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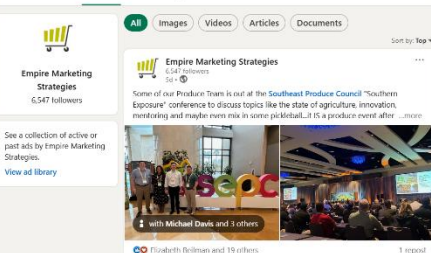
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Kroger Forges Ahead With Investments in Shoppers, Prices After E-Commerce Boosted Q2 Results

Grocer's identical sales grew 0.2%, while digital sales jumped 20%

Progressive Grocer
Julia Tabisz

Sep 11, 2026

Kroger saw total company sales grow slightly in the second quarter, to \$34.6 billion, up from \$33.9 billion during the same period last year, the company reported Friday. Excluding fuel, identical sales increased 0.2% in Q2.

Kroger said its gross margin fell slightly year over year (YoY), from 22.5% of sales in Q2 2025 to 22.4% in Q2 2026. The slight decrease was due to a combination of higher fuel sales, higher shrink, higher transportation costs and greater value delivered for customers.

At the same time, Kroger's first-in-first-out gross margin rate, excluding rent, depreciation and amortization, and fuel, was up 13 basis points YoY in Q2. The company said the increase was due in part to improvements in e-commerce profitability and media. Kroger's adjusted e-commerce sales were up 20% in Q2, and retail media grew 24% during the quarter.

"I am pleased with the progress we are making. Our teams kept driving value for customers, improving execution in our stores, growing e-commerce profitably and managing costs with discipline," CEO Greg Foran said. "Improving sales momentum remains a top priority. While there is more work to do, I am confident in our plan to become America's favorite grocer."

During the company's earnings call Friday, Foran pointed to recent executive appointments that will sharpen Kroger's focus on omnichannel execution. Earlier this month, the company [named Mark Ibbotson](#) as its new EVP and chief of store operations. And Nate Faust [began his tenure](#) as Kroger's EVP and chief e-commerce officer on Sept. 1.

"Nate has spent more than two decades building successful e-commerce businesses," Foran said. "[Mark] will help us raise the level of execution across the enterprise." Kroger also highlighted a favorable pharmacy mix in its Q2 earnings report. During the company's earnings call, executives said the grocer is working to bridge the gap between food and pharmacy to capture health-conscious shoppers, as the use of GLP-1 medications grows.

"We continue to see strong engagement in natural and organic," Foran said on the call. "In August, we launched a [new grocery and prescription delivery offering with Instacart](#), allowing customers to combine groceries and eligible prescriptions into a single order across nearly all our banners. It's another example of how we're using the strength of our ecosystem to reduce friction and improve service."

[Continue reading the full article here.](#)

Kroger Wellness Tour Brings Weekend In-Store Activations, 4 Mini-Fests In September

The Shelby Report
Shelby Team

Aug 31, 2026

Kroger is turning its stores into wellness destinations for the month of September with the 2026 Kroger Wellness Tour, a program that puts Kroger Health pharmacists and dietitians on the sales floor alongside better-for-you product sampling every Friday and Saturday at participating Kroger Family of Stores locations.

The tour extends Kroger Health's food-as-medicine positioning into a sustained in-store activation, pairing the retailer's OptUP nutrition program with its in-house health professionals to drive product discovery and weekend traffic. Four community mini-fest events in Nashville, Houston, Phoenix and Salt Lake City will expand the program beyond the store.

"Kroger touches millions of families every day," said Colleen Lindholz, president of Kroger Health. "The Wellness Tour is about using that reach to meet customers where they are and make it easier to take one step toward better health."

In-store program

Throughout September, participating stores will offer better-for-you product sampling, including dietitian-approved OptUP Picks where available, along with opportunities to connect with Kroger Health pharmacists and dietitians, nutrition education and information about Kroger Health services available in store and online. OptUP, introduced in 2017, rates products on nutritional value and has since incorporated the bitewell FoodHealth Score.

