The Future of Beverage Programs in Convenience Retail

Innovation, customization, and experience in non-alcoholic drinks

SIGNALS OF WHAT COMES NEXT

47%

of U.S. adults had specialty coffee in the past day, versus 42% for traditional coffee

National Coffee Association (2026)

60%

of specialty coffee drinkers drink their specialty coffee cold

National Coffee Association (2026)

44%

of Americans made an effort to limit added sugars in the past year

IFIC Food & Health Survey (2026)

+18%

year-over-year growth in refresher sales at Dash In

C-Store Dive (2026)

FIVE FORCES SHAPING C-STORE BEVERAGES

Premium
Café-style drinks at a c-store price

Customization
Many drinks from a few building blocks

Health
Clear sugar, caffeine, and protein info

Technology
Made-to-order drinks without a barista

Scaling
Test, measure, then expand

What drives food and drink purchases

Share of Americans citing each as a purchase driver



Health options win when they also deliver taste and value.

Source: IFIC 2026 Food & Health Survey, via Food Business News

The refresher opening

- Only 20% of c-store operators offer refreshers
- 15% plan to add them; 65% have no plans
- 54% of operators offering them saw higher sales

What to watch

- Too many add-ins that strain inventory and training
- Automated equipment without a maintenance plan
- Wellness claims customers cannot verify

SCALING BEVERAGE INNOVATION

Test with LTOs
Scarcity drives engagement

Lead with familiar
Recognizable flavors perform best

Measure results
Sales, attachment, and repeat visits

Scale consistently
Taste, safety, execution, consistency

Sources: National Coffee Association, 2026 National Coffee Data Trends (June 2026); IFIC 2026 Food & Health Survey, via Food Business News; Datassential and Dash In, via C-Store Dive (June 2026); Red Diamond Coffee & Tea, Costa Coffee, and Circle K, via NACS Magazine (July 2026). Prepared by It's All Goods.