diwali is emerging as one of the top three fireworks holidays of the year,” says Bialek. “It’s our goal to help our retail partners identify emerging marketings like this, ensuring that they are equipped to capture new sales dollars.”

This year’s Canada Day is anticipated to be a great patriotic celebration. According to Bialek, C&G retailers should expect to see a spike in sales leading up to July 1 and recommends that retailers be prepared with additional inventories.

Value is key. Customers are looking for “bang for buck” in fireworks – a quality fireworks show that stretches dollars spent over a longer display duration.

“Our line-up of Fireworks Kits starts at below \$30, and each assortment comes complete with fireworks, ignition tools, and a professionally sequenced firing order,” says Bialek. “For less than \$100, fireworks can entertain a backyard crowd, making them an affordable option for customers and a great year-round novelty item for C&G retailers.”

Ease of purchase, knowledge of regulatory requirements, and cautionary storage are key.

Bialek recommends C&G retailers purchase fireworks from a reputable source – preferably directly from an authorized importer or large-scale distributor. This is important to ensure that, in the event of an unforeseen incident, the retailer has full support and product liability coverage.

BLAST-OFF Fireworks has a team of regulatory specialists that can conduct a formal regulatory assessment for any retail site. They also offer retail customers a Client Toolbox retailer handbook, a self-guided training manual, as a “must-read” for any Canadian fireworks retailer. It provides additional information on best practices for selling fireworks in the Canadian marketplace.

“Convenience is paramount,” says Bialek. “Customers want to grab their case of soda, pack of hotdog buns, an assortment of fireworks, and head to their “main event,” whether that be the lake cottage, a birthday party, or a backyard cookout.”

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.

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BY ELIE Y. KATZ

MAXIMIZING PROFITABILITY WITH DATA-DRIVEN CONTROL: A STRATEGIC BLUEPRINT FOR RETAIL AND SERVICE ENTERPRISES

Overview

Managing a business without tapping into analytics is like navigating uncharted waters without a compass. This article explores how retail and service enterprises can harness sales insights and inventory control to drive significant profit growth. By embracing these tools, businesses can optimize operations, meet customer expectations, and outpace competitors.

Decoding Sales Insights

Sales insights form the backbone of any successful business. They offer a window into customer behavior, helping retailers with POS systems understand which items capture consumer interest. With these insights, you can adjust stock levels and refine marketing campaigns, eliminating guesswork from your decision-making process. Data transforms intuition into a measurable and actionable strategy.

For service-based businesses, sales analytics reveal which services resonate most with clients. You can craft tailored packages and incentives that appeal directly to your audience by analyzing service usage and customer preferences. Adding distinct features or extra value based on client

feedback sets your offerings apart. This proactive use of data attracts more customers and builds lasting relationships.

Revamping Inventory Control

Inventory control is more than managing physical

From stock levels to service schedules, integrated inventory management systems help businesses reduce waste, improve efficiency, and maximize profitability.

products on a shelf; it encompasses all your business resources. For retailers, sophisticated inventory management software monitors stock levels in real time, minimizes aged inventory, and automates routine tasks. Such systems reduce waste and errors while boosting overall efficiency and profitability.

Service-based companies also maintain an "inventory," including time slots, specialized equipment, or personnel hours. Effective resource management ensures optimal allocation of these assets. Like retailers forecasting product demand, service providers can predict when their services will be most needed and prepare accordingly. This forward-thinking approach helps you set competitive yet profitable prices, ensuring your resources are used where they are most effective.

Creating Synergy Between Data and Inventory

The real potential of these systems emerges when you integrate sales data with inventory management. Imagine launching a retail promotion for a high-demand product. While sales data confirms its popularity, your inventory system might reveal a low stock level. By synchronizing these insights, you can reorder items before the promotion goes live, ensuring you meet customer demand and avoid disappointing "out of stock" notices. This integrated approach boosts sales and builds customer trust.

In service industries, the integration works similarly. Consider a sought-after consulting session that attracts a surge in bookings. Sales

data identifies its high demand, while your scheduling system indicates the availability of top consultants. Coordinating these systems allows you to allocate the right experts during peak demand periods, maximizing appointment slots and enhancing the overall customer experience. As a result, your business enjoys increased revenue and elevated service satisfaction.

Automation plays a key role in this synergy. Both retail and service sectors can benefit from features that automatically trigger restocking or resource allocation when certain thresholds are reached. For instance, when a product's inventory falls below a designated level, an automatic order ensures that stock is replenished in time. Similarly, when demand for a service exceeds a >>

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preset limit, the system can prompt you to re-assign staff or expand resource capacity. These automated processes reduce human error and ensure operations run smoothly, saving time and driving efficiency.

Tailoring Approaches for Varied Business Models

Although retailers and service providers operate in different environments, both stand to gain from a data-driven strategy. Retailers with a strong physical presence can significantly enhance their operations

Whether managing stock or client relationships, leveraging data insights can optimize operations, boost customer loyalty, and drive profitability across business models.

by integrating a robust POS system with real-time inventory tracking software. This setup allows for immediate adjustments in

stock levels, identification of emerging trends, and creation of targeted promotional offers. Such responsiveness transforms occasional buyers into loyal customers and boosts overall profitability.

On the other hand, service-based businesses may find more value in integrating client relationship management (CRM) systems with advanced analytics platforms. These tools track critical performance metrics such as project duration, client satisfaction, and repeat business rates. Analyzing these data points, you can pinpoint operational inefficiencies and discover new opportunities to enhance service delivery. For example, if data shows that a specific service package is particularly popular within a niche market, you can develop customized packages with unique features that competitors do not offer.

Final Thoughts

Data is the fuel that drives modern business success. Whether you operate in the retail sector or provide professional services, mastering

sales insights, and inventory management is essential. By optimizing stock levels, refining service offerings, and automating routine processes, you can significantly enhance your profit margins and operational efficiency.

Embrace the power of your data and transform it into actionable strategies. You will meet and exceed customer expectations by putting informed decision-making at the heart of your operations. This will create a sustainable competitive advantage that propels your business forward, ensuring long-term growth and profitability. **■**

Elie Y. Katz is the president & CEO of National Retail Solutions (NRS), which operates thousands of point-of-sale terminals across the USA and Canada, offering NRS Pay credit card processing to small and mid-size independent retailers. For more information, visit NRSPlus online or call (888) 541-1073

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WHAT STAFF UNIFORMS SAY ABOUT YOUR BUSINESS

BY ANGELA ALTASS

The decision whether staff will wear uniforms, whether it be a branded shirt or something more elaborate, comes down to several factors, not the least of which is how many workers are employed at a business.

Some of the convenience stores who were contacted by *Convenience & Carwash Canada*, who preferred not to be mentioned by name, said their businesses didn't have enough employees to warrant uniforms.

