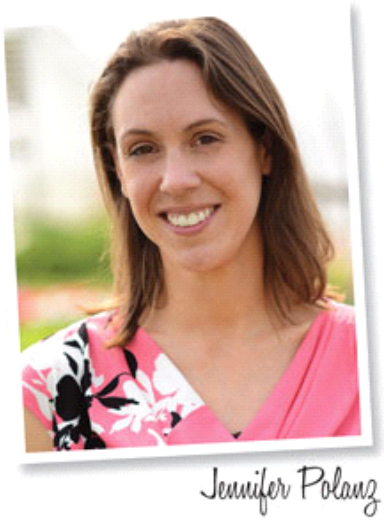
greenPROFIT

Columns

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Tech Observations

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True confessions: I play Pokémon Go. Or rather, I should clarify I play Pokémon Go with my 6-year-old Pokémon-obsessed son and 9-year-old slightly-less-obsessed daughter. It's fun bonding time, and because it makes you walk to hatch eggs and find Pokéstops (just go with me here), we get out together, too.

I was hesitant, though, to download the app, particularly because of some privacy setting issues that now appear to be resolved (though I'm still with them at all times when we play).

It's an interesting phenomenon and one that probably will taper off as the game gets a little older. But how fun to capture Pokémon out in the real world, like in the Ball Gardens, at the airport and even in the greenhouse. Millennials in particular are rather obsessed with the game, since they grew up on Pokémon on television.

The game is a great way to connect with younger customers and maybe teach super-young "customers" a thing or two about life cycles (what they call evolution in the game).

The game is not unlike a lot of new technology coming down the pike. Initially, it's equal parts thrilling (at what the potential could be), confusing and downright dangerous. There are privacy settings and security to think about when it comes to new technology, and it takes a while to learn its applications and best uses.

However, think about life before technology. While we could argue about the social aspects of it (has it made us more social or more secluded?), it's helped businesses in ways we never dreamed before. There are upsides and downsides to everything, and let's be honest, it's not going away any time soon.

That's why this issue is dedicated to multiple aspects of technology and how you can explore new ideas to further your businesses. Tech expert Joe Dysart dives into Cloud-based storage and what every retailer needs to ask before signing on the dotted line. This has been a topic of interest for many retailers, so Joe really took a deep dive into the finer points. If you're considering Cloud-based storage at all, here's your first stop in this issue.

Technology isn't always available to the masses right away—many times it gets developed by larger corporations and then trickles down. In Kristine Lonergan's guest column on bridging the digital divide, she explores some of the new technology she's seeing at larger retail operations. And finally, we tapped Doug Smith at Epicor to tell us how to get the most out of your point-of-sale system's technology for inventory control.

One story that doesn't focus on technology, but does focus on new ideas and concepts from a real up-and-comer, is our profile on Will Heeman, our *Green Profit*/Dümmen Orange Young Retailer Award Winner.

This issue is not meant to encourage you to dive recklessly into technology. Rather, take the time to investigate what will work for you and make educated decisions. Sometimes you come up with a Weedle and sometimes you land a Dragonite. **GP**