Mobile Solutions
Transforming Retail

Improve mobile shopping, customer experience, and workforce and operations management

The retail sector is experiencing dramatic changes that require new approaches to deliver profitability and returns. Shifting customer demographics are creating new markets. The ‘consumerization’ of technologies is changing the nature of customer interactions.

At the same time, economic uncertainty is affecting consumer spending. Empowered customers increasingly control the shopping experience. So for growth, retailers need to seek new business models and customer relationships.

Mobile technology is at the center of this transformation. Mobility applications such as location-based messaging are a critical tool in helping increase levels of interaction and engagement with customers, thus leading them to buy more and be more loyal.

The question for retailers is how to embrace trends in mobility without compromising security or creating new sources of business risk.

Highlights
Mobile tools have a powerful effect on customer perceptions of your retail brand, helping you to reach people in new and different ways.

Building mobility into your business strategy can help you open up new revenue channels and reduce your cost of operations, using a single infrastructure to touch on critical retail challenges ranging from stock turns to customer loyalty.

IBM and Cisco can help with solutions that allow you to enhance customer service, keep customers in store for longer, reduce queuing times, deliver more targeted promotions, and make inventory management easier.
Dealing with the challenges facing retailers

Retailers are under pressure to deliver a superior customer experience while streamlining operations. This imperative creates a number of challenges that can be addressed by mobile technologies, such as:

- Lack of timely and relevant interactions to customers, employees, vendors, and other stakeholders.
- Decreased enterprise and store-level people, process, and systems capabilities and capacities.
- Inconsistent planning and measurement across the organization.

Taking advantage of new opportunities

With Cisco and IBM’s enterprise mobility offerings for retail you can capitalize on the opportunities presented by mobile technologies while addressing the challenges of an increasingly complex environment. We can help you:

- Provide employees with devices, wireless infrastructure, and mobile apps for workforce productivity, customer service, merchandising, and supply chain management.
- Use analytics to understand customer movement and behavior in-store, allowing you to create location-based applications such as VIP customer alerts.
- Deliver an easier and more seamless shopping experience across touch points, with support for new modes of engagement.
- Offer timely, relevant, and personalized customer interactions, and shape positive brand experiences in real time.
- Enhance the customer experience across channels through more mobile and intelligent location technology.

How you could benefit from mobility today

Provide better customer support

You can improve customer support significantly through a measure as simple as installing an in-store wireless network and giving employees access to it with a tablet or smartphone. This will help your staff serve customers faster, increasing your sales potential.

Imagine your sales staff being able to check on product pricing or availability from anywhere within a store, pulling up product comparisons, delivery details, and other information while moving around the shop floor, or suggesting additional items to match a customer’s selection.

Similarly, senior can use the technology to carry out executive functions while remaining on the shop floor, adding up to a much more efficient, productive, and customer-friendly retail operation.

Keep customers in store longer

Day after day potential customers walk past your door(s). How can you entice them to come in and buy? One way is through a free guest Wi-Fi service. With Wi-Fi access, even the most shopping-averse partner might be happy to loiter while their other half peruses your goods.
And while they are there, you can give them an excuse to browse with targeted promotions delivered to their smartphone or tablet devices. Offer a voucher or time-limited promotion as part of your Wi-Fi service and give potential shoppers more reasons to step inside.

Taking the concept a step further, you could also provide smartphone apps that deliver relevant information to customers while keeping your brand top of mind and offering further sales opportunities even when a customer is no longer in store.

**Reduce waiting**

Few things are as off-putting in a shopping trip as having to wait to get to the till. With mobile technology, however, you can give shoppers a quicker and more efficient alternative.

With the right systems in place, your customers could use their own mobile devices as barcode scanners and pay using a web-based interface. Alternatively, give spare employees a handheld card reader plus a portable printer and let them take payments if all the cashier desks are full.

This won’t just result in shorter waiting times, but can double the wow factor of your brand when shoppers realize they never have to stand in line again.

**Connect with your customers**

Retail is one of the sectors that has been quickest to catch on to the potential of digital signage, with its capacity to deliver eye-catching, targeted promotional messaging. Many current digital signage systems are limited by their immovable nature however, meaning they cannot be employed flexibly within stores. By linking your digital signage to your Wi-Fi network, however, you can move signs around to suit specific promotions or customer events.

Even better, you can get your digital signage to react to the presence of customer devices, for example by delivering customized welcome signs and promotions when registered customers walk in through the door.

And why stop there? With or without digital signage, you can use Wi-Fi to push personalized promotional messages direct to potential customers, via their handsets.

**Facilitate inventory management**

Stock taking is critical… and onerous. Keeping track of inventory is vital for efficient retail operations, but can tie up valuable employee resources and time. Wireless technologies can streamline the process, however, by enabling automated data capture based on RFID.

Tagging your products and tracking them automatically as the move in and out of the store can cut out the work associated with stock taking and at the same time help deal with challenges such as theft and breakage.

Furthermore, automated inventory management can serve as a stepping stone for a wider integrated supply chain tracking process that can allow your business to keep tabs on each product from when it leaves the factory to when you hand it to a customer.
The Cisco and IBM answer to retail mobility

Today’s shoppers are increasingly using mobile devices throughout the sales cycle. Mobile tools have a powerful effect on customer perceptions of your brand, helping you to reach people in new and different ways.

Tablets, smartphones, and laptops have become so pervasive that individuals expect to be able to use them as an everyday part of their shopping experience.

For retailers, though this excitement around the latest devices and mobile applications can draw attention away from the true foundation of mobile collaboration: the network. It needs to be able to control access to maintain adequate security.

It must also have the capacity, reliability, and performance that mobile workers require. End-user configuration and connection have to be simple and easy, regardless of device.

To successfully enable a mobile strategy, one must first address these and other network-related issues.

IBM and Cisco can help with solutions that consider everything from network infrastructure and device management to the policies that govern access and security. We can even put together entire workspaces using applications and virtualization.

We deliver the components you need, starting with the network.

Cisco provides world-renowned network technology products, while IBM completes the picture with deep business and IT expertise, delivered through consulting, design, implementation, and run services, as well as a host of technology offerings.

Together, IBM and Cisco can help you develop the right business, network, and mobility strategy quickly and cost-effectively.

A portfolio to meet a myriad mobility needs

IBM MobileFirst
IBM MobileFirst is the most comprehensive mobile solution portfolio in the industry, offering an array of solutions that helps businesses connect, secure, manage and develop mobile networks, infrastructures and applications.

Mobile is rapidly becoming the primary means by which individuals interact with businesses, and through IBM MobileFirst IBM is providing companies with the essential tools to take advantage of new business opportunities being enabled by mobile.

Cisco BYOD Smart Solution
A modular framework for mobility environments, the Cisco BYOD Smart Solution lets you start with the modules you need for today’s business needs and then add new modules as your needs change.

The solution covers core infrastructure, policy management, secure mobility, workspace management, and productivity applications.

For more information
To learn more about how IBM and Cisco network expertise and solutions can help your enterprise support mobile collaboration by incorporating the use of employee-owned devices into its business strategy, contact your IBM or Cisco representative.

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