

8/31/2017

Retail Tech Trends

Jennifer Polanz

Q: What are your thoughts on tech adoption by garden retailers?



Sam Kirkland (SK): Mobile point of sale (POS) has been a topic of conversation in the industry for quite some time now—some retailers are slower to adopt the technology than others. The cost of a mobile device versus traditional technology is less and retailers can offer faster service while maintaining customer satisfaction with speed and accurate pricing, while at the same time outperforming competition. Also, it helps consumers checkout quickly and efficiently.

Through the use of mobile technology, retailers have all the business logic required while on the go, helping consumers with information, or diagnosing and responding to problems—which are key to customer service. While working with consumers, you can promote your website, review upcoming events, access pricing and quantity status, and, if you offer special orders, have that information with you at all times.

We recently announced a new addition to our suite of mobile solutions, Epicor Eagle Mobile+. With this app, retailers can easily access their data with today's mobile platforms—which can lower operational costs and allow more access for associates.

Creating lists has been high on the list for retailers, so if an area of the business needs to focus on something specific, users can create a list and have these tasks available on mobile devices so associates are focused where they need to be. Having access to this real-time data allows businesses to make decisions or changes on the fly.

Q: We're hearing a lot today about using data and analytics to better understand the customer. How can IGC retailers benefit from this?

SK: Analytics can be overwhelming. With lawn and garden retailers, I always discuss seasonal purchasing.

Catching the downturn in sales is dramatic and key to start reducing purchasing to match sales. Another area overlooked too frequently is using analytics in marketing. Think about product placement and how to merchandise from the consumers' perspective. Using a market basket solution that shows what items sell when a specific item is purchased, to better plan product placement and increase the flow of high margin items.

On the consumer side, it's important to know who your top 100 customers are and if there is a lot of movement in that group. Taking care of your customers is key in retail. All customers are important, but knowing who is spending their time in your business and what they are buying can help business owners gain a better understanding of their business.

Q: Many retailers don't always fully utilize what's available. Why is this and how can it change?

SK: First, retailers need to see that by using the technology they invested in, they will not only improve processes, but also begin realizing their return on investment. The next step is to analyze employees and make sure they are in the right positions. From there, we can help build a training path that fits the business and develop a multi-year plan to improve system usage. A specific software training solution is a great help as this can get all employees to a uniform level of knowledge.

When retailers are open to try something new and have a software system monitor the success, that's when I know they are beginning to change processes and head in the right direction. Additionally, if software providers can offer more educational sessions, materials and training, and show lawn and garden retailers that the software is valuable, I believe more retailers will start using more software functionality and see significant improvements in their businesses. **GP**