

Younger Consumers Visit C-stores Most Frequently

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★ EXCLUSIVE

JERSEY CITY, N.J. — When analyzing shopper preferences regarding convenience stores, it's not just factors like income, region and gender that are strongly influential. According to the exclusive *Convenience Store News* 2015 Realities of the Aisle consumer research study, age also makes a significant difference in c-store shopping habits.



Overall, today's consumers willingly embrace the convenience factor. While the very youngest and oldest age groups surveyed visit c-stores with somewhat less frequency, a majority of other consumers make a habit of stopping by. Those aged 25-34 are most likely to visit a c-store several times a week (68.3 percent), followed by those aged 35-44 (65.4 percent) and 45-54 (60.6 percent).

More than a quarter of those aged 25-34 visit a c-store almost every day, while 34 percent of those aged 18-24 visit about once a week.

Younger consumers are the most location-loyal, with three-quarters of those aged 18-24 indicating they typically visit the same c-store each time. The least loyal age group is 35-44, yet a majority still visit the same store at 66.4 percent. Location of their chosen store is a major consideration factor across all age groups.

Interestingly, all consumers are less likely to carry that loyalty through to a loyalty program — but this is partially due to lack of availability. About a quarter of all age groups are enrolled in their usual store's loyalty program if one is available, with those aged 25-34 reporting the highest rate of enrollment at 33.4 percent.

Consumers aged 18-24 are the most likely to say their store does not offer a loyalty program and they would not enroll in such a program even if it existed (29.4 percent), while nearly half of those aged 45-54 say they would enroll in a loyalty program if their store offered it (49.1 percent).

Although a majority of all consumers do not use the extra services offered at c-stores, age does make a difference in those who do.

ATM is the most popular service, with 47.4 percent of those aged 25-34 reporting they use it, and 36 percent or more of most other age groups saying the same. Those aged 55-plus are significantly less likely to use a c-store ATM, with only 19 percent doing so.

The next most popular services are car wash, used most frequently by those 25-34 (25.1 percent) and 18-24 (21.6 percent), and DVD rentals, most often used by those 18-24 (18.6 percent).

Overall, younger consumers aged 18-24 are the most likely to use some kind of extra service, with only 35.1 percent saying they do not use any. Older consumers aged 55-plus are the least likely to use extra services, with 67.1 percent saying they do not use any of the listed options, followed by those aged 45-54 at 52.4 percent.

Editor's note: For more findings from the exclusive *Convenience Store News* 2015 Realities of the Aisle consumer research study, look in the February issue of *Convenience Store News*.

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