

# Fueling Flavor: *The Now and Future of Convenience Stores*

Breakout Session

Jason Zelinski  
Vice President, Retail

The quest for *next*  
*Find your next growth opportunity*



# Agenda

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The Evolution of Retail

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5 Trends Thriving in the Convenience Channel

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Panel Q&A

# The Evolution of Retail



# 5 Trends Thriving in the Convenience Channel



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## Bites & Delights

*Food Service is the new fuel*



2

## The Vibe Spot

*Are C-stores the new social destination?*



3

## Beyond the Brew

*Growth is beyond Beer, with Wine, Spirits, and Cannabis Beverages*



4

## Level Up

*Not your traditional C-store fuel source: Energy Beverages and Functional Beverages*



5

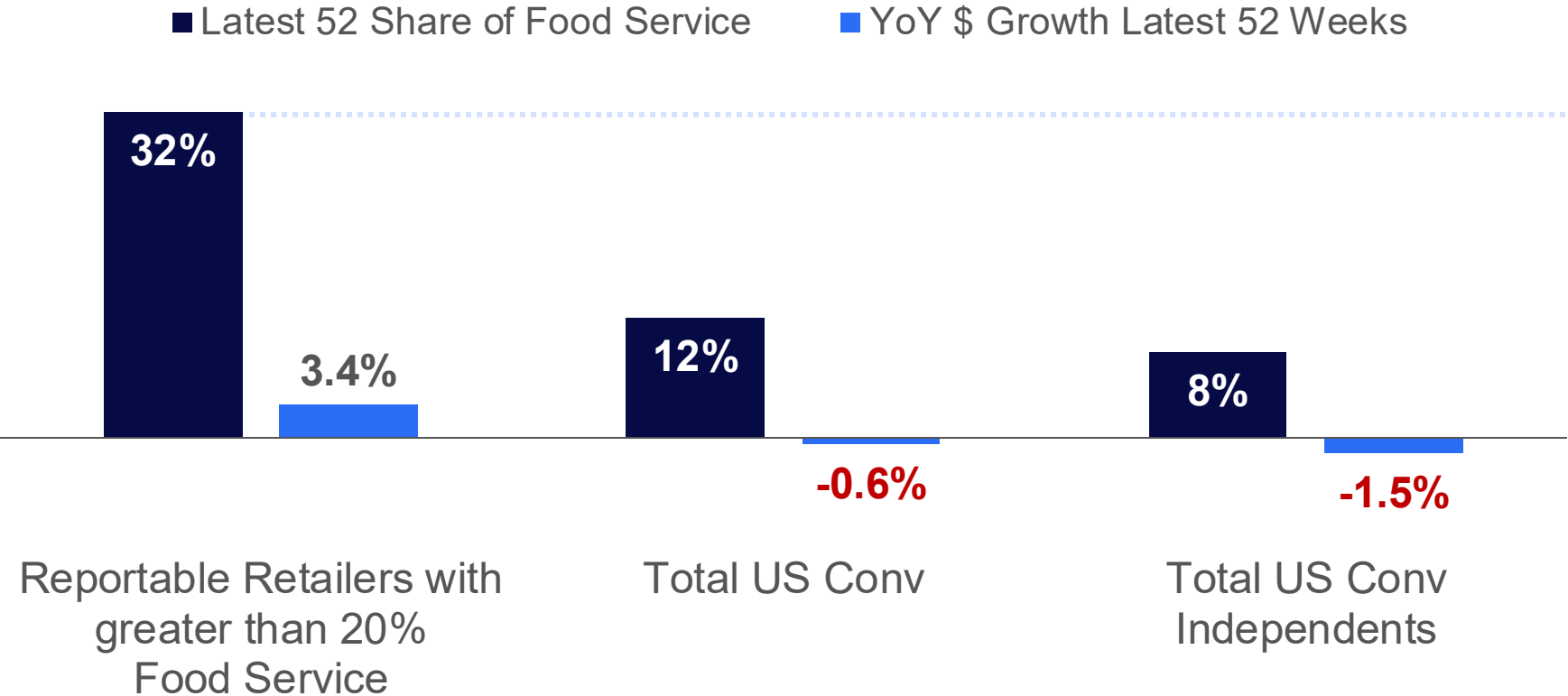
## Thrive Mode

*Consumers are prioritizing health & wellness*

# Bites & Delights: Food Service is the new fuel

Food Service is now a top 6 category in the Convenience channel

\$ Growth Versus Share of Food Service w/e 05/10/25