A benefit of providing uniforms for members of your staff is presenting professional and consistent branding to your customers, says Janice Rudkowski, assistant professor, Ted Rogers School of Retail Management.

"It makes it easy for customers to identify staff as it makes them easily recognizable and can have an overall positive effect on the shopping experience," says Rudkowski. "It may enhance the customer's confidence in service and the retailer's overall image. Some employees may like it that they don't have to spend extra money on work clothes."

When choosing the best uniform for employees, Rudkowski advises getting input directly from the staff who will be wearing them.

"Ensure everything about the uniform, fabric, styling, colours, branding, and sourcing, aligns with your values and image," says Rudkowski. "Business owners should consider the inclusivity of sizing and styles that are appropriate for men and women as well as accessibility considerations for employees who may have special requirements. Fabrics should be durable but comfortable and uniforms need to be replaced often so that they don't look old or stained, which would stain the brand's image."

Shoppers at Domo locations in Western Canada will find employees easily identifiable by what they are wearing.

"Staff at Domo are easily identifiable with uniforms that remind guests of our Jump to the Pump full service," says Scott Cardno, senior vice president, marketing and merchandising, Domo Corporation Ltd., Winnipeg, Manitoba. "Our uniforms are our famous red Domo coveralls, paired with a red Domo hat and red Domo toque in the winter. Guests and people of



The decision to have staff wear uniforms, whether simple or elaborate, depends on factors like the number of employees.

>>

all ages recognize and love our red coveralls. We also have red track suits for managers and the choice of shorts and golf shirts in the summer months.”

Uniforms make employees easily identifiable to customers, which contributes toward improved customer satisfaction, says Scott Sibbet, vice president, retail operations, Gas King Oil Co. Ltd. In Lethbridge, Alberta.

“Our uniforms contribute to a cohesive look, ensuring that employees present a professional image to customers,” says Sibbet. “When selecting uniforms, we collaborate with our management team to ensure that the uniforms are comfortable while reinforcing Gas King’s brand by incorporating logos and colours that reflect our culture and values.”

Whether a store has staff wearing uniforms may tell customers about the size of the business and the number of employees. Receiving feedback from employees can help you make an informed decision regarding uniforms and whether they are the right choice for your business. **■**



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IT'S TIME TO REVIEW YOUR HR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES



It is crucial for all businesses to ensure that their HR policies and procedures are compliant with current employment legislation and regulations, especially small businesses with limited resources.

BY RENEE BOYDA

When HR policies are outdated with employment legislation, it subjects the business to legal risks that in turn could lead to expensive fines and damage to their reputation. A small business who faces these penalties may not recover.

Additionally, by having outdated policies, businesses can face:

- Security vulnerabilities
- Employee dissatisfaction and disengagement
- Wasted time, inefficiencies and ineffectiveness
- Lack of clarity and consistency
- Missed opportunities for innovation

Therefore, updating your HR policies and procedures can help your business succeed by:

1. Being compliant with changing employment laws.

Several provinces have instituted vast changes to their employment standards legislation (or will be in the near future). For example, Ontario has made numerous changes to its employment standards laws through its Working for Workers legislative series, with its sixth Working for Workers Act legislation introduced in November of 2024. Changes to pay transparency, Employment Standards Act maximum fines, tips payment and tips sharing, vacation pay agreements, regulations on artificial intelligence in >>

hiring processes, job posting rules, sick leave documentation, virtual harassment changes, and more are already in place. If the Working for Workers Six Act is passed, then a new parental leave, a new long-term illness leave, and many other changes will be forthcoming.

2. Aligning policies and procedures to changing organizational or industry standards.

Reviewing your HR policies and procedures will allow you to update them to match current strategies and goals, supporting growth and operational efficiency.

3. Mitigating risks and enhancing efficiency to deal with common workplace problems.

Have you ever encountered situations that seem to be re-occurring, or that have consumed more time than is necessary to reach a resolution? By updating policy, businesses can ensure that they have procedures in place and feel confident that existing “pain points” can be addressed quickly and consistently.

4. Upholding a respectful workplace.

Having updated policies and procedures in place to deal with conflict, harassment, discrimination, and safety provides a stronger security net to ensure a respectful workplace is maintained.

5. Improving employee experience and engagement.

By showing a commitment to continuous improvement through policy, it shows the employee that you value them, improves trust and retention.

6. Improving communication and understanding of responsibilities and expectations.

Well written and up-to-date policies and procedures provide a framework for managers and employees to tackle problems and prevent misunderstandings.

When reviewing your HR policies and procedures here are some tips to make the process as effective as possible:

1. Prepare ahead and do your research. Check your industry standards and competitor practices to stay competitive and relevant.
2. Read through your policies and procedures thoroughly and mark those that are no longer effective or need to be updated, refined or revised due to changes in organizational or industry standards. Collaborate with other managers and supervisors for input. Be mindful that if policy changes are perceived as unfair, unnecessary, too complex or too restrictive then you will face resistance from employees and managers.
3. Check to see if your policies are compliant with current employment laws and regulations. With so many changes that have been happening with employment legislation and regulations, attempting to align your policies can be especially difficult, so seek guidance from an HR professional.
4. Educate your managers, supervisor and employees on your policy and procedures to ensure understanding. Failure to properly communicate changes to your staff can lead to misunderstandings, lack of compliance and even increased conflict.
5. Monitor and evaluate your policies and procedures to assess effectiveness.

Businesses should review their HR policy and procedures every one to three years. But there are several other instances that trigger a review:

1. Changes to employment laws and regulations.
2. Organizational changes such as new internal processes, a change in ownership or leadership, changes in mission, vision and values, or changes in your strategic direction.
3. Repeated or significant policy violations or

non-compliance in general signals that a policy may be outdated, unclear or inadequate. It could also mean that it was not communicated properly.

4. Workplace incidents such as injuries, violence, structural or hazardous materials failures may be due to poorly written safety or operational policies and procedures. Again, make sure they are clearly communicated to staff.
5. When there are high turnover rates, absenteeism, or low employee engagement it could reflect ineffective policies or procedures.
6. Negative feedback from employees or managers, complaints or grievances about the policies and procedures requires a reassessment.

Keep in mind that a review does not necessarily mean that you are rewriting your entire policy manual and that reviewing policies does not automatically lead to policy changes. Keep in mind that an HR professional can help. If you need any assistance with this process or help on any other HR matter, you may consider reaching out to Legacy Bowes, where our team of HR experts can help your business maintain sound practices when it comes to people operations and management. **CB**

Renee Boyda is a human resources consultant with Legacy Bowes. Renee is a CPHR candidate, 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 focused on building HR structures and processes to create consistency and fairness in workplaces across Canada. Renee is a proud Metis, with over 12 years of human resource experience in both union and non-union environments. She can be reached at (204) 947-5525.





