

Dallas Conference Proves IBM RSS is 'Wide Open and On Demand'

Mechanical bulls, self-checkout systems and the Super Bowl were highlights of the IBM Retail Store Solutions Education Conference 2004 (RSSEC) where over 700 IBMers, IBM Business Partners and customers "corralled" in Dallas, Texas to learn and share insights on the "New Retail Frontier: Wide open and on demand."

Ken Keating, IBM Retail Store Solutions' Director of Marketing, kicked off the events' general sessions and set the stage for a celebration of 30 years in the retail industry. Tom Peterson, General Manager of RSSD, echoed Ken's thanks to the team and added: "Delivering technology that helps our customers wrap their arms around their customers, empower their employees, streamline operations and take out costs is what we're all we're about." In spite of new competitors in the market, "we had an 'incredible' year." Peterson credited new RSSD products – including the acquisition of self-checkout and significant growth in business partner results – with the year's success. "We're entering 2004 with good momentum," he claimed.

Speakers for the 3-day event gave testimonials on how IBM's innovative technology is helping their businesses succeed. Reidar Nordby, President and CEO of Norsk Tipping, is revolutionizing the lottery business, along with IBM Business Partner EssNet, by combining it with retail trade. Technology has helped Chad Ehmke, IT Vice-President at Yum! Brands operate the many different brands in his company – Pizza Hut, KFC, Long John Silvers, A&W and Taco Bell – as one.

Dave McGeary, IT Project Director with Giant Eagle, highlighted self-checkout in the keynote speech. The fast-growing regional supermarket chain on the East Coast, Giant Eagle has IBM Self Checkout in over half of its chain with plans to install it in all its new and remodeled stores.

The IBM Self Checkout systems – recently acquired along with leading self checkout vendor, PSI – debuted at the conference's Solutions Expo RSSEC where many attendees were eager to see how the systems work. In fact, CNBC featured a segment on the self-checkout trend, which aired during the conference and included interview clips with Tom Peterson.

At the end of the conference, Pascal Gaussen, RSSD Director in EMEA, summed up the event saying he was impressed with the speakers and the consistent messaging throughout the event. "This year we talked about strategy, not only hardware."

The Super Bowl and the mechanical bull? Plan to attend RSSEC 2005 and find out more.