## Food Service is Fueling Foot Traffic

Convenience retailers investing in strong food offerings are seeing more repeat visits — and growth. The recipe for success? More Food Service, more loyal customers

TOTAL STORE, Cold Disp, Commissary, Foodservice Prep On, Froz Disp, Hot Disp, Perish in 26 Conv Retailers, 2 Total US, Reportable Retailers with greater than 20% food Service during Latest 52 Weeks

## The Vibe Spot: *Are C-stores the new social destination?*

Convenience retailers are expanding into Food Service by enhancing the customer experience with a café-style environment

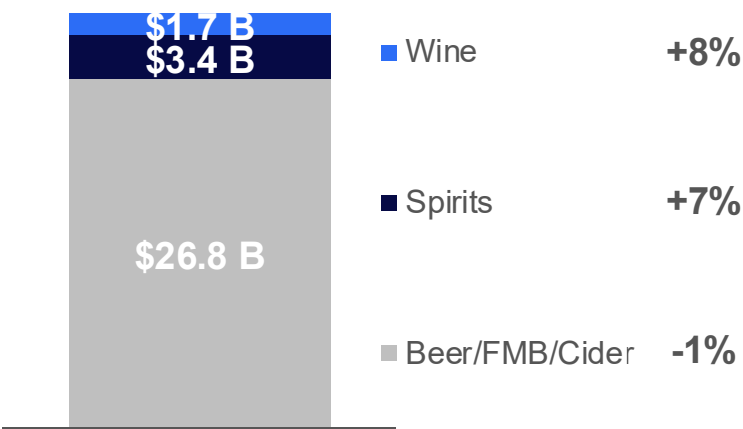


# Beyond the Brew: Growth is beyond Beer, with Wine, Spirits, and Cannabis Beverages



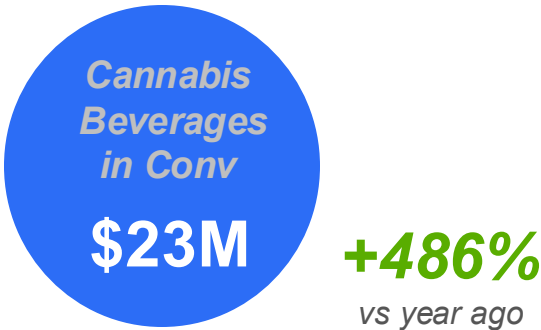
## C-store share of Alcohol

- The Convenience channel represents 43% of dollar sales for total Beverage Alcohol and growing year over year  
*This does not include Liquor Open State data*



## Growth from outside the Beer Box

- Dollar sales growth for Wine and Spirits in the Convenience channel are outpacing the growth of Beer. This is aided by the expansion of where it's legal to sell Wine- and Spirits-based RTDs



