

Store Brands

Business Intelligence for an Evolving Market

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Editor's Note

Stand out in the crowd

When I was growing up in the 1970s, the dinner norm for my family — and for many other families back then — was a home-cooked meal, fashioned by none other than mom out of ingredients purchased at the local grocery store. Outings to restaurants were few and far between, reserved mainly for special occasions and road trips.

That decade and many of the decades prior to it were the glory days of grocery stores and supermarkets. They had few competitors (outside of other grocery stores and supermarkets) when it came to fulfilling the needs of families' meal occasions.

Fast-forward to the 21st century. Households not only are smaller and more diverse than they were in the "old days," but also have myriad choices when it comes to fulfilling meal occasions. The traditional grocery store/supermarket now must compete with a staggering array of restaurants (many of which deliver); mass merchandisers, drugstores and other non-traditional food purveyors (with both brick-and-mortar and online offerings); companies such as HelloFresh that deliver fresh ingredients and the recipes needed to convert them into meals; and even businesses such as Home Chef that deliver complete chef-prepared meals.

The abundance of choices today means grocery retailers (including those in non-traditional channels) must be more creative than ever to earn consumers' dollars. And key to that quest is creating a perception of uniqueness — through the in-store experience and the product assortment. So where could store brands fit in with that quest?

The possibilities are numerous. Here are just a few ideas borrowed from a sampling of forward-thinking retailers:

- *Connect own brands to charitable efforts to create a warm and fuzzy feeling for the banner and its brands.* As part of its Food for Friends program, Stop & Shop offers holiday "trimmings boxes" containing non-perishable Stop & Shop-branded items such as cranberry sauce, stuffing mix and cut green beans. Customers may purchase the boxes for \$10 each to help people in need.
- *Launch one-of-a-kind products and create recipes around them to spur return visits.* Wegmans is a pro at creating unique store brand items and then leveraging its *Menu* magazine to encourage trial and repurchase. For example, its latest issue includes a recipe for Grilled Jamaican Style Jerk Chicken with Coconut Rice & Caribbean Cabbage that relies on Wegmans Jamaican Style Jerk Marinated Boneless Chicken Breast Cutlets as the main ingredient.
- *Tie own brands to a fun, interactive event to build awareness.* Save-A-Lot's Fuel Your Family Road Trip events saw "Road Scholar" ambassadors for the retailer taking a month-long, multi-state journey to give consumers the opportunity to personally connect with the Save-A-Lot banner and brand. They attended community events, hosted customer appreciation events at Save-A-Lot stores and shared recipes and tips for easy and affordable meals.

Do you know an outstanding supplier?

Store brand suppliers are crucial, of course, in retailers' quest to create high-quality, differentiated products that spur return visits on the part of shoppers. Help us honor the best of the best: Nominate an outstanding supplier for one of Store Brands' 2015 Supplier Pacesetter Awards. Awards will be given in 10 key achievement areas. For more information, visit <http://tinyurl.com/qfob6w>. **SB**



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