

What's the Big Idea?



Making loyalty EZ

One Stop Food Stores (Shelby, NC) had been searching for a loyalty program for

years, but couldn't find one at an agreeable price for its 17 stores. The chain had just about given up the search when it stumbled upon EZRewards (www.ezrewards.us), a



Convenience Store

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Business Ideas for Convenience Retailers

Decisions

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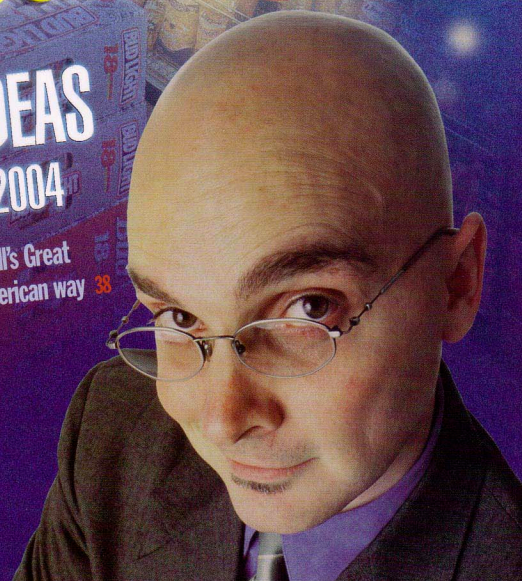
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points-based loyalty program that revolves around a multi-functional point-of-sale terminal and state-of-the-art backend software, delivered to customers through a mag-strip card. To award points, cashiers swipe the customer's card at the time of purchase and key in the purchase amount. The EZRewards system does the rest—issuing and tracking customer points and redemptions, facilitating performance-based promotions and issuing receipts to track transactions.

One Stop opted for a straight bonus program that awards points for every dollar spent. Using the system's reporting feature, paired with support from vendors, the chain can create monthly promotions for free products or grant instant winners to stimulate excitement in the stores. One Stop also created a gift card program using the system.

"We can also customize our rewards," says Tom Tucker, One Stop's vice president of operations. "Say a customer turns up on our 'lost customer report.' I can tell the EZRewards system to reward that customer with a free 2-liter the next time they come in. The next time the card is swiped it will read 'welcome back' and instruct the cashier to give them their prize."

One Stop saw a return on its investment in one month. The terminals cost \$45 per week per store, and the cards, which were branded with a store's name and logo, cost 28¢ a piece. The company ordered 4,000 cards (1,000 for each of the four stores participating at this point) and in the first three months has given out more than 3,100.

"We're providing a service that no one else in the area has right now," Tucker adds. "People change habits to shop with us because of that service."