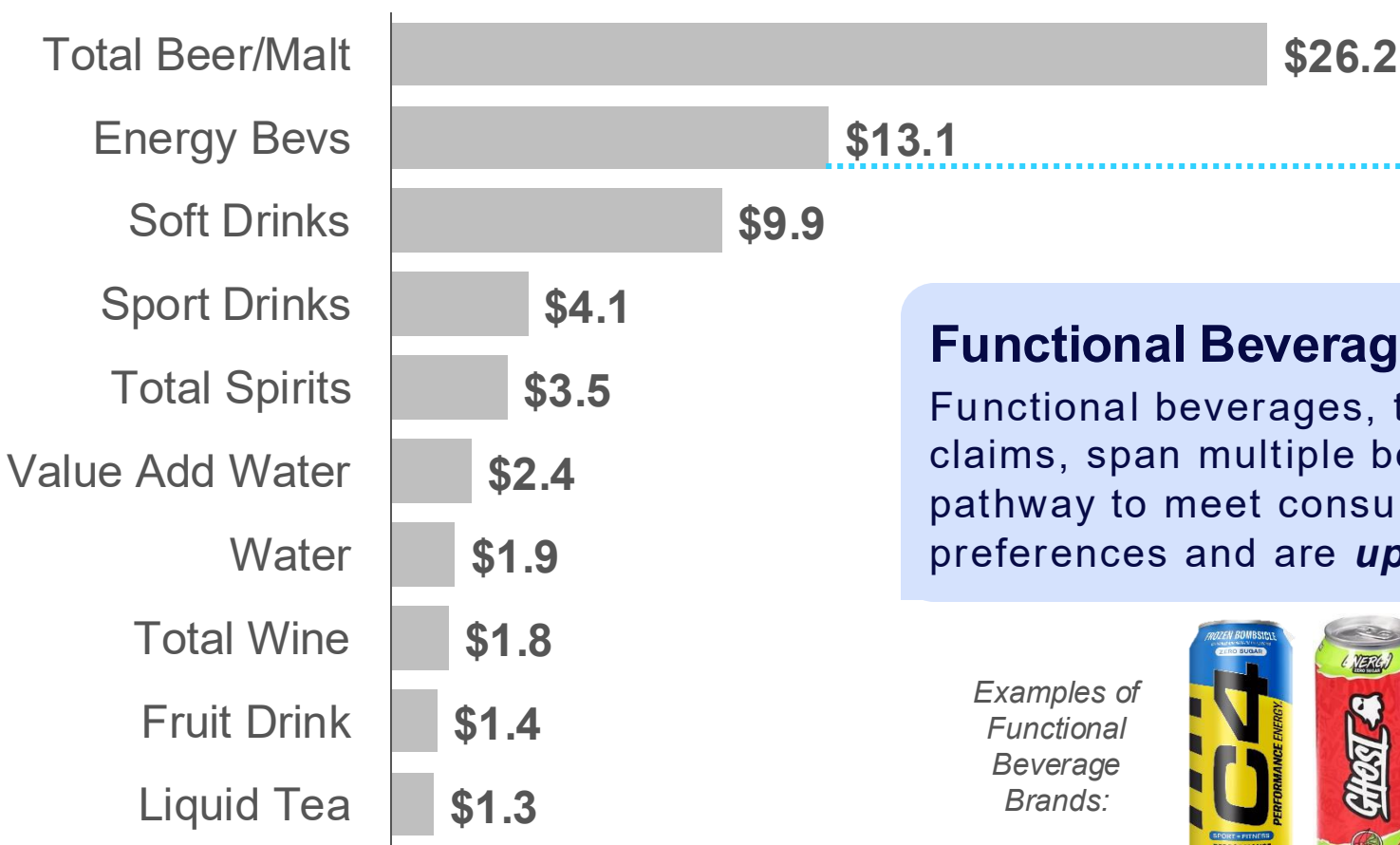
## Growth of Emerging Categories

- Cannabis and hemp derived beverages are growing in Convenience, as well as Functional and Energy beverages as alternatives to alcohol consumption

Source: NielsenIQ Discover RMS Total US Convenience, Total US Drug, Total US Food, Total US xAOC, Syndicated

# Level Up: Not your traditional C-store fuel source: Energy Beverages and Functional Beverages

Top 10 Bev Categories (\$Billions & Change vs YA)



## Energy Beverages

Energy beverages are larger than Soft Drinks in C-stores. They are a type of Functional Beverage.

## Functional Beverages

Functional beverages, those with a stated focus on claims, span multiple beverage categories. They offer a pathway to meet consumers' changing needs and preferences and are **up 5% vs 2 YA in C-stores**.

