



# 3 THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN INVESTING IN YOUR STORE



In the convenience store world, two things ring true: we're always looking for ways to get customers to turn left, and it's an ever evolving industry. Keeping up with customer preferences and creating the best in-store experience for your community members is key to staying competitive. Whether it's upgrading exterior lighting to better align with customer expectations of a safe environment or enhancing food offerings with fresh grab-and-go items, people will notice those features and remember them the next time they need to make a stop.

So, whether you're considering a small upgrade or a major overhaul to your c-store, there's a few things to keep in mind when choosing to invest in your store.

## 1 UNDERSTAND AND IDENTIFY YOUR COMMUNITY'S NEEDS

Especially for store owners and operators, the needs of the community drive what offerings to include in their store. As a convenience store brand that deeply believes in investing in each location to meet the needs of its local community, Cenex®, the energy brand of CHS Inc., offers LIFT, a lighting, image

and facilities transformation program designed to revamp Cenex stores through a series of exterior and in-store updates. Through LIFT, current Cenex retailers have the freedom and flexibility to renovate their stores how they see fit, all with the resources and support of CHS.

Each community is different, and there are so many ways store owners and operators can make updates to offer just what their neighborhood craves. Through the LIFT initiative, Cenex store owners can more easily reflect their community in-store.

In Merrill, Wis., the River Country

Co-Op Cenex location sits along the Wisconsin River and near several lakes, so it added a bait shop as one of its in-store upgrades so that minnows and a snack were easy to grab on the way to a fishing trip. Offering local food vendors was important to the folks at the Synergy Cooperative Cenex location in Cumberland, Wis., and with the help of LIFT, they incorporated four local meat and cheese vendors in addition to locally made maple syrup and honey products. The Northern Star Co-Op management team in Grand Rapids, Minn. knew that many residents in the community rely on financial assistance, so they chose to implement the Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) program, an electronic system that allows a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) member to pay for food using SNAP benefits. While there are more than 1,400 locally owned and operated stores within the Cenex network, these examples show how LIFT helps each location be tailor-made for its community.

“We believe that our stores being locally owned and operated is truly what makes

Cenex unique” said Akhtar Hussain, Director of Refined Fuels Marketing at CHS. “The LIFT initiative was born to help our Cenex family be able to remain competitive in their area and make their location one worth driving an extra five minutes for.”

## **2 IDENTIFY THE POTENTIAL INCREASE IN PROFIT**

Investing in your location will do more than improve the shopping experience for your community. Making impactful upgrades has the potential to boost your bottom line, too. For the Enerbase Cooperative Cenex location in Minot, N.D., not only were upgrades on the table but they also committed to a complete overhaul to increase sales. The team had done minor updates in the past like adding new pumps and P.O.S. systems, but the low-interest financing available through the LIFT initiative made them feel secure with the potential ROI of committing to a 2,500-foot addition. The investment in their location was worth it, and allowed for a kitchen expansion, new coolers



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***“WE KNOW YOU TAKE PRIDE IN YOUR BUSINESS, AND THAT YOUR BUSINESS PLAYS A VITAL ROLE IN YOUR COMMUNITY,” SAID HUSSAIN. “BECAUSE WE’RE ROOTED IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES, WE’RE DEDICATED TO FOSTERING COMMUNITY IN ALL TOWNS WE SERVE. WE WANT TO BE EACH STORE OWNER’S TRUE SUPPORT SYSTEM THROUGHOUT EACH STORE TRANSFORMATION.”***

and freezers, an updated entryway, refreshed restrooms, upgraded countertops and cabinetry, new LED lighting throughout the store and more.

“Enerbase Cooperative is just one example of so many stores in the Cenex network that are seeing really great ROI from their recent renovations,” said Hussain. “In fact, since the start of the LIFT initiative, Cenex retailers have seen a substantial increase in food, in-store and gas sales. That proves that the upgrades are satisfying the needs of the communities these locations serve.”

As a c-store owner or operator, you may be wondering if now is the right time to take the gamble of renovating your c-store. Whether you’re considering an all-in store revamp or on the fence about some minor upgrades, Cenex is ready to be your partner, and through LIFT initiative, the brand is offering low-interest loan financing for qualifying in-store improvements like updated bathrooms, LED lighting, reach-in or walk-in coolers, check-out counters and so much more.

### **3 SELECT THE RIGHT PARTNER**

Taking on a renovation at any scale can be nerve-wrecking. As a business operator, you need to make the right choice for not only your store, but also for your community. Choosing the right partner to enhance your convenience store portfolio is a critical component to





achieving overall success. The Cenex-brand is ready to be your partner and can help decide when it's the right time to renovate, and even the extent of upgrades you'd like to pursue.

"We know you take pride in your business, and that your business plays a vital role in your community," said Hussain. "Because we're rooted in local communities, we're dedicated to fostering community in all towns we serve. We want to be each store owner's true support system throughout each store transformation."

As a trusted partner, Cenex empowers you to make the business decisions that are right for you and your community by offering vendor partner flexibility through programs like LIFT.



For more information or to join the Cenex family, visit [cenex.com/lift](https://cenex.com/lift).