CONVENIENCE STORE LAYOUT: EIGHT DESIGN STRATEGIES THAT BOOST SALES AND IMPROVE THE SHOPPING EXPERIENCE

BY ROLAND FIGUERO

Convenience stores rely on getting customers what they need quickly and easily. A well-designed store layout is not only a key driver of sales but also a critical factor in customer satisfaction. So, what are the fundamentals of effective store design and layout for convenience stores? Here are eight strategies that enhance functionality, boost sales, and provide a seamless shopping experience.

1. Understand the Customer Journey

The customer journey begins the moment they step into the store.

- **First Impressions Matter:** The first few seconds can make a lasting impression on your customer. Invite them into your store with a clean, well-lit entry area. Displays near the entrance should feature high-margin or popular items to emphasize the ease of finding what they need quickly.
- **Traffic Flow:** Arrange aisles and displays to create a logical flow. Encourage customers to explore the store by guiding them through key sections, such as snacks, beverages, and grab-and-go items.
- **Zone:** Divide the store into zones based on product categories, such as fresh food, beverages, household essentials, and impulse buys. Clearly marked sections make navigation intuitive.

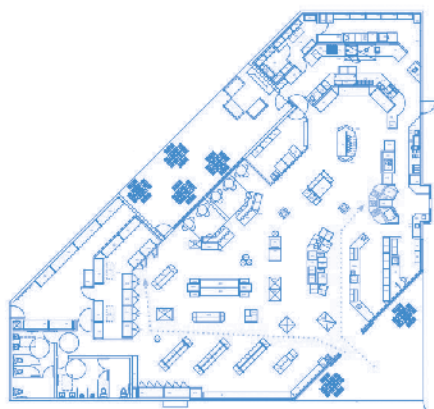
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2. Maximize Space Efficiency

Convenience stores typically have limited space, making efficient use of every square foot crucial.

- **Vertical Displays:** Vertical shelving increases storage and display capacity without expanding the footprint.
- **Compact Aisles:** Keep aisles wide enough for comfort but compact enough to encourage browsing. A width of three to four feet is generally ideal.
- **Multi-Use Fixtures:** Opt for fixtures that can dis-



By understanding the customer journey, optimizing space, and integrating modern technologies, store owners can create an environment that encourages repeat visits and boosts sales.

play a variety of products, allowing for quick reconfigurations to meet seasonal or promotional needs.

3. Strategic Product Placement

- Product placement is critical for driving sales.
- **Eye-Level Displays:** Place high-margin items at eye level to increase visibility and sales.
- **Impulse Zones:** Position impulse-buy items, such as candy and small gadgets, near checkout counters.
- **Cross-Merchandising:** Pair related products together – for example, placing chips near beverages—to encourage additional purchases.

4. Lighting and Ambiance

The ambiance of convenience stores significantly influences customer behavior. Proper lighting enhances product visibility and creates a welcoming atmosphere.

- **Bright and Even Lighting:** Avoid dark spots and ensure shelves and displays are well-lit.
- **Highlight Key Areas:** Use accent lighting to draw attention to promotions or premium products.
- **Mood Setting:** Incorporate warm lighting in areas like coffee stations to create a cozy moment.

5. Technology Integration

Modern technology is not just a tool, but a catalyst for growth in the retail industry. It can enhance the shopping experience and streamline operations, opening up new possibilities for your convenience store.

- **Digital Signage:** Use digital screens for dynamic displays of promotions, product information, or store updates.
- **Self-Checkout Stations:** These reduce wait times and free up staff for other tasks.
- **Data Analytics:** Leverage data to understand customer preferences and adjust layouts and inventory accordingly.

6. Accessibility and Inclusivity

An inclusive design is a cornerstone of convenience store layout, ensuring that all customers feel welcome and can access what they need regardless of their abilities or needs.

- **ADA Compliance:** Ensure aisles, counters, and entrances are accessible to individuals with disabilities.
- **Clear Signage:** Use large, readable fonts and universal symbols for navigation.
- **Family-Friendly Features:** Include amenities such as baby-changing stations or kid-friendly product displays.

7. Seasonal and Promotional Adjustments

Flexibility is key in adapting to seasonal trends or promotional events.

- **Seasonal Displays:** Rotate displays to highlight holiday or seasonal items, keeping the store fresh and engaging.
- **Limited-Time Offers:** Use endcaps to showcase time-sensitive promotions or new arrivals.
- **Event-Driven Themes:** Align displays with local events or cultural celebrations to resonate with the community.

8. Enhance Checkout Efficiency

The checkout area is often the last impression of your store. Make it count.

- **Streamlined Counters:** Keep the counter clutter-free and ensure all essential equipment is within easy reach for staff.
- **Speed and Convenience:** Offer multiple payment options, including contactless methods.
- **Engaging Displays:** Use checkout counters for last-minute impulse buys, like gum, snacks, or small electronics.



Conclusion

Effective convenience store design combines aesthetics, functionality, and customer-centric strategies. By understanding the customer journey, optimizing space, and integrating modern technologies, store owners can create an environment that encourages repeat visits and boosts sales. Remember, a well-thought-out layout is not just about selling products but also about building a positive shopping experience. **■**

Roland Figueredo is the director of business development with King Retail Solutions (KRS). He has been with KRS since 2019 and has over 20 years of retail industry experience. With a degree in Marketing and Business Management from TCNJ, Roland developed a passion for retail very early on in his career. Roland acted as marketing director for brands such as Calvin Klein, IZOD, and Van Heusen. Throughout his tenure, he was responsible for overseeing and implementing countless in-store and merchandising solutions and bringing keen insight on branding communication. He can be reached at Roland.Figueredo@kingrs.com, 541-214-8908, www.kingrs.com.

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SCROLLING THROUGH THE SUDS: **BUILDING CARWASH SOCIAL CAMPAIGNS (PART I)**

BY MEL OHLINGER



Social media is an affordable way to engage customers and grow your carwash – strategic posts make all the difference.

Social media is a total game-changer for carwashes – and, hands down, the most affordable way to advertise. Love it or hate it, social media isn't going anywhere in 2025. It's become part of doing business, and having a social media presence is pretty much non-negotiable if you want to stay competitive in the carwash market. The way you market your carwash is constantly evolving (just like the platforms themselves), and staying on top of those changes can make all the difference—especially when it comes to reaching local customers who aren't part of your estimated traffic counts.

