

"Top Sellers: Getting the basics right"

Creating more sales in your convenience store is all about details. One of the most basic details is to ensure that your top selling products get the attention they deserve. Product manufacturers like Cadbury, Nestle, British American Tobacco and Unilever spend billions each year to ensure that their brands remain at the top of consumer spending.

Giving the best brands the best space in your c-store is one of the easiest things to get right, but frequently one of the first things that's overlooked.

We sometimes take these products and their sales for granted. Take a few minutes to make sure that you are using every opportunity these products give you. We suggest the following 5 steps:

1. Print a report of your 20-30 top selling items, excluding car wash, lotto and airtime. Base the report on your sales quantities over the last few months. If possible, you can also draw a report based on profit i.e. top profit generating items. Comparing top items based on quantities and profit often yields interesting results.

2. Take the list and check if you are out of stock and if you have given these items the best space on the shelves.
3. Review where you've merchandised the top sellers. Are you giving a novelty item or slow seller better space or attention than one of your top sellers? You may find that you're spending more time on the slow seller just because it's a slow seller.
4. Review any new products that you've included in your range, are they providing enough sales to secure the shelf space you're giving them. Have you given a "new" product better space / attention than a top seller?
5. Give the list to a supervisor or manager to check if every top seller is ALWAYS stocked and PERFECTLY displayed over the next few weeks. Remember, this is about detail, being out of stock, even for an hour is not acceptable.

If you spend a little time on this list of 20-30 items you'll definitely find an opportunity in the detail. Remember: getting more out of an existing opportunity is easier than creating a new one.

BEST PRACTICES:

DO frequently check that your top selling items are ALWAYS stocked and PERFECTLY displayed.

DO fill your impulse area (e.g. at the cashier) with top selling brands; NOT novelty items or slow sellers that you want to get rid of.

DO make sure your staff and managers know that running out of stock on a top seller is similar to putting Diesel in an Unleaded vehicle; it's something to be avoided at all cost.

DON'T forget that the top selling brands provide the basis of your everyday sales; neglecting them is one of the easiest ways to lose sales.

QUICK WIN:

Once you have a list of items that are the top sellers based on quantities sold, add 10-30 cents to each products selling price. You are probably selling thousands of these items every month and adding a few cents to the selling price can add a few hundred or thousand Rands to your bottom line. This is not just a once-off quick win, if you change prices frequently you can slowly build higher margins.

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