



More Than the Free Unit: How a 2+1 Promo Drove Portfolio-Wide Growth

The power of retail media to turn a simple multi-buy mechanic into measurable incremental volume, validated banner by banner against a live control group.



Footprints AI and an international food and beverage company built a retail media strategy around a single, high-clarity mechanic (buy 2, get 1 free) activated across Eurocash's banners and measured against a control group from day one. The plan was to drive multi-unit purchasing among urban, plant-based-curious shoppers, own everyday coffee and breakfast occasions and prove the effect rather than just the reach, isolating incremental sales against a live control from the outset.

The strategy:

- **Drive multi-unit purchasing:** use the 2+1 offer to move shoppers from single units to multi-packs.
- **Own everyday coffee occasions:** align messaging to morning, stock-up and routine-replenishment missions.
- **Convert plant-based intent:** reach urban 20-44 shoppers already open to plant-based drinks.
- **Prove the effect, not just the reach:** run a campaign-vs-control design to isolate incremental sales.

Challenge

Plant-based drinks are a growing but still considered purchase, most shoppers buy one carton at a time, if at all, and multi-unit purchasing is rare in a category people are still building into their routines. A 2+1 mechanic can shift that behavior, but it carries a risk: a promotion that simply discounts volume the shopper would have bought anyway proves nothing and in a seven-day window there is little room to be wrong. The campaign ran across three very different Eurocash formats at once, each with its own shopper and basket rhythm. The real question was whether one week could lift multi-unit buying in every format and stand up to a control-group read, proving the growth belonged to the campaign and not the season.

Execution

- **In-store visibility:** video on digital screens and in-store radio kept the brand present at the point of purchase, where beverage decisions are made.
- **On-site display:** website and mobile app banners kept the 2+1 offer visible while shoppers browsed promotions and planned the basket.
- **Direct prompts:** push notifications pulled the offer back into consideration ahead of the next shop.

Shopping Missions

The 2+1 mechanic was built to land on the missions where adding an extra unit feels natural:

- **Routine/Replenishment:** the regular restock of everyday staples, where a third carton slips into the weekly rhythm, the single largest mission among campaign buyers.
- **Stock-up:** the bigger supermarket trip, where the free third unit rewards buying ahead.
- **Special Occasion:** planned purchases for a specific need, where trying more of the range makes sense.
- **Fill-in:** the quick top-up between shops, where the offer nudges a second unit into a small basket.

Target Audience

- 20-44, urban, all genders (slight female skew)
- Life stages: Young Singles, Young Couples, DINKs, Full Nest I
- Plant-based-curious shoppers building everyday coffee and breakfast routines

Strategy At A Glance

Retail Network



Geo-Focus

- National coverage

Retail Channels

- **In-Store:** Digital Screens - Video Ad
- **On-Site:** Mobile App - Display Ad and Story, Website - Display Ad and Story, Push Notification

Media budget

- Duration: 7 days
- Share of Budget: 7%



Solution

The promotion was built around a simple commercial thesis: that the biggest gains would come from the missions where adding an extra unit already feels natural, routine restocks and larger supermarket trips. Footprints AI built the activation to own those moments and prove the 2+1 mechanic actually converted.

Footprints AI enabled:

- **Occasion-led targeting:** activation mapped to routine, stock-up and everyday coffee occasions, reaching urban, plant-based-curious shoppers where multi-buy propensity was highest.
- **Omnichannel orchestration:** consistent visibility from in-store screens and radio at the point of decision through app, website and push across the full path to purchase.
- **Shopper profiling precision:** audience built on Eurocash transaction data concentrated weight on the life stages and missions most likely to buy more than one unit.
- **Multi-unit conversion:** the buy 2 get 1 free mechanic gave shoppers a clear reason to move from a single carton to a larger basket.
- **Media-to-sales validation:** every result isolated against a matched control group of non-activated stores, measured banner by banner down to SKU level.

Results

Isolated against a live control group, the campaign delivered a clean incremental effect across all three banners. Reading campaign stores against matched control stores strips out the season and the wider category trend, so the lift reflects the campaign, not the calendar.

- Hero SKUs outperformed control: promoted SKU volume grew +43% in campaign stores versus +23% at control, a clean incremental lift that held in every banner.
- The halo reached the whole shelf: the wider brand portfolio grew well ahead of control too, so the campaign lifted the brand as a whole, not just the three promoted SKUs, with no cannibalization of the rest of the range.
- The 2+1 mechanic converted into real multi-buy: 810 units were sold as the free third unit across the campaign, and shoppers genuinely added units to earn it rather than buying as usual. The effect was strongest in Delikatesy Centrum, where 15.9% of hero volume was the free unit.
- The brand grew faster than the category: in campaign stores the promoted SKUs outpaced the wider plant based category, so the brand pulled ahead of the shelf rather than just riding it.

Incremental Units

+22pp

hero SKUs, campaign stores vs control



iROAS

1.37x