What makes social media advertising so affordable is that social media profiles are free to create. Anyone can sign up and start posting. Plus, with all the new and accessible cloud-based design tools, creating professional posts that make sense and look good has never been easier. Creating engaging content is another conversation – one that requires some serious thought and time. That's another story. It takes strategy, creativity, and a little bit of effort. As they say, quality over quantity.

At a minimum, throwing up the occasional post across your channels tells your customers that your business is still alive and ticking but if you want to actually grow your audience and attract new customers, a random photo of your wash on a busy day or a quick Canva graphic for a holiday won't cut it. You need a plan. A well-thought-out strategy that makes your posts stand out from all the noise. That's where a social media campaign comes in. A great campaign makes your message clear, grabs attention, and—most importantly—gets results. So, how do you put together a social media campaign that actually works?

Plan Your Campaign

Whether you're a manufacturer who is rolling out a new product or an operator who wants to bulk up monthly memberships, the general tactic behind planning a campaign is largely the same. Try to follow these steps.

- 1. Define Your Objectives:** The first step in planning a social media campaign is to define clear objectives. What do you want to achieve? Are you looking to increase brand awareness, drive membership sign-ups, promote a seasonal offer, or boost customer engagement? Your campaign should have a specific, measurable goal. For example, instead of saying, "we want more memberships," a better objective would be, "Increase our carwash memberships by 3 per cent over the next 30 days." This clarity is the secret sauce that will help guide your content and overall strategy. And, while you might not hit those goals during your first few campaigns, narrowing down that desired metric is key to staying on topic and on target.
- 2. Define the length of your campaign:** On a calendar, plot out how many days, weeks, or months and which days your campaign will run. This gives you and/or your team an outline to build content towards. When building promotional campaigns that have a set date, like a holiday, we will schedule several "lead-up" posts prior to the event (typically two to three weeks ahead of time), one or two "day of" posts, and at least one "follow up" post to round out the campaign and thank supporters or followers who participated.
- 3. Build your content:** With your outline in place, building content becomes a little easier. Stay within the confines of the campaign and do your best to brand designs consistently across the entire length of it. Additionally, creating clear start and stop points on either end of the campaign creates a feeling of finality once the campaign has expired, signaling a return to "regular programming" in your social feeds. >>



This image features a standout post from Petit's carwash manufacturer campaign. Its 'unpolished' feel grabbed attention on social media, helping foster camaraderie between technicians and service providers while driving traffic to their SCWA booth.

4. **Digest your metrics:** You don't need a data science degree or a deep understanding of granular analytics to check in on the success of your campaign. Sometimes the tools built into the social media platforms are enough to get an educated glance at what worked and what didn't work. Take note of posts within the campaign that received a spike in engagement or impressions and try to identify what worked in the design or the content that resonated with your audience. Look at the time of day that your posts went out to identify when your followers are most active, and delve into your demographic information to help shape your next campaign.

On To the Next One

Engagement with your campaign is a fleeting thing, but the life-cycle of the content that you made doesn't have to be. One of the biggest mistakes we see across the industry and across social media management as a whole,

is discarding content after it's been used.

When your campaign wraps up, don't let all that awesome content you made go to waste. Give your top-performing posts a second life by repurposing them – find new ways to make them shine! Here are some easy ways to recycle some of your hard work:

1. **Build a blog:** Write a mini blog (~600 words) and host it on your website re-counting some of the details of your campaign. If the campaign included an event at your business, attach some photos or testimonials of customers that attended.
2. **Send out an email blast:** If you have a customer list, consider recycling some of your social media content and send out a mass email recapping the campaign.
3. **Recycle individual posts:** Refresh the captions on your post and reuse the graphics or video you built on a future post. This not only saves some time in the design process, but hits new follower's feeds with content they may not have seen in the past.

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Mel Ohlinger is the CEO of OhmCo, a leading carwash marketing agency based in Wisconsin. With over 20 years in marketing, design, and web development, she's a creative force in the industry. A former cryptologic technician for the NSA, Mel's background in Morse code and precision laid the groundwork for her expertise in branding and strategy.

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ISTOBAL Celebrates 75 Years of Innovation and Growth

BY MELINE BEACH

Celebrating 75 years of innovation, ISTOBAL S.A. has established itself as a global leader in the design, manufacture, and marketing of vehicle wash and care solutions.



top: Bristol, Virginia
bottom: West Coast San Diego, California.

While the company's roots are in Spain, its impact in the U.S. is a testament to how decades of expertise, adaptation, and forward-thinking innovation can shape a market.

Expanding to the U.S.

The immense potential of the North American carwash sector, particularly in the commercial segment, drove the decision to expand into the U.S. ISTOBAL recognized the chance to offer a new, but well-established alternative in carwash solutions as the market presented a unique opportunity for the company to showcase its well-engineered products, exceptional service, and dedication to the carwash experience.

ISTOBAL first entered the North American market through a distributorship but it didn't take long for the company to realize that there was an opportunity, and a need, to establish a larger presence. As a result, the company established ISTOBAL USA, a subsidiary of ISTOBAL S.A., in 2009. With continued growth, the company required a larger space, more employees, and a dedicated facility to support the North American market. In 2011, ISTOBAL USA found its home in Bristol, Virginia, where it remains today in a 125,000 sq. ft. facility that designs, builds, and ships across North America.

This manufacturing facility enabled ISTOBAL to customize equipment for the U.S. market, improve support, and reduce shipping times. In 2021, the company expanded again by acquiring one of their distributors in San Marcos, California. This move helped ISTOBAL expand in the Pacific region, leading to new partnerships and better factory service.

"Adaptation, dedication, and a customer service mindset are what sets us apart from many of our competitors," says Ian Burton, North American Director of Sales at ISTOBAL USA. "We listen to what our customers need and to what's happening in the carwash industry."

ISTOBAL's expansion to the U.S. not only strengthened its global footprint but also reinforced its commitment to technological advancement, sustainability, and superior customer service. As ISTOBAL celebrates its 75th anniversary milestone, its legacy of knowledge and continuous improvement continues to drive the development of cutting-edge equipment that redefines the carwash experience that we know today.

Continuous investment in research and development drives ISTOBAL's ability to deliver advanced solutions, reinforcing its position as a leader in the carwash industry. Over the past 18 months, ISTOBAL USA has focused on developing and refining equipment tailored to the unique needs of >>

North American operators. Key advancements, such as the M'WASH PRO rolover and T'BRUSH tunnel module, respond to industry demand for flexible and high-performance systems.

"Researching the shortfalls of current equipment, even our own, leads us to develop niche products that overcome current limitations to meet customers' needs," says Burton. "This is what led ISTOBAL USA to develop our extended-height and extended-width rolover options and launch the T'BRUSH tunnel module, bridging the gap between traditional rollovers and the high cost of express tunnels to better serve the diverse needs of customers."

