



ADVANCED POS: FORGING RETAIL'S FUTURE

New ways of ringing up customers are helping retailers make the critical shift from transaction to interaction.

TAKEAWAYS

- 1 Advanced point-of-sale systems are the hub of digitally transformed retail
- 2 When retailers use new POS technologies, customers are engaged and revenues rise
- 3 Leading retailers are turning data generated by POS systems into real-time insights

From more personalized service to increased sales, retailers of all types are seeing next-generation point-of-sale (POS) systems transform the customer journey.

Point-of-sale systems are evolving to meet the challenges of the 21st-century marketplace, augmenting the shopping experience of customers while maximizing efficiencies in everything from checkout times to inventory flow. Although modern POS systems are decentralized, they are also powerful, interconnected, and often mobile.

Modern POS platforms are hubs for retailers to better understand their customers while also making shopping more convenient and fun. With the right POS solutions, retailers see more conversions and gain deeper insight into what's selling and what's not.

POS: The Digital Hub

An increasing number of phone and tablet stores use mobile POS systems, and other sectors are starting to follow. Switching to mobile POS is a sound decision for many if not most retailers, but such a move should follow careful evaluation of a retailer's specific needs.

The watchword is compatibility. Smart retailers will select a mobile computing device that meets specs for payment card industry (PCI) compliance, connectivity, and manageability. A good example: Motion computing tablets—devices that incorporate Intel processors and Windows—can support any retail operation. They boast full compatibility with most POS software and peripherals, and offer complete PCI application support, superb wireless capabilities, and excellent remote management.

POS solutions are the hub of a multichannel commerce infrastructure. With advanced POS solutions, retailers can see what's happening across channels, helping businesses better understand their customers. Leading retailers are turning the data from POS solutions into real-time insights.

Richard Clarke, global retail director for strategy and business development at Fujitsu, has said that advanced POS technologies will be at the center of retail's digital transformation:

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Fujitsu offers the TP8 terminal, a sleek, minimalist platform enabled by Intel® vPro™ technology that features a modular, all-in-one design and dual independent customer-facing display. The TP8 supports multiple in-store touchpoints and handles a wide range of applications, including sales transactions, registration, promotions, and loyalty programs.

But POS is about more than money changing hands. Toshiba's Lift 'n Learn uses digital signage to engage customers with relevant information when a particular product is picked up from a store shelf. Brookstone, a U.S.-based retailer of lifestyle products ranging from outdoor speakers to foot massagers, used Lift 'n Learn to acquaint customers with its unique products.

“Toshiba's interactive digital signage complements our customers' in-store experience with the kind of dynamic content they've come to expect when shopping online,” said Kiran Smith, Brookstone's chief marketing officer.

While not part of the Brookstone pilot, the Lift 'n Learn technology allows customers to purchase an item from the touchscreen.

Check, Please

The restaurant industry is also embracing next-generation POS systems. Servers spend about a third of their time dealing with payment, according to Leslie Truelove, a marketing director at Ziosk, a company that makes pay-at-the-table solutions for restaurants.

“Servers have more time to be on the floor and tend to customer wishes,” Truelove said.

That means more orders.

Restaurants that use Ziosk's tabletop POS solutions also see an uptick in order size, according to Truelove. Diners who might feel sheepish ordering dessert after a full meal have less inhibition about ordering a slice of pie from a touchscreen.

The Ziosk POS solution allows restaurants to “capitalize on magic moments,” Truelove said. “It becomes the server's assistant.”

A table-side POS solution also yields a trove of valuable customer data. Restaurants using Ziosk receive 50 times as many survey responses, according to Truelove.

“Restaurants are getting infinitely more data now,” Truelove said. “With that information they can learn what customers want and tailor their menus accordingly.”

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Conjoining Two Worlds

Ultimately, advanced POS systems are making the brick-and-mortar experience more like online shopping—and vice versa. The conjunction of these two shopping modes is inevitable, to the benefit of customers and retailers alike.

“My overarching belief is that as more and more sales move online, the store is fundamentally transforming from being a distribution channel to becoming a media channel,” said Doug Stephens, a retail consultant and self-described futurist. “Stores will be interactive points where customers can learn, play, explore, and try new things.”