Examples of Functional Beverage Brands:

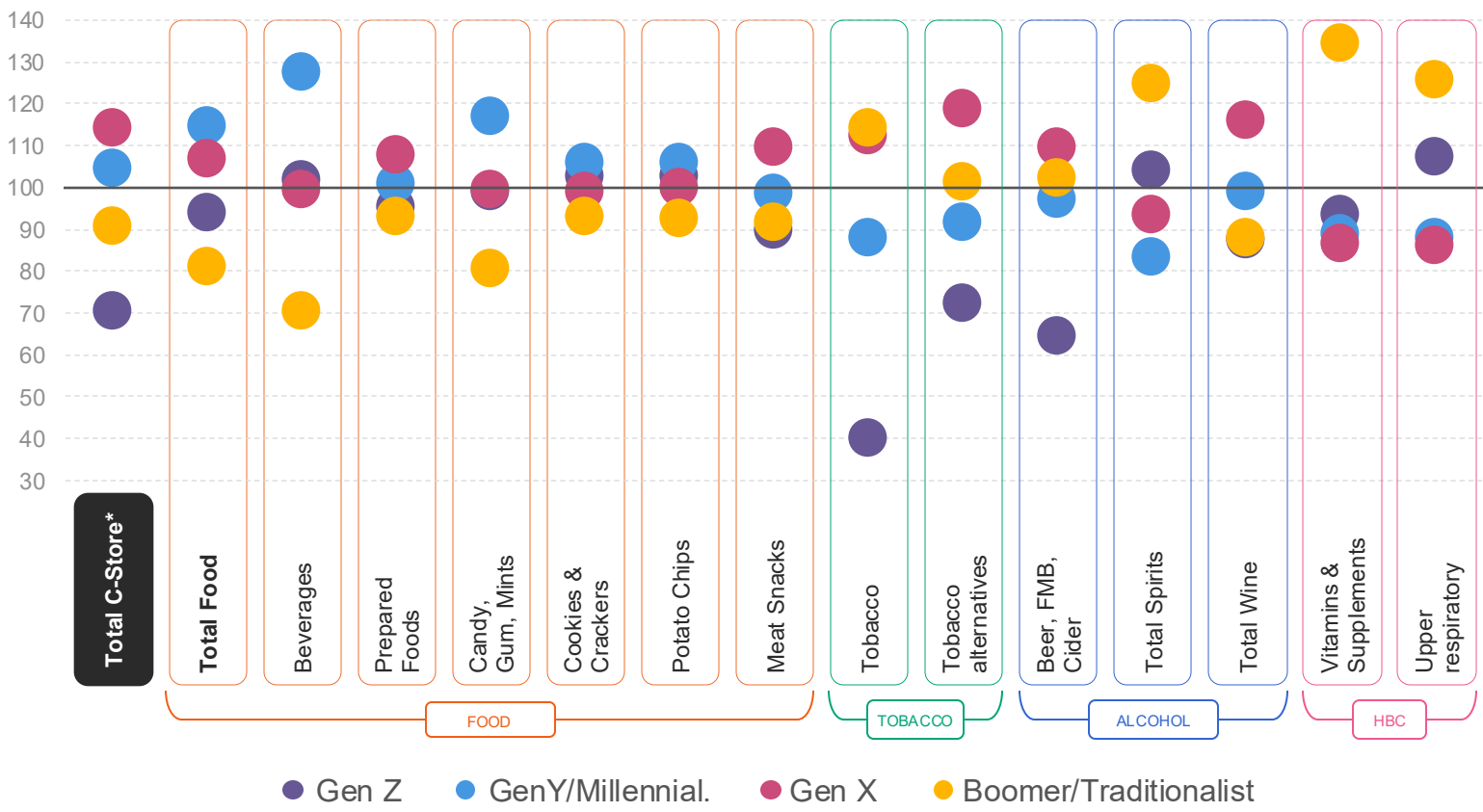


Source: NIQ Discover; Total Convenience Channel; latest 52 weeks ending 05/10/2025

# Thrive Mode: Consumers are prioritizing health & wellness

Generations shop categories differently across c-store: Younger consumers illustrate expectations will change on assortment