Burton adds, "As ISTOBAL USA charts its course forward, it remains steadfast in its mission to deliver cutting-edge carwash solutions that empower operators and elevate the customer experience.

utilitarian in focus."

ISTOBAL USA benefits from engineering most of its equipment to meet European standards and norms, which often prioritize the highest levels of efficiency and sustainability.

"This means that our equipment generally uses less water, less power, and less chemicals than equipment designed in less sustainability-focused markets," says Burton. "For us, we try to find the middle ground between our European roots and American expectations. We have European-engineered efficiency, along with the opportunity to customize our customers' equipment and site to match their customers' expectations."

The ability to blend European efficiency with American consumer expectations has become one of ISTOBAL USA's greatest strengths. The company offers highly customizable equipment, allowing operators to



Istobal in the 1960's

Balancing European Roots with American Expectations

ISTOBAL's Spanish roots have shaped its approach to carwash technology, focusing on minimizing water, energy, and chemical usage. Sustainability is a core principle for ISTOBAL, and while the parent company provides a global framework, ISTOBAL USA continues to invest in local technological advancements. As a result, the two markets have distinct expectations for their carwash solutions.

"Here in the U.S., we expect a show – lights, signage, and even scents," says Burton. "However, the same expectation is not there for most European customers. The approach there seems to be much more

tailor their systems to meet specific market demands while maintaining the sustainability benefits of ISTOBAL's engineering expertise.

By staying attuned to industry trends and listening to customer feedback, ISTOBAL USA continues to refine its offerings to align with the evolving needs of carwash operators across the U.S.

Supporting Local Economies

ISTOBAL USA's impact extends beyond the carwash bay. The company embraces the philosophy of "thinking globally, acting locally", ensuring that its innovations not only benefit individual operators but also contribute to broader environmental and economic initiatives.



Production floor at head office: Bristol, VA



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- 2) AU energy site with M'Wash Pro: National City, CA
- 3) MotoMart site with M'Wash Pro: St. Louis, MO
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- 5) M'Wash Pro at Mountain City Suds: Mountain City, TN
- 6) M'Wash Pro XL at Rove Energy: Santa Ana, CA
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- 9) Simi Petroleum site with M'Wash Pro: Simi Valley, CA
- 10) M'Wash Pro at Spray & Shine: Liberty, KY

"Our commitment to community impact is primarily manifested through a global focus on environmental responsibility and local economic support," says Burton. "As pioneers in sustainable carwash solutions, we develop integrated technologies that significantly reduce water, chemical, and energy consumption. This global thinking translates into local action by helping our clients – carwash operators in various communities – to run more environmentally friendly businesses."

Burton adds, "Moreover, we strive to support local economies by working with local vendors and small businesses whenever possible. This approach stimulates economic activity in the communities where our products are used and our employees live."

In the workplace, ISTOBAL USA is committed to creating a safe and healthy environment for employees worldwide. This commitment extends beyond their immediate team to include the end-users of their products, ensuring that carwash operators and their customers benefit from safe, efficient, and environmentally friendly equipment.

Looking to the Future

As ISTOBAL USA looks ahead, its focus on continuous innovation, market expansion, and customer value ensures it will remain a trusted partner for carwash operators. With 75 years of experience, ISTOBAL leverages cutting-edge technology to deliver high returns for carwash businesses and a fast, convenient experience for users. Inspired by technological progress, the company has proven its ability to expand and evolve with market demands while staying true to its roots. Here's to 75 years of excellence – and many more to come! 🇺🇸

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.

Production floor at head office: Bristol, VA



WHY AST SYSTEMS MAKE SENSE FOR REMOTE REFUELING LOCATIONS

BY STEVE STEWART

According to Worldometer, an aggregator of facts and data about the size and scope of the world and its population, Canada is the world's fourth-largest country by area with just more than nine million square kilometers (3.5 million square miles). This trails Russia (16.3 million km²/6.3 million mi²), and is close behind China (9.4 million km²/3.6 million mi²) and the United States (9.2 million km²/3.5 million mi²).

At the same time, Canada ranks 38th in terms of population amongst the world's countries with 39.7 million inhabitants, right between Yemen (40.6 million) and Poland (38.5 million). Interestingly, though, while Yemen and Poland have population densities – measured as the number of people per square kilometer – of 77 and 126, respectively, Canada's population density is a mere four people per square kilometer, lower than all but four other countries (Greenland, Mongolia, Western Sahara and Australia). For further comparison, the world's five most populous countries – India, China, the U.S., Indonesia



and Pakistan – have population densities ranging from 38 (the U.S.) to 488 (India).

What makes Canada's large size and relatively low population even more notable is the fact that the majority of the country's largest cities and their populations are located within 200 kilometers (120 miles) of the U.S. border. That means there are vast swaths of the country that are dotted by small, isolated municipalities that can be situated many hours or even days from the nearest town, village or hamlet.

Besides their remoteness, what these places have in common is they are all home to a population that requires an infrastructure that can reliably supply life's basic necessities like shelter, food, water and heat.

Serving A Unique Niche

To that list, you can add motor fuel used to power private automobiles, municipal vehicles, school buses and farm equipment, among others. Doing so, however, is not as easy as plopping a gasoline station on the nearest open corner. While the highly populated parts of Canada are able to support a traditional retail-fueling operation with a convenience store, vehicle wash and underground storage tanks (USTs) storing the fuel, that kind of setup is not feasible in most remote locations.

The main reason is that there is just not enough daily business to justify an operation that features an on-site staff to serve the drivers that may come in for a fill-up. Also, the cold weather that is endemic to the northernmost reaches of the country can make it difficult and costly to install USTs where permafrost might be present, as well as having someone close at hand to service, inspect, maintain and repair a UST-based fueling operation.

To overcome these obstacles, retail-fueling operators in remote areas of the

country have turned to fueling systems that feature above-ground storage tanks (ASTs) for fuel storage and dispensing. The AST is the center of a self-contained turnkey system built on a slab outfitted with a fuel dispenser with either one or two hoses, a card reader, a pumping and metering infrastructure system, and supplied electricity and Internet service. Some operators, especially those that may service multiple agricultural operations, have created what are called "mobility tank nests." These setups put the dispenser system on a mobile skid that is strapped to a flatbed truck so that it can be taken anywhere an AST may be located and then hooking it up and dispensing the fuel as needed before moving on to the next site.

What all types of AST-based fueling systems have in common is that they need to be compliant with the CSA B139 Series code that governs the "installation of large oil-burning equipment." Specifically, CSA B139 lists the minimum requirements for installing or altering a wide array of equipment, including "underground supply tanks, aboveground outdoor tanks and aboveground tanks installed inside of buildings."

