

BEST PRACTICES

# for Optimizing the Grab-and-Go Section

*Maintaining freshness is key for  
keeping shoppers satisfied.*



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**F**or retailers serving busy shoppers on the go, now's the time to give the grab-and-go section a facelift.

According to Technomic's recent *U.S. Retail Foodservice Consumer Trend Report*, 92% of consumers said they expected to maintain or increase their purchases of grab-and-go items in the near future. Additionally, commuting to work has become the norm again after the pandemic had many consumers working from home; according to Technomic's May 2022 *C-Store Consumer Marketbrief*, two-thirds of consumers who remained at the same job through the pandemic are now commuting at least a few days a week, and 29% are back to commuting full time—and these numbers are likely similar among grocery store consumers as well.

In the process of optimizing the grab-and-go section to compete for sales amid heightened demand, it's crucial for retailers to offer the products their customers are craving. Having a great selection of sandwiches and wraps is a no-brainer: According to Technomic's *U.S. Retail Foodservice report*, the No. 1 breakfast item is a breakfast sandwich/wrap, with 42% of consumers saying they'd purchase if offered, and the same amount say they'd purchase a sandwich or wrap for lunch or dinner.

To make the most out of a great product selection, retailers can benefit from finessing their in-store merchandising by highlighting foods that meet their shoppers' needs.

## MERCHANDISING BEST PRACTICES

Highlighting freshness is one of the most important callouts to make in the prepared foods section, as shoppers want to know at

a glance that a grab-and-go item will have the taste and quality of something freshly prepared. According to Technomic's *U.S. Retail Foodservice report*, the No. 1 factor that consumers say would prompt them to purchase from retail foodservice is that the food looks good, and 27% of consumers say that fresher grab-and-go options would encourage them to make repeat purchases from a store's prepared foods section.

Freshness matters beyond just "shelf appeal," however. Retailers need to ensure freshness long after the time the food is purchased, as most retail foodservice shoppers don't eat their food right away—35% of retail foodservice consumers wait two to three hours to eat their food, and 21% wait 24 hours or more, according to Technomic's *U.S. Retail Foodservice report*.

While grocers have some control over maintaining and monitoring the freshness of items still in the store, the best way for retailers to ensure freshness beyond the time of purchase is to offer items in packaging that helps retain taste and quality overall. E.A. Sween, for example, offers premade sandwiches with freshness-preserving packaging that can retain quality for three days or more—even up to several weeks.

## PRODUCT SELECTION

Having great products on the shelf matters not just in terms of day-to-day sales, but can determine store loyalty, too; according to Technomic's *U.S. Retail Foodservice report*, 39% of consumers say they're loyal to certain retailers because of specific prepared foods they offer.

Offering lots of great options to choose from can also keep shoppers coming back

for more. Thirty percent of consumers say improved variety would encourage repeat purchases, and 38% say they would like retail stores to offer more prepared foods that feature new or unique flavors, according to Technomic's *U.S. Retail Foodservice report*.

Of course, retailers need to keep margins in mind as they cater their offerings to consumer preferences. Especially as labor struggles persist, grocers need ways to minimize costs while delivering on demands for variety, freshness and quality in the grab-and-go section.

Premade grab-and-go solutions from E.A. Sween—with proprietary freshness-preserving packaging—can deliver on all of the above. Not only do premade offerings save labor and provide an opportunity to keep the shelves in the grab-and-go section fully stocked when consumers are ready to purchase, but E.A. Sween sandwiches offer a consistent fixed cost, providing profit integrity for grocers juggling other variables.

In short, choosing premade grab-and-go sandwiches can help retailers meet demand and minimize shrink to keep margins high. E.A. Sween offerings fit the bill with varieties shoppers love, including Wraps and Artisan style sandwiches.



To learn more about how products from E.A. Sween can help retailers optimize the grab-and-go foods section and maximize margins, visit [www.easween.com/brands](http://www.easween.com/brands)

