

In the Stores



This exclusive online feature from Apparel Magazine, RIS News and Consumer Goods Technology delivers key insight and intelligence for retailers and brands on three major technologies – Mobile CRM, Store Trafficking and POS – that are impacting today's dynamic store environment.

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THE CONNECTED APPAREL ENTERPRISE

As Retail and Wholesale strategies continue to converge it now becomes critical to be integrated from the store to headquarters to the supply chain and beyond – to replace disparate sources of data that have for so long plagued apparel retailers. Now a single version of the truth is possible from design, sourcing, distribution and out to the retail shelf . . . end to end completeness as never before is available from Porini and Microsoft Dynamics AX Retail.



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The New Era: Digital Shoppers

With an eye on personalization, apparel retailers are turning to innovative solutions to intimately connect with tech-savvy shoppers.

There is no question that tech-savvy consumers are changing the face of the retail shopping experience, a move that is forcing apparel chains to respond to their shoppers' demands. As a result, apparel companies industry-wide are implementing new digital strategies to stay connected to their top shoppers, and deliver personalized, efficient shopping experiences.

Meet the new "omni-shopper." She uses multiple channels, such as the web (via personal computer or mobile phone), a traditional store, even the call center, to educate herself about merchandise, create a shopping plan, execute a purchase and procure goods. These shoppers have more accessibility to information than ever before, and they are proving that retailers relying solely on traditional broadcast advertising models are clearly missing an opportunity to connect with them and drive sales.

"Multi-channel retailing has opened up the landscape of new touch points for consumers to shop with their favorite retailers," said Elaine Goodman, president, Los Angeles-based specialty retailer Kolobags.com. "Retailers need to take advantage of technology to deliver specific content that can drive brand awareness and sales at the right moment. Companies that can stay well-connected will not only acquire shoppers, but maintain their loyalty."

Using Web-based consumer devices, from the web and smart phones, to laptops and tablet computers, as shopping aids, consumers are educating themselves before making purchases. Sure, they are using these tools to ensure merchandise is available, but optimal in-stock levels are only one piece of the puzzle. More importantly, shoppers want their favorite retailers to connect with them through these new channels to deliver a more personal experience. And touch points abound.

"Our shopper, the fashionista, is not following the trends — she is setting them," said Michael Ebert, search and affiliate marketing manager for eFashion, a business partner of New York City-based BabyPhat.com. "She stays on top of fashion, but she can't do this solely by browsing stores. She is online, accessing social media, mobile 'apps,' and anything else that can appeal to her tastes and influence her buying decisions."



Eager to service its shopper wherever she was, Lilly Pulitzer created a Facebook page over a year ago. Today, the chain has 110,000 fans, and it continues to grow in popularity.

Some retailers may be shivering at the thought of investing precious information technology and marketing dollars into a new, unexplored project, but the good news is that the technology marketplace continues to evolve, and solutions costs are dropping — making it easier for all apparel retailers to try their hand at targeting the digital shopper. This is especially good news because global enterprise information technology spending is expected to increase by 3 percent this year, according to Stamford, Conn.-based Gartner.

If you are still confused about where to invest that capital, here are some popular initiatives that are attracting shoppers' attention:

Digital signage

Retailers are still attracted to technology that is easy to use and expands a message's reach on the sales floor. That's why more retailers are trading in static, costly printed signage for digital sig-

nage applications. Projected on flat screen monitors, “they are dynamic options, and since a message can be changed on the fly, branding becomes more timely and personal,” said Vijay Pullur, founder and CEO of SocialTwist, a Mountain View, Calif.-based provider of social media marketing solutions.

And applications are endless. As Portland, Ore.-based Columbia Sportswear transitions from manufacturer to retailer for example, the company is outfitting stores with tall, stacked digital fixtures that display videos of merchandise. Interactive store windows that replicate an online shopping experience complement these displays. The 65-inch store window screens reportedly attract thousands of users.

“Digital technology is the best way to deliver a consistent shopping experience company-wide, including access to promotions, information on loyalty and even to browse merchandise,” said Paul Zaengle, Columbia’s senior director of ecommerce.

Meanwhile, New York City-based men’s wear designer Simon Spurr found a way to transform a traditional store window into a front-row seat for his runway show during New York City’s Fashion Week. With the help of the real-time conferencing Webex platform from San Jose, Calif.-based Cisco, Spurr taped his runway show, and streamed it live on his web site, across a window at a Saks Fifth Avenue window and at a temporary retail store.

“Webex proved to be a dynamic platform to allow us to speak one on one with fans and consumers in a real-time situation,” the designer told *Apparel*. “The platform enabled a lot more people to enjoy the experience of the fashion show — many more than our 600 seated event space would have permitted.”

Fashion Week also marked the unveiling of Macy’s “Magic Fitting Room,” available at its Herald Square store in New York City. The Cincinnati-based chain applied multi-touch technology to its flagship store’s large-scale fitting-room mirrors. The move, which attracted many millennials, allowed shoppers to virtually browse, try on and purchase merchandise simply by using their fingertips to navigate across icons displayed on the mirrors.

Meanwhile, Charlestown, Mass.-based bridal retailer Priscilla of Boston uses wall-mounted high-definition touch screen PCs from Palo Alto, Calif.-based Hewlett-Packard to aid its sales consultants in helping brides choose their perfect wedding gown. It is not uncommon for a bride-to-be to research styles online or in magazines, and still spend approximately two hours choosing and trying on different styles.

“The technology supports the company’s luxury experience and is able to simplify the shopping process for brides and our consultants,” explained Kimberly Minor, the retailer’s chief fashion strategist.

Customized touch screen software enables brides and consultants to preview gowns by designer, neckline, silhouette and price, and a finger stroke electroni-



Baby Phat.com, using MyBuys.com, analyzes consumers' purchase behavior and uses the data to deliver personalized product recommendations.

Protecting the Customer Relationship

Consumers may be demanding more personalized shopping experiences, however if retailers want to sustain the valuable shopper relationship, they are now in the hot seat to maintain consumer privacy.

Privacy is becoming a huge issue, especially as retailers across the board acknowledge that they keep customer information, such as name, addresses, purchase histories and other critical details filed away in databases. Even Google recently reported it tucks away seemingly harmless online searches made by their customers.

“While there is nothing harmful in this to the average customer looking for vintage jeans, information that may be misconstrued or taken out of context can be extremely detrimental,” said New York City-based designer Simon Spurr. “I don’t think any of us really recognize that anything we do or even post in social media forums is ‘out there’ forever.”

Besides keeping this information protected from vicious cyber-hackers, it is equally important for retailers not to abuse the privilege of having access to this information.

“It is imperative that retailers strike a balance between the right level of personalization and not conducting intrusive communications,” said Shaun Schooley, vice president of client success for Redwood City, Calif.-based MyBuys.

The best formula is to follow standard privacy guidelines, similar to those already in place for loyalty and in-store marketing programs that access and manipulate sensitive consumer data. Companies such as New York City-based BabyPhat.com are leaving nothing to chance, however, and keep their legal teams at the ready.

“We advise the team on all internal privacy issues, from payment card industry data security standard compliance related to our MyBuys campaign, to reporting on other issues that may emerge due to this evolving mobile channel,” said Michael Ebert, search and affiliate marketing manager for eFashion, a business partner of BabyPhat.com. “Any information we can uncover and address will only help us better serve and protect our shoppers.”

cally change the dress colors. A “favorites” section allows brides to save their selections.

Social media

The interactivity of social media is changing the way people interact and share thoughts — of all kinds. Whether sharing photos