CRATHCO

1. How to Build a Beverage Program That Actually Makes Money

A profitable **convenience store beverage program** is more than a collection of drink options. It is a business system designed to drive traffic, improve inside sales, increase ticket size, and deliver strong gross margins. Foodservice has become a major contributor to c-store profitability, accounting for **27.7% of in-store sales and 38.6% of in-store gross margin dollars** in 2024, according to NACS. [convenience.org]

For operators evaluating **c-store beverage equipment** or planning a beverage station upgrade, the first step is understanding the role each category plays. Cold dispensed beverages support refreshment and repeat visits. Frozen beverage machines can create impulse appeal and high-margin incremental sales. Specialty and functional beverages help operators compete with quick-service restaurants and coffee chains.

Cold dispensed beverages alone remain a meaningful profit opportunity, with NACS Magazine reporting a **51.76% gross margin** for the category in 2023 data. But strong margins do not happen automatically. Operators need the right **commercial beverage dispensers**, beverage station layout, menu architecture, and labor model to make the program work consistently. [nacsmagazine.com]

The most effective beverage programs are built around a scalable platform: the right mix of **cold beverage dispenser systems, frozen beverage equipment, and self-serve beverage stations** that staff can operate confidently during peak hours.

Before adding more SKUs, review whether your current beverage setup is designed around the drinks that drive the most profit — not just the drinks you have always offered.