Choosing The Right Outfit

Realizing the demand for safe, efficient, reliable and CSA B139-compliant motor-fuel storage and dispensing in the isolated reaches of Canada, OPW Retail Fueling ("OPW"), a global leader in fluid-handling solutions, located in Smithfield, NC, USA, has developed a full portfolio of equipment that can be used to outfit an AST-based fueling operation.

Every one of these systems requires an overfill-prevention >>



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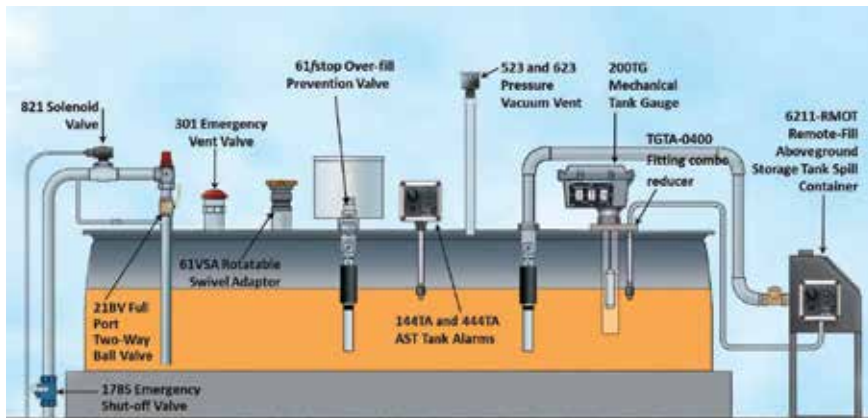


To learn more, visit us at
opwglobal.com/opw-retail-fueling

valve, and OPW has stepped to the forefront with its 61fSTOP Overfill-Prevention Valve, which has been designed to prevent overfilling of ASTs during pressurized fuel delivery. The 61fSTOP is fully adjustable, which allows for easy installation in new or existing AST setups with various heights and storage capacities. When the AST's liquid level rises to a predetermined capacity, the single-action valve mechanism automatically closes to halt fuel flow while any excess product that is left between the valve and fuel-delivery coupler is drained into the tank via internal secondary drain valves.

Other components joining the 61fSTOP in the portfolio of OPW AST products include:

- **Spill Containers:** The 6211-RMOT and 6221 AST Storage Tank models have been designed to protect the environment by preventing spilled product that may occur during normal AST-filling operations from reaching and contaminating any surrounding soil and groundwater.
- **Vents & Vent Caps:** These components combine to prevent an AST from becoming over-pressurized and vent lines from becoming blocked by debris. The 301 Series AST Emergency Vent is a weighted, mushroom-style emergency vent. When the AST builds pressure, the weighted



OPW-RF AST schematic

cast-iron lid is forced up off its seat to relieve the pressure. When pressure is relieved, the lid lowers and is automatically reset.

- **Fuel-Dispensing Nozzles, Swivels & Breakaways:** OPW offers complete lines of nozzles, swivels and breakaways, from pressure-sensitive to automatic shutoff in the hanging-hardware product category. All of these components are designed and engineered with ruggedness in mind, which means they should be able to satisfy the demands of the most

remote AST-based fueling operation. The 11B Automatic Nozzle is a workhorse in this area, while OPW also offers cold-weather-approved nozzles for use in the most trying climates.

- **Mechanical Tank Gauges:** The 200TG Tank Gauge is designed to read liquid levels in both horizontal and vertical ASTs with an accurate numerical-counter readout, which eliminates the need for on-site manual gauging.
- **Anti-Siphon Valves:** The 199ASV Anti-Siphon Valve helps prevent the siphoning of

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OPW-RF AST installation

fuel in an AST should a leak or break occur in the fuel-supply line. The valve installs on the top of the AST with a suction rod on the inlet and the fuel-supply line, which runs to a remote fuel pump, on the outlet of the valve.

- **Ball Valves:** The 21BV Full-Port Ball Valve is used where a shut-off point is needed to isolate a section of piping. These forged-brass valves feature a manual open-close

arm and a quick-turn handle, allowing for easy shutdown of the AST system.

- **Emergency Shut-Off Valves:** The 178S Series External Shut-Off Valve is installed on the fuel-supply piping and is designed to halt product flow from an AST or any place in the fuel-supply line in the event a fire should occur. A fusible link attached to a spring-operated lever holds the poppet normally open. In the event of a fire, the fusible link melts at 160°F (71°C), allowing the spring-actuated poppet to interrupt the flow of fuel in the supply line.
- **Fuel-Delivery Couplings:** Designed to safely connect fuel-delivery transport truck hoses or nozzles to the fill pipe of an AST.
- **Automatic Fire Extinguisher System:** This small, non-rechargeable fire extinguisher is installed in a containment sump underneath an AST and fuel dispenser and will extinguish a fuel fire in the event of a dispenser knockover. The extinguishing agent is automatically discharged when the surrounding temperature reaches 175°F (79°C).

Additionally, larger ASTs may require tank alarms. In this instance, OPW offers the 444TA Four-Signal Tank Alarm, which is designed to

sense up to four different liquid levels, and the 144TA Liquid-Level Tank Alarm, designed for liquid-level sensing.

Conclusion

“Remote” doesn’t mean “forgotten,” so it is imperative that Canada’s most removed municipalities are served the same as those larger cities closer to the border. When it comes to motor-fuel supply and dispensing, AST-based systems have risen to the fore as a great way to bring refueling to isolated areas of the country without incurring high overhead costs regarding staffing and the construction and installation of a UST-based fueling system. To help ease the burden, OPW has developed complete lines of AST equipment that help enable the operators of remote fueling locations to optimize their operations while ensuring that a steady supply of fuel can be safely, efficiently and reliably dispensed into the fuel tanks of the residents of even the most sparsely populated areas of the country. **■**

Steve Stewart is the senior Canadian & Caribbean sales manager for OPW, based in Toronto Canada. He can be reached at steve.stewart@opwglobal.com. For more information on OPW, go to opwglobal.com.

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ANNOUNCEMENT

Sonny's Enterprises Announces Retirement of Chairman and Former CEO Paul Fazio



Tamarac, FL – **Sonny's Enterprises recently announced the planned retirement of Paul Fazio**, board chairman. This marks the culmination of his extraordinary career in the carwash industry, which spanned more than four decades.

A visionary leader, Fazio was instrumental in shaping both Sonny's Enterprises and the broader carwash industry. His steadfast commitment to the company's employees and clients drove unprecedented growth and helped elevate the entire industry.

"I started in this industry in 1981, working with my father," said Fazio. "Together with our incredible team, we grew Sonny's from a small parts company into the global leader in conveyerized carwash equipment and supplies. Our mission was to make car washing easy, and we were able to achieve that. It's been a wild ride, and I wouldn't change a thing."