Current CPG Spending (\$/Buyer) | Index to Total Panel



**Generation Z**  
GenZ are under-indexing in c-store

**52%**  
say minimizing behaviors such as smoking, drinking, or sun exposure to protect their future health is more important to them now than five years ago – *NIQ Global Wellness Report*

Source: NIQ 2025 Global Health & Wellness Survey, average across 19 countries

\*Total Store = Food, Tobacco & Tobacco alternatives, Alcohol, Baby Care, Health & Beauty Care (HBC), Household Care, Pet Care; Source: NIQ Omnishopper Panel; Total US; Market = Convenience/Gas; Total Store; Buy Rate Index to Total Panel; 52 weeks ending March 22, 2025

# Meet Our Panelists



**Adam Deremo**

Founder  
Awake Chocolate



**Richard Garcia**

Head of Convenience  
Retailing & Fuel  
Products  
Shell



**Jeff Lenard**

Vice President of NACS  
Media & Strategic  
Communications



**James Hunt**

SVP NA Retail  
NIQ  
*Moderator*



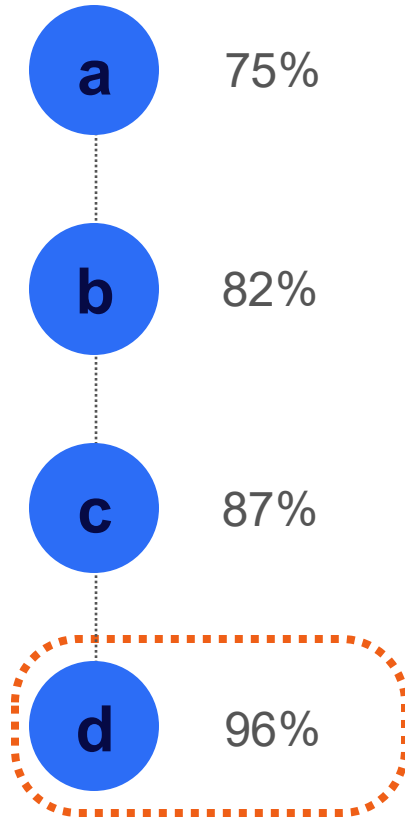
**Jason Zelinski**

VP, Global & National  
Convenience  
NIQ  
*Moderator*

# But first... Trivia!



# What percentage of shoppers in NIQ's Omnishopper Panel shopped at a US Convenience store 2 or more times in 2024?

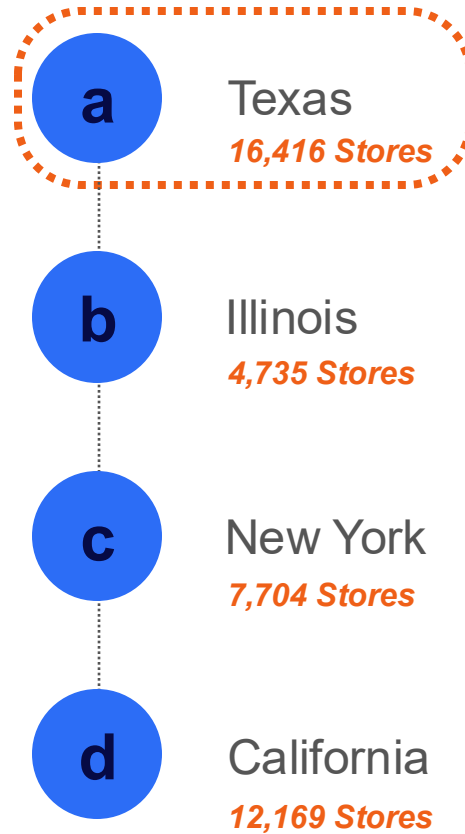


**d. 96%**

People all over America depend on Convenience stores from corner stores and bodegas to gas stations making up the heart of communities

Source: NIQ Omnishopper 52 weeks ending dec 2024

According to the  
NACS/NIQ TDLinx  
Industry Store  
Count, what state  
had the most  
Convenience  
stores?