Community mini-fests

The four expanded events run on consecutive Saturdays:

- **Sept. 5**, Nashville area: Kroger Store No. 580, Clarksville, Tennessee
- **Sept. 12**, Houston area: Kroger Store No. 142, Montgomery, Texas
- **Sept. 19**, Phoenix area: Fry's Store No. 655, Gilbert, Arizona
- **Sept. 26**, Salt Lake City area: Smith's Store No. 274, West Jordan, Utah

Mini-fest programming may include product sampling, wellness workshops, live cooking demonstrations, fitness activations, giveaways and coupons.

Ralphs Re-Grand Opening in Palm Springs



Ralphs Re-Grand Opening in LA



Store and Leadership Updates

Louisville Store #779
Re-Grand**011 Atlanta**

Store 784 Oakwood, GA
Grand Opening 8/21

014 Cincinnati

Store 948 Cincinnati, OH
Re-Grand Opening 9/4

016 Columbus

Store 273 Worthington, OH
Re-Grand Opening 8/21

021 Central

Store 907 Martinsville, IN
Re-Grand Opening 8/20

Store 961 Greencastle, IN
Re-Grand Opening 8/21

024 Louisville

Store 779 Georgetown, KY
Re-Grand Opening 8/20

Store 368 Frankfort, KY
Re-Grand Opening 9/10

034 Houston

Store 748 Houston, TX
Re-Grand Opening 9/4

035 Dallas

Store 917 Dallas, TX
Re-Grand Opening 9/4

090 Ruler

Store 258 Springfield, IL
Re-Grand Opening 8/28

620 King Soopers

Store 12 Pueblo, CO
Re-Grand Opening 8/26

Store 406 Durango, CO
Re-Grand Opening 9/9

703 Ralphs

Store 181 Palm Springs, CA
Re-Grand Opening 8/21

Store 184 Los Angeles, CA
Re-Grand Opening 8/28

Mark Ibbotson named EVP and Chief Store Operations Officer

Kroger named Mark Ibbotson as EVP and Chief Store Operations Officer, effective September 14. Mark will report directly to Greg Foran. Michael Marx, Victor Smith and Paula Kash will report to him.

Mark is a strong leader with more than 15 years in senior leadership at Walmart and its former U.K. subsidiary Asda. Across his career, Mark built a reputation as an operations specialist and omnichannel retail innovator.

Mark began his career in the U.K., including roles at Sainsbury's, before joining Asda in 2004. At Asda, he rose through the company to eventually serve as Chief Operating Officer, overseeing hundreds of stores and driving meaningful improvements in efficiency and cost as well as expanding the company's eCommerce capabilities by introducing pick up and drive through.

In 2015, Mark joined Walmart U.S. where he held many roles, including Executive Vice President of Central Operations and Realty. In that role, he helped led the company's eCommerce platform rollout, including pickup and delivery services.

Since leaving Walmart in 2020, Mark has served as a strategic advisor to retail and technology companies, including McKinsey & Company and Instacart, focused on eCommerce fulfillment and digital transformation.

"Mark has built his career on a belief that great operations start with simplifying complexity and enabling the associates closest to the customer," said Greg Foran, CEO of Kroger. "Mark's experience and track record will help us take a meaningful step towards becoming America's Best Grocer."

**Mark Ibbotson**

Leadership Updates Continued**Role Changes****Sean Brislin****Sean Brislin to Lead Strategic Merchandising Transformation Initiatives**

Sean Brislin, currently vice president, Deli/Bakery, is transitioning roles to lead strategic Merchandising Transformation initiatives, including KCC and other enterprise priorities.

This move reflects our investment in transforming our ways of working and building future Merchandising capabilities, as well as the need for dedicated leadership to accelerate progress. Sean will continue partnering closely across Merchandising and the broader organization to successfully deliver these initiatives.

Leadership continuity plans are in place, and business priorities remain unchanged. Nick Tranchina, currently president of Murray's Cheese, has been named vice president of Deli/Bakery.

This shift reflects the importance of accelerating transformation efforts while ensuring strong leadership across the business for continued success.

Sean joined the company in 2009 as category strategy and innovation manager for *Our Brands*, focused on Produce, Floral and Natural Foods before moving to the Frozen Grocery category. He came to Kroger from Daymon Worldwide, where he served as senior account manager for several retailers over his six years there. In 2012, Sean was promoted to senior category manager for the Seafood department and in 2013 he moved to the newly formed Nashville Division as the division Meat sales manager. In 2015 he was promoted to Meat merchandiser for the Nashville Division.