Chief Executive Officer Curt Hutchins expressed appreciation for Fazio's leadership: "Paul's vision and unwavering dedication to Sonny's, our customers, and the entire carwash community have been the driving forces behind our tremendous growth. His legacy will continue to inspire us as we build on the strong foundation he created."

The board of directors also commended Fazio's impact: "Paul's leadership has been essential in transforming Sonny's into the industry leader it is today. His commitment to customers and his lasting influence on the organization is deeply appreciated, and we are thankful for his extraordinary contributions."

Fazio, who previously served as the company's CEO before transitioning to chairman, will remain a significant shareholder. Fazio's retirement represents the pinnacle of his distinguished career, and Sonny's remains dedicated to upholding the values and vision that have defined his leadership.

CICC Responds to FAO Report on Beverage Alcohol Sales in Ontario

The Financial Accountability Office of Ontario (FAO) has released a report that estimates the financial impact to the Government of Ontario of the decision to expand Ontario's beverage alcohol marketplace for beer, wine, cider and ready-to-drink alcohol beverages, including the cost to accelerate that expansion to begin in 2024.

The FAO estimates that expanding the beverage alcohol marketplace in Ontario will result in a net cost to the province of \$1.4 billion over the term of the early implementation agreement, which expires on December 31, 2030. Of the \$1.4 billion net cost, the FAO estimated that \$817 million relates to the planned expansion of the beverage alcohol marketplace on January 1, 2026, and \$612 million relates to the decision to accelerate that expansion to begin in 2024.

The Convenience Industry Council of Canada (CICC), which represents corner store distributors, manufacturers, and retailers across Ontario, has provided the following statement in response to a report from the Financial Accountability Officer. The statement is attributable to Anne Kothawala, President & CEO of the Convenience Industry Council of Canada:

"The Ontario government's modernization of the beverage alcohol market gives consumers what they've demanded for years – increased choice, and convenience. It has been a game changer for our stores. Year-over-year comparisons of December 2023 and December 2024 suggest average sales increases of 15 per cent, with many of our members crediting beverage alcohol expansion in Ontario for this needed boost to be competitive. Our store operators are excited to finally offer this product to customers and see the increased foot traffic from this move.

The report ignores the research about the impact of expansion on job creation and additional

taxation into the provincial coffers. According to economic research conducted by Cascadia Partners for CICC, up to 7,900 new jobs will be created, amounting to \$193M annually in new wages. An additional \$200 million annually will go to provincial coffers in tax revenues related to direct consumer purchases, employment taxes and taxes related to the \$173M in capital expenditures our stores are making. Beverage alcohol expansion has benefitted consumers, corner stores, and provincial coffers.

There remains room for improvement to ensure that local corner stores see the full benefit of this policy. While we actively work with government partners to ensure Ontario's alcohol regime is working for everyone, expanded sales have been critically important for local businesses across the province, and we're optimistic about what is to come."

The \$1.4 billion net cost projected by the FAO report consists of \$489 million in support to Ontario's wine industry and Brewers Retail Inc., \$1,280 million in lower tax revenues, primarily for beer, wine and spirits taxes, and \$14 million in other expenses. These costs are partially offset by a \$353 million increase in LCBO net income, largely related to increased wholesale activity.

The actual financial cost to the province will depend on how retailers and consumers respond to the expanded marketplace. The cost would be lower than projected by the FAO if the marketplace expansion results in higher per-capita alcohol consumption. The cost would be higher if more grocery and convenience stores participate and capture a larger than expected market share or consumers shift their purchases to new retailers more quickly than projected. After accounting for these and other factors, the FAO estimated that the financial cost to the province could range from \$529 million to \$1.9 billion to December 31, 2030.

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WHAT'S NEW



Dave Dougherty

OPW Vehicle Wash Solutions Announces Retirement of Keith Moye and Appointment of David Dougherty as New VWS Vice President

OPW Vehicle Wash Solutions has announced that David Dougherty will assume the role of vice president and general manager of OPW VWS, effective immediately. Dougherty brings 28 years of experience in a variety of leadership positions in the PDQ business, having most recently served as GM of PDQ, a brand within VWS.

"David has deep industry experience and he has done a fantastic job managing PDQ, expanding its leadership in the In-Bay-Automatic space," said Kevin Long, president of OPW. "I'm confident that his industry and his management expertise will position him well in his new role."

David will succeed Keith Moye, who will retire effective April 30, 2025. Following an accomplished career spanning 16 years at OPW, Moye leaves behind a legacy of leadership, innovation, and dedication to the company's mission.

"It has been an honour to be part of OPW and work alongside such an incredible team," said Moye. "I am proud of what we have accomplished together, and I have full confidence that David Dougherty will lead the VWS business to new heights."

Dougherty and Moye will work closely together over the upcoming months to ensure a smooth leadership transition. In his new role, Dougherty will focus on bringing holistic, innovative and growth-oriented solutions leveraging the strong VWS brands, ensuring continued success and growth for our customers and VWS.

"I look forward to working with the VWS team to drive further innovation and deliver exceptional value to our customers," said Dougherty.

To get in touch with David Dougherty and connect with him on LinkedIn, visit www.linkedin.com/in/david-dougherty-26399410/.

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

National Carwash Solutions (NCS) Launches 2025 Training Schedule and Expands Online Course Offerings

Grimes, IA – National Carwash Solutions (NCS) proud to announce the launch of its 2025 College of Clean Training Schedule. This year's program includes an expanded lineup of online courses and a diverse range of in-person training opportunities hosted at the NCS headquarters in Grimes, IA.

Facility Updates at NCS Headquarters in Grimes, IA

NCS proudly offers the industry's largest and most comprehensive training facility, enhancing the experience bay to equip operators with essential education, hands-on experience, and technical expertise.

Here's what you'll find in our experience bay:

- Two upgraded 100-foot tunnels
- Newly added fleet wash system
- Two in-bay automatics (Soft Gloss Maxx and Radius)
- A connected system setup showcasing integrated components
- An outdoor vacuum area
- An updated backroom solutions area

What is New for 2025?

The 2025 training schedule introduces more flexibility and variety, offering both in-person and online options:

- **Expanded Online Courses:** Designed for convenience, these modules make advanced learning accessible anytime, anywhere.
- **Comprehensive In-Person Training:** Hosted at the NCS headquarters in

Grimes, IA, these sessions focus on hands-on learning and expert-led discussions.

In-Person Courses at NCS Headquarters

- **Tunnel Maintenance Course:** A deep dive into the operations and upkeep of tunnel systems.
- **Cleaning Solutions Course:** Covering advanced cleaning techniques and product knowledge.
- **Rollover Courses:** For professionals focused on mastering rollover systems.
- **Car Wash Management Course:** Ideal for those looking to refine their leadership and business skills in the carwash industry.

