

Corner View March 2022



Norman Hower
CICC Board Member and 7-Eleven Canada's Vice President & General Manager

As Canadians emerge from two years of COVID-19 restrictions and routine changes, all of us are eager to resume activities we enjoyed prior to the pandemic.

The transition will be slow, but commuting to the office, taking road trips, and once again visiting with family and friends will return as we navigate our way through the emerging new normal.

For convenience stores, who have weathered the pandemic storm, this presents a fantastic opportunity to provide new and innovative products like on-the-go fresh food options that our customers are demanding.

Consumer demands have changed because of the pandemic. Canadians want fresh products. And now more than ever, they have set a new benchmark in terms of sanitary and cleanliness.

At 7-Eleven Canada, we have partnered with the Steritech organization to provide high quality and detailed food service assessments that help us understand where we may have operational gaps. These audits are performed quarterly and shared with all levels of leaders inside the organization. For stores doing well, it presents a great opportunity to recognize stellar food safety standards and for stores with opportunities, it provides detailed and specific information so action plans can be taken promptly to correct those items.

Where is the business heading soon? I see **three trends** emerging as we see customers come back into the stores:

"Familiar Favourites" will be in demand

An example for 7-Eleven is our quarter-pound Big Bite hot dog. During the pandemic, many locations were impacted because we had to remove our self-serve condiment stations and stop selling this customer favourite. However, in February, we relaunched our famous dog partnering with Schneider's here in Canada to deliver an all-beef, Canadian-made product at a value price point. Our condiment offerings were refreshed, and we told the story online and with some fun television advertising. We found out that our customers were ready to buy this classic item with a refreshed message and approach! We hope to make this product once again a star in our food line up.



Healthier options are in demand

Customers are looking for healthier options, clean ingredients, and plant-based solutions for snacking. At 7-Eleven, we partnered with Light Life in January to launch terrific new plant based “Chik’n” tenders, and the response exceeded our expectations. We also see a much broader appeal here because consumer demand has indeed shifted during the pandemic. Convenience stores can be a great outlet for healthier options, and we believe the trend will only grow stronger over time.



Delivery is here to stay

We knew this trend was growing before the pandemic started, but it has literally exploded over the last two years. Chains small and large are getting into this space because consumers are demanding it. 7-Eleven is investing in technology to deliver 7NOW – putting our stores in the palm of our customers hands. We expect this to grow over the coming years and we do see Fresh Food items including Slurpee drinks as some of our most popular ordered items. The marketplace remains important as well and the large providers such as UberEATS, Door Dash, and Skip the Dishes remain important partners in this space.



It has been a long, challenging road to navigate the past two years and I'm proud to say that our industry has remained resilient and well positioned to continue to serve communities across the country. We are excited at 7-Eleven to welcome back Canadians across the country and focusing on the three areas that will be essential in the recovery:

- 1) Familiar Favorites
- 2) Healthy Options
- 3) Home Delivery