

Sample Proposal

Proposal for “The Burgeoning of Convenience Stores Across the American Landscape”

INTRODUCTION

In a little over two decades we have witnessed the emergence of a new concept in retail buying for the American consumer—the convenience store. The United States government defines convenience stores as “food retailer(s) of limited lines in a freestanding sales area of 5,000 square feet, concentrating on selected fast-moving products” (*Directory of Supermarkets, Grocery, and Convenience Store Chains*, 1991). To this definition I would add that typically the products on the shelves of convenience stores are priced higher than those carried by their competitors.

RATIONALE FOR MY INVESTIGATION

While spreading across the country like politicians on a campaign trail, convenience stores appear to have maintained a fairly distinctive regional character. Uni-Mart and Sheetz are common names for these stores in central Pennsylvania, but in Iowa we find Casey’s, in Massachusetts Cumberland Farms, and hundreds of other names specific to a state or region. I am intrigued by the rapid growth of convenience stores, which, from my early research, seem to retain a local flavor for such a widespread national phenomenon.

PROCEDURE

Through my library research, I will examine the burgeoning of convenience stores by exploring the answers to questions such as the following:

- How does the rapid growth of convenience stores reflect demographic trends?
- What determines the location of convenience stores? (macro-geography?)
- How have the unrelated markets of food retail and gasoline sales evolved into a common store?

I also plan to interview several key executives at Company X, including Person Y, who is the executive vice-president.

REFERENCES

Directory of Supermarkets, Grocery, and Convenience Store Chains. CGS, 1991. This is a comprehensive guide to all major and many minor stores and their data (number of stores, size, brief history, top personnel). It also includes maps that illustrate regional concentrations of stores, and provides an overview of the industry today.

Curtis, C.E. “Mobil Wants To Be Your Milkman.” *Forbes*. February 13, 1984, pp. 67-89. This article provides a concise but informative discussion of the combining of the food retail and gas industries.