"Our mission has always been to provide top-tier education to carwash professionals," said Justine Johnson, Director of Marketing. "The addition of online courses and our comprehensive in-person offerings ensures we're meeting the needs of a diverse audience while setting new standards for professional growth in the industry."

Why Attend College of Clean?

- **Expert Instruction:** Led by industry veterans with real-world experience.
- **Hands-On Learning:** Gain practical skills in state-of-the-art facilities.
- **Flexible Options:** Choose from online modules or immersive in-person courses.
- **Career Growth:** Equip yourself with certifications and skills that make a difference.

Register Today

Spots are limited, and early registration is encouraged. Visit NCS College of Clean to explore the full schedule and reserve your spot.



Birthday Cake 5-hour Energy

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5-hour Energy wanted to do something special to celebrate its 20th birthday in Canada. Each 57 ml shot delivers 200mg of caffeine, B-vitamins, and nutrients to help keep you feeling alert for your party – all with zero sugar.



Gasboy Introduces AtlasX Series of Dispensers for Next-Generation Commercial and Retail Fueling

Greensboro, North Carolina — Gasboy, a Vontier company, and industry leader in fleet fueling technology solutions, is pleased to introduce its new AtlasX Series of next-generation dispensers for commercial and retail fleet fueling.

The new AtlasX Series includes a range of commercial and retail dispensers that meet the full scope of fleet refueling and fuel management needs:

AtlasX PRIME Integrated Fuel Control and Dispenser

- AtlasX 9800G Series Electronic Dispenser
- AtlasX 9100G Series Mechanical Dispenser
- AtlasX 8800G Retail Dispenser
- AtlasX 9850G Ultra-Hi Flow Series Dispenser
- AtlasX 9862G Diesel Exhaust Fluid (DEF) Dispenser
- AtlasX 9216G Series Satellite Dispenser
- AtlasX 8850G Retail Ultra-Hi Flow Dispenser
- AtlasX 8862 Diesel Exhaust Fluid (DEF) Retail Dispenser

AtlasX dispensers are part of Gasboy's comprehensive range of products designed to meet the evolving needs of fleets and fleet-fueling retailers. With the ability to efficiently dispense gasoline, diesel, and biofuels — including B20 and B100 — the AtlasX family of dispensers deliver futureproof fueling to help fleets meet their decarbonization goals. Setting a new standard for centralized, optimized, and efficient commercial refueling, the AtlasX dispensers are robustly engineered to deliver reliable, accurate and user-friendly refueling.

"This modern platform leverages the strengths of our legacy Atlas and Encore brands to provide fleets with a comprehensive selection of models and configurations that will position them for a future of reliable and lower carbon refueling," said Nate Valaik, Director of Sales for Gasboy. "This next-generation family of heavy-duty dispensers will withstand challenging fuel environments, help maximize efficiency, and lower your carbon footprint."

Key features of the AtlasX 9800G Series Electronic Dispenser and 8800G Series Retail Dispenser include:

- Gasboy 4 piston PD V10 Meter reduces calibration drift
- Continued use of market-tested, reliable painted steel and stainless-steel panel construction options

- Encore Electronics platform provides the foundation for future applications (remote diagnostics, remote software updates, secure payments)

Enhancements to the 9100G Mechanical Dispenser include:

- Precise measurement mechanics and flow control features prevent fuel loss
- LED strip backlighting increases visibility
- Easy access panels and large hydraulic frame provide access to 4 sides of the unit

AtlasX 9850G and 8850G Series Dispensers:

- Deliver ultra-high flow capacity fueling
- Are available in electronic dispensers and master / satellite combo models

AtlasX 9216G Series Satellite Dispensers:

- Are an ideal companion to the AtlasX high-flow and ultra-high-flow master dispensers
- Feature painted galvanized steel panels for enhanced durability

Cold weather and warm weather models of the 8862G & 9862G DEF Dispenser:

- Leverage the same system interfaces as Gasboy's standard Atlas dispenser to seamlessly integrate with existing Gasboy fleet management system and applications

AtlasX PRIME Integrated Fuel Control and Dispensers:

- Integrates the Gasboy authorization terminal into the AtlasX electronic dispenser platform enabling complete fleet management directly at the pump
- Features a large, user-friendly 40-key full alphanumeric keypad and a 4.3" high-brightness LCD color screen
- Includes a MiFare contactless reader and an insert magnetic card reader, with an optional HID reader for multiple authorization methods

AtlasX dispensers with modern components, web connectivity, and easy software updates support enhanced remote management capabilities that streamline maintenance and maximize uptime.

For assistance locating a certified Gasboy distributor, visit gasboy.com/us/distributor-locator.

For more information about Gasboy's AtlasX dispensers, visit [AtlasX Next-Generation Commercial and Retail Fueling | Gasboy](#).



UNITI expo 2026: Charting a Path for Growth

An overview of what to expect for the next edition of Europe's leading trade fair for the service station and carwash industries

As preparations for the next edition of UNITI expo gain momentum, the leading service station and carwash trade fair in Europe promises to pave the way for the sector's growth through its constant evolution.

Within its decade-long tradition, UNITI expo 2026 will again take place in Halls 1, 3, and 5 of Messe Stuttgart on 19–21 May 2026. The 40,000 m² exhibition space will showcase the best the service station and carwash industries have to offer – a true gateway to the future.

Leading companies will present cutting-edge solutions poised to reshape the sector, tackling key issues such as the emergence of multi-energy, multi-service hubs and the carwash of tomorrow. The event's comprehensive conference program will engage attendees through expert-led panels covering the latest trends, evolving market dynamics, and innovative strategies.

The Future Mobility Lounge also plays a pivotal role in the evolution of UNITI expo. The themed pavilion dedicated to the topic of 'alternative fuels' will be expanded in 2026 and will offer exciting new features.

"The success of the last edition underscored exhibitors' enthusiasm for showcasing pioneering concepts, reaffirming UNITI expo's role as a key hub for the industry's ongoing transformation. As an association, our primary goal is to provide our members with opportunities to remain relevant during this evolution, and we are committed to delivering on that promise with the next installment," states Elmar Kühn, managing director of UNITI Services GmbH and event organizer.

Networking remains a pillar of the event, offering opportunities to foster collaboration and new partnerships to address key challenges. Various gatherings throughout the trade fair, including the UNITI expo networking party and stand parties, will create the ideal environment for exchanging valuable insights and promoting international cooperation.

UNITI expo is back on 19–21 May 2026. With the booking process in full swing, constantly updated information for exhibitors and visitors can be found at www.uniti-expo.com.

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