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MANAGEMENT • INVESTMENT • ECONOMICS • ENTREPRENEURSHIP • TECHNOLOGY

**Mengapa Pelaburan
Emas Menjadi Pilihan?**

Telur Mana Telur?

*you
are
what
matters*

**An Affair of Online
Learning and Covid-19**

**Pembasmian Kemiskinan Dalam RMK
Ke-12**

Bukit Harimau Menangis
Tarikan Pendakian di Kemaman



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7-ELEVEN... DING DONG...

We are sure all of you can hear that statement, right? Let us look into the company's brief history.

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7-Eleven is a globally recognised retailer headquartered in Dallas, Texas, that owns 60,000 convenience stores worldwide, the majority of which are in North America and Asia, founded in 1927 by J.C. Thompson and, at the time, only offered milk, bread, and eggs (7-Eleven Malaysia Holdings Berhad Annual Report 2020, 2020). The firm's name originated from its original business hours, 7.00 a.m. until 11.00 p.m. Today, the chain is well-known for its wide

range of daily needs and food supplies despite its small store space and 24-hour service.

7-Eleven Malaysia Holdings Berhad, on the other hand, was founded in 1984 and has been listed on Bursa since 2014, besides being a franchisor to approximately 2,500 7-Eleven stores in Malaysia (Hoi, 2021). 7-Eleven is so popular in Malaysia that Dungun, Terengganu alone, has more than ten stores across the district. Locals are so used to

7-E (local slang for 7-Eleven) that if they forget to bring a toothbrush or comb while travelling, they will say, "Let's find a 7-E".

7-Eleven introduced the world to the Slurpee in 1966, its signature iced drink, and the Big Gulp in 1976, a 32-ounce (946-ml) cup fountain drink (7-Eleven, 2019). Besides that, the convenience store also offers coffee to go, self-serve soda, a wide variety of reheatable and convenient foods, daily needs, such as soap, shampoo, toothbrush, and much more. In a rapidly changing digital world, the store believes in redefining convenience. The company, which initially has only focused on bread, milk, eggs, and gas, has now diversified and embraced banking, delivery services, rewards programmes, and convenient digital apps (7-Eleven Franchise Innovation, 2022).

The firm has implemented state-of-the-art 21st-century store technology that provides customers with a seamless experience while simplifying back-end technology. As technology redefines how people shop, 7-Eleven continues researching and developing platforms that cater to a new, digital-savvy generation of shoppers. The company is keen on investing millions in industry-leading digital innovation. By introducing its name as one of the leading latest technology adapters in the market, 7-Eleven's brand image increases its value among consumers, suppliers, and partners. Through a differentiation strategy, 7-Eleven remains the cream of the crop among convenience-store operators.

Besides keeping in check with consumers' ease of daily use, the management and office-administration aspects are also highlighted, making sure that all records and stock keepings are effective, efficient, and top-notch. Looking at the back-end technology, the firm thoroughly analyses sales metrics through related resources and software to enable franchisees to optimise inventory and help keep shelves stocked with what sells best at each location. Different locations may have different market demographics

and segmentation. In addition, inventory management and invoice payments are all fully automated.

Like many other stores, 7-Eleven also carries its house brand, a brand name used by retailers for a product or product line made specifically for or by the retailer. Other terms for the house brand used interchangeably by academicians across the globe are private brands, private labels, or store brands. Store brands being familiar to us include Mydin, Tesco (now Lotus), Giant, and IKEA. The examples of 7-Eleven house-brand products are Big Gulp, Slurpee, 7-Eleven coffee, and other selection of 7-SELECT products, which have outsold many national brands since 2013. Locals are more than willing to buy 7-Eleven's house brands since the quality surpasses famous and well-known brands but are offered at a lower price.

In June 2020, 7-Eleven ventured into the retail-pharmacy segment by acquiring a 75% stake in Caring Pharmacy Group Berhad. 7-Eleven and CARiNG are household names in Malaysia and are especially well-known in the Klang Valley. 7-Eleven was said to have taken the initiative to collaborate with CARiNG because COVID-19 has drastically changed Malaysian consumers' consumption patterns, with people buying more preventive healthcare and take-home items, such as masks, hand sanitisers, and over-the-counter medicines. 7-Eleven innovatively integrated its brand name with partners that suit the current pandemic situation to survive the increasingly competitive convenience stores market in Malaysia.

Another recent team-up is between 7-Eleven Inc. and The Hershey Company. They have partnered to develop new confectionary items made exclusively available at 7-Eleven stores in Malaysia, Thailand, Taiwan, the Philippines, and Singapore (NST Business, 2021). The packaging itself is unique in a way that it shows that the items are special and only available in 7-Eleven. This partnership is an excellent example of both parties' wise win-win branding strategy, as Hershey has

had the latest manufacturing innovations, such as automated candy-making technology. In contrast, 7-Eleven has widely dispersed stores across the five countries, making sales convenient and possible. 7-Eleven has even integrated their shoppers' insights in taste profiles, consumer needs, and snacking trends, and provided the data to Hershey to create confectionaries that best suit the target market.

Therefore, companies should identify specific ways to differentiate their products or services to gain a competitive advantage (Trott, 2017). Creating strategic alliances with reputable firms could help the companies expand in many ways, which will then lead to highly innovative firms, thus, increase customer satisfaction, as proven by Teo et al. (2019). Have fun with 7-Eleven, friends!

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