

Inside 7-Eleven's upper-funnel approach to retail media

Article

Many advertisers see retail media solely as a performance marketing channel. But 7-Eleven's retail media network, Gulp Media, is aiming higher up the funnel.

"Most retail media [networks] are focused on performance marketing on their first-party websites," Mario Mijares, vice president of insights, loyalty, marketing, and monetization platforms at 7-Eleven, said at [Advertising Week New York 2023](#). "We're not doing that. Our

focus is connecting our database to third-party platforms and in-store for top-of-funnel and mid-funnel marketing.”

Powering this full-funnel experience is 7-Eleven’s “immediate consumption ecosystem,” which includes Gulp Media, 7-Eleven’s database of customer loyalty and point-of-sale data, and its Brain Freeze Collective, a group of 250,000 customers that can be tapped for qualitative or quantitative research.

With these tools, 7-Eleven helps brands achieve lower-funnel goals like conversion as well as upper-funnel objectives like brand awareness and lift.

- 7-Eleven worked with C4, a small energy drink brand, to grow its audience outside of its loyal customer base, said Mijares.
- Through a top-of-funnel campaign with 7-Eleven, C4 achieved a 6.6% sales lift for individuals in households making \$50,000 to \$75,000 per year and an 8% sales lift for individuals in households making \$100,000 to \$149,000, according to 7-Eleven.
- In addition, 33% of exposed buyers were new to the brand at 7-Eleven, 7.4% of whom were also new to the category.

7-Eleven will soon add another layer to its ecosystem: lab stores. These are fully functional 7-Eleven locations that use hidden cameras to see which products are resonating with consumers and which aren’t, giving brands access to customer insights before they even officially launch a product.

“Do a small run [in the lab store],” said Mijares. “Once you’re ready to launch, then we do a launch campaign for the loyalty program [across all stores], then [do a] shopper marketing [campaign], and then outside our four walls with Gulp Media. All of that [data] goes back into our analytics platform and then you can do your attribution.”

Gulp Media also plans to lean heavily into in-store media in the coming years, specifically with in-store radio.

- “We believe that the best [in-store media] channel is radio,” Mijares. “[Customers] don’t need to be looking at a screen. You don’t need to distract the consumer from what they’re doing.”
- To ensure its in-store radio is targeted, 7-Eleven will use an AI-generated voice for its messaging, giving the retailer flexibility to put content in a Boston or Southern accent.