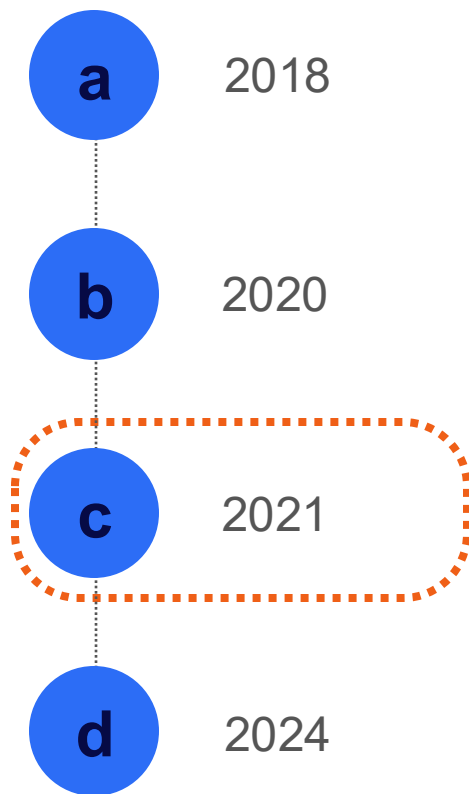
### a. Texas

Texas has 33% more stores than California.

Illinois actually has the 10th most behind Florida, New York, Georgia, Ohio, North Carolina, Michigan, and Pennsylvania

Source: [https://www.convenience.org/Research/Convenience-Store-Fast-Facts-and-Stats/FactSheets/IndustryStoreCount#:~:text=U.S.%20Convenience%20Stores%20\(as%20of%20Dec.%2031%2C,151%2C282%20\(+1.4%\)%20\\*%202013%20%E2%80%94%20149%2C220%20\(+0.7%\)\)](https://www.convenience.org/Research/Convenience-Store-Fast-Facts-and-Stats/FactSheets/IndustryStoreCount#:~:text=U.S.%20Convenience%20Stores%20(as%20of%20Dec.%2031%2C,151%2C282%20(+1.4%)%20*%202013%20%E2%80%94%20149%2C220%20(+0.7%)))

According to  
TDLinx, what year  
did Chain  
Convenience stores  
outnumber  
Independent store  
openings for the  
first time?

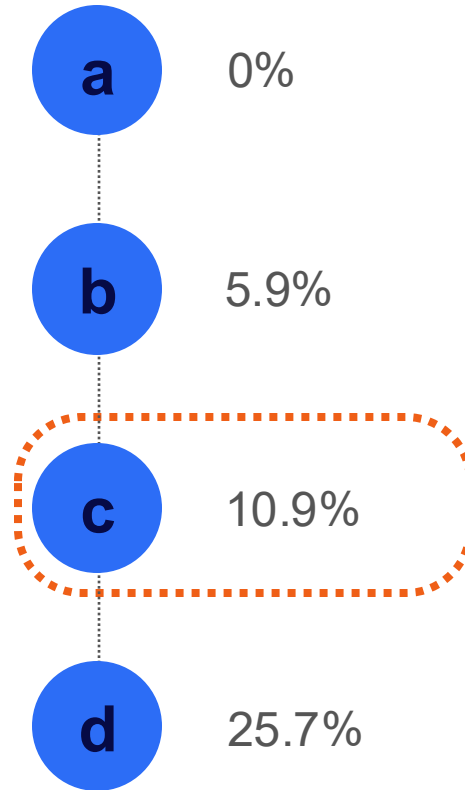


**c. 2021**

Since 2018, independent c-store operators shed (either through store closings or acquisition by chains) 7,942 stores while chains grew 6,959 stores.

Source: NIQ, TDLinx, U.S. counts are for open stores during month of December

Ownership structure isn't the only thing changing in C-Stores. Since 2009 how much has the average square footage per convenience store increased?



**c. 10.9%**

Supermarkets, Dollar Stores, and Drug Stores were all getting smaller during this point in time.

Source: NIQ, TDLinx, U.S. counts are for open stores during month of December



Thank you!

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Vice President, Retail



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