He returned to the Store Support Center in 2017 as coordinator of Category Management and Promotional Planning for the Meat department, and in 2020 was named director of Deli Merchandising prior to his promotion to vice president of Deli/Bakery in 2025.

Sean is a graduate of Miami University where he earned a bachelor's degree in business with majors in management and marketing.

Nick Tranchina Promoted to Vice President, Deli/Bakery

Nick Tranchina, currently president of Murray's Cheese, has been promoted to vice president of Deli/Bakery, reporting to Carlo Baldan, group vice president of Fresh Merchandising.

In this expanded role, Nick will lead the Deli/Bakery business in addition to Murray's Cheese, developing and executing merchandising strategies that drive long-term profitable growth, enhance brand equity and strengthen Kroger's market position. He will set the strategic direction for category performance, build high-performing teams and partner closely with division and cross-functional leaders to deliver compelling, customer-centric experiences.

He succeeds Sean Brislin, who will transition to lead strategic Merchandising Transformation initiatives, including KCC and other enterprise priorities.

Nick brings 20 years of Kroger experience to this role.

Most recently, as president of Murray's Cheese, he provided strategic direction for the enterprise Specialty Cheese business, helping drive sales through differentiated customer experiences, cheese monger training and a best-in-class cheese selection. Throughout his career, Nick has built a reputation for merchandising excellence, innovation and deep expertise in specialty foods, helping create distinctive experiences that resonate with customers and drive business growth.

Nick is a member of the *Guilde Internationale des Fromagers* and the *Confrérie du Gruyère*, two prestigious organizations recognizing excellence and expertise within the cheese industry.

**Nick Tranchina**

Kroger Expands Ukrop's Prepared-foods Sections

Stores in Mid-Atlantic region add branded departments with baked goods, meals

Mark Hamstra
Supermarket News

Aug 21, 2026

Kroger is rolling out expanded displays of Ukrop's-branded prepared food sections across several Mid-Atlantic stores, according to a local report. The rollout, which includes grab-and-go baked goods, salads and prepared meals, began in April in a Kroger Marketplace store in Mechanicsville, Va., and has since expanded with two smaller versions in Charleston, W. Va., and Yorktown, Va., *Axios Richmond* reported.

Another Ukrop's department is planned for a Midlothian, Va., Kroger opening in early September. At that store, the Ukrop's section will replace an in-store Starbucks cafe, according to Axios.

A spokesperson for Kroger could not be reached for comment.

Ukrop's Homestyle Foods is the bakery and prepared-foods division of longtime regional chain Ukrop's Super Markets, which was sold in 2009 to Martin's, part of the Giant division of Ahold-Delhaize USA. The Ukrop family retained the bakery and prepared foods operations, which relaunched in 2010 under the Ukrop's Homestyle Foods brand, supplying other retailers in the region with hundreds of products, including cookies, cakes, pies, dinner rolls, salads, sides and entrées.

Although Kroger stores in the Richmond area and beyond have long [carried an extensive line](#) of Ukrop's Homestyle Foods products, the larger, branded departments are a new development that calls attention to the highly popular local Ukrop's brand, according to the Axios report.

Last year Ukrop's Homestyle Foods said it rolled out its grab-and-go, ready-to-eat grilled chicken to more than 500 Kroger-owned stores east of the Mississippi River. In addition, Ukrop's White House-brand dinner rolls, cinnamon crumb cake and mini pies are available in Kroger stores nationwide.

The expansion of the branded in-store prepared food offerings at Kroger comes as consumers have increasingly been turning to supermarkets for ready-to-eat foods. Deli-prepared food sales have been among the strongest-performing categories among grocers as cautious consumers have cut back on restaurant spending.

Supermarkets are capitalizing on the trend by investing in expanded prepared foods assortments, including grab-and-go offerings. For example, this year H-E-B ramped up its rollout of [upgraded grab-and-go prepared foods](#) displays under its Fresh Initiatives program.

According to the 2026 *Supermarket News* [Retailer Expectations Survey](#), 38% of retailers said they planned to expand their deli/prepared foods offerings this year and 66% said they planned to introduce more grab-and-go or prepacked foods. More than half (55%) of survey respondents identified deli/foodservice as the category they expected to be the most successful in 2026.

UK "Back to School Bash" at Store #784

