



Boots Chooses IBM to Help Empower Employees to Drive Sales

LONDON and SOMERS, NY -- Jul 1, 2004 -- Boots, the UK's largest pharmacy and health care chain, has chosen IBM to develop an in-store employee portal to help store managers and staff deliver better customer service which will in turn drive sales.

Accessible through check-outs and personal digital assistants, the portal will provide Boots store managers and staff with access on demand to training materials and personalised advice to complete tasks in progress more efficiently. The initiative is part of Boots' strategy to simplify internal processes giving staff more time to assist customers on the shop floor.

The portal will be the foundation for quick and simple delivery of a wide range of information and applications, enabling stores to be run more efficiently and profitably. Materials available will include advice on serving customers, managing constant stock availability on store shelves and driving sales plans.

"Our customer appeal is founded on our heritage of expert service and advice. We're empowering our store managers and staff with the tools they need to drive our outstanding retail offering. IBM is providing us with a solution to improve customer service and drive revenue by empowering our staff," said Brad Poulson, Director of Store Systems at Boots.

Integral to the project will be input from key Boots store staff who are being consulted on the type of information they need on a daily basis to serve customers more efficiently. Work on the portal is already underway and pilots are scheduled in 21 stores next month.

"Maintaining leadership in retail is about making a visit to a store so compelling that customers keep coming back," says Neil Holland, IBM Retail Client Executive. "The Boots employee portal will drive new levels of customer service and productivity for Boots, empowering store staff to deliver the optimal shopping experience for sophisticated consumers. It enables Boots to exceed customers' demands and maintain its leadership in the market."

About IBM

IBM, the world's largest information technology company, is the leader in providing the Retail Industry with a full range of e-business solutions, including: point-of-sale systems, automated self-checkout systems, other hardware and software technology, consulting focused on business transformation, IT strategy and planning, store operations improvement, and supply chain optimization, and with services, such as outsourcing, managed operations, systems integration, and application development and design.

IBM has a list of retail customers in 100 countries worldwide that reads like a "Who's Who" of retailing. For more information on IBM Retail Solutions, please visit

<http://www.ibm.com/industries/retail>

About the Boots Company Plc

Best known as the UK's largest pharmacy chain, the company also owns, develops and markets consumer healthcare products in 130 countries around the world through Boots Healthcare International. Among its best known brands are Nurofen, Strepsils and Clearasil. Boots retail operations continue to break new ground in health and beauty with the recent introduction of wellbeing services from aromatherapy to laser eye surgery. The company's unparalleled product offer includes Boots brands and exclusives such as Britain's top selling cosmetics range, No7, and the designer haircare brand Toni & Guy. In addition to its stores in the UK and Ireland, Boots also operates in Thailand, Taiwan, The Netherlands and Italy.