An enterprising employee at one of the stores began offering milk, bread and eggs on Sundays, when the

regular grocery stores were closed for the weekend.

The move to stay open 24 hours started by accident in 1962, at a store in Austin, Texas, located close to the

university campus. On a Saturday night after a football game, the store was so busy that its employees lost

track of time and did not bring down the shutters.

Meeting the needs of convenience-oriented customers by

providing a broad selection of fresh, high-quality products and services at everyday fair prices, speedy

transactions and a clean, friendly shopping environment.

7-Eleven Inc. was the world’s largest operator, franchisor and licensor of convenience stores, with annual

sales of more than $62 billion.1 The company had pioneered the concept of convenience stores in the

United States, where it had 7,200 stores.

This concept was also extended to several countries in North

America, Europe and Asia, including more than 36,400 franchises outside the United States, the largest of

which were located in Asia. Beyond the borders of the United States, Japan had the single largest number

of stores in the 7-Eleven chain, followed by Thailand, Taiwan and South Korea.

7-Eleven was founded in 1927 as the Southland Ice Company in Dallas, Texas. It started by selling ice

blocks that were used to refrigerate food in homes. The first stores were known as Tote’m stores because customers “toted” away the ice blocks.

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regular grocery stores were closed for the weekend.

Tote’m changed its name to 7-Eleven in 1946, when the stores were open from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. daily.

During the 1950s, 7-Eleven started moving beyond the Dallas market into other regions of Texas and also

into Florida and Washington, DC.

In

fact, the American work routine was changing. Late-night or early morning schedules were becoming

common, and factories were running three full shifts, leading to several categories of American workers

who were staying up later, getting up earlier, and needing a convenient place to shop.

7-Eleven had articulated its mission as: “Meeting the needs of convenience-oriented customers by

providing a broad selection of fresh, high-quality products and services at everyday fair prices, speedy

transactions and a clean, friendly shopping environment.

The concept of convenience stores, developed by 7-Eleven, was shaping the way Americans shopped; in

turn, American buying behaviour and the American landscape were both shaping the identity of

convenience stores