

## ARTICLE – “Generating more sales in your convenience store” – PART 1

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### STORE FLOW

One of the simplest techniques I have used in my stores over the last 10 years is to analyse the flow of customers in the convenience store. There are 5 easy steps that will give you a better understanding of how customers shop your store. The first 2 steps are as follows:

**STEP 1:** Draw a diagram of your store layout. (Diagram 1 is an example)

- Draw your store layout on a paper with gridlines (each gridline can represent a tile)
- Measure your store length and width
- Measure the basic distances between major shelves/fridges/etc
- Make sure you include the exits and entrances and show each shelf and fridge
- Make sure you indicate any stands, round bins, loose shelving, newspaper stands, etc

Note: You can draw the layout on MS Word by inserting different shapes, activate the gridlines to make it easier.

DIAGRAM 1:

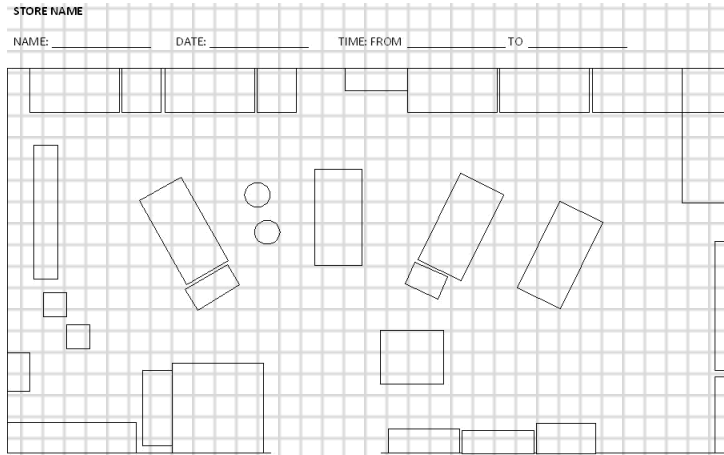
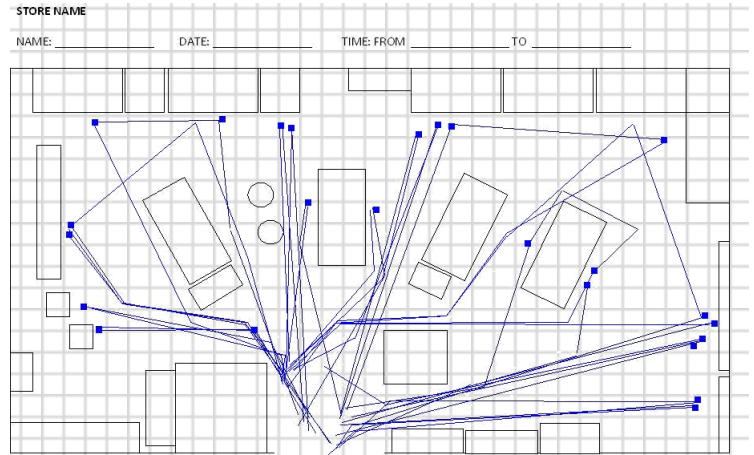


DIAGRAM 2:



**STEP 2:** Complete customer flow

- Write your store name at the top and make a few copies
- Get one of your employees to stand in a corner of your store and indicate where each customer goes, stops, etc
- It is important to show where they go when they enter the store, make an X where they stop and where they go after that (Diagram 2 is an example)
- When the paper becomes full, just use a new one
- Make sure you do this on a few occasions, different times of day, different days of the week and weekend

Note: Diagram 2 shows how customers have moved through the store

In the next issue we will discuss what to do next.

### RETAILER TIP

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Honouring the promotions being advertised, at the price you promise, in the period you say, is a competitive advantage that most retailers have lost. It isn't always easy, takes planning, but the advantage can be yours.

Whether you agree with the promotion or not, you shouldn't voice your concern by not participating. Let your promotions forum representative know, but still support the promotion. Remember you are part of a network of sites and what you do reflects on the brand, not just your site.

A promotion is an invitation to your site and if the promotion product is not available your customer will lose trust in your business.

## **BOTTOM-LINE TIP**

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Ensure that you have a paper trail for every transaction on your site. If there is no paper trail it is too easy for a transaction to go "missing" and even easier for cash to disappear.

If you run an Excel or Pastel system don't disregard the reports from the site system. It should be part of your daily procedure to compare the source documents (slips, cash up printouts) with your own system and then with the site system.

Take some time to make sure that every part of a transaction creates a paper trail and that you and your management check that the paper trail corresponds with your reports and your accounting books.

## **SHRINKAGE TIP**

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If you find that you are losing self-medication items such as Vicks cough syrup, Strepsils, Grand Pa, Panado's, etc due to theft and these products are merchandised on your shelves, here are two ways of dealing with the problem:

- Move the items to your cashier area and sell them from there. Unfortunately sales will most likely drop, but you can inform customers with proper signage on the "old" shelf that the items have been moved and are still available.
- Otherwise, display only the empty boxes on the shelf, but be sure to inform customers clearly that the boxes are empty and that the contents are available at the cashier desk.

In both cases, you can hold the cashiers responsible for any losses as the items are now under their control.

## **FEIS 4 FUEL**

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FEIS 4 FUEL is a company that supports Fuel Retailers.

The first step to doing better business in our industry is to have options. We can help.

Contact Ruan Schoeman on 082 782 5087 or 012 804 5066 or [rschoeman@future-ent.com](mailto:rschoeman@future-ent.com)

