

Super Small Super Store

7-Eleven is the world's largest chain of convenience stores. Even larger than McDonald's! Its stores are located in eighteen countries, with its largest markets being Japan, the United States, Taiwan, and Thailand. Globally, it operates franchises or licenses more than 35,200 stores. They serve approximately seven million customers everyday.

The company originated in 1927 in Dallas, Texas, USA, when an employee of Southland Ice Company, Joe C. Thompson, started selling milk, eggs and bread from an ice shop. Although there were already some small grocery stores in the area, Thompson, discovered that selling basic items such as bread and milk reduced the need for people to travel longer distances to grocery stores. Thompson eventually bought the Southland Ice Company and turned it into the Southland Corporation which soon opened several locations in the Dallas area. Initially, these stores were open from 7a.m. to 11p.m. while most competing stores opened later and closed much earlier. The company began to use the 7-Eleven name in 1946, and by 1952, had opened its 100th store. In 1963, 7-Eleven experimented with a 24-hour schedule. Aggressive marketing strategies and careful attention to consumer trends propelled the company to unprecedented growth throughout the 70's and mid 80's.

Despite stiff competition from similar retailers, 7-Eleven remains at the top the convenience store market. In 2008, after placing in the top 10 a respectable 16 times, the company was named the number one franchise by Entrepreneur Magazine's Franchise 500, beating out Subway who had held the number one spot for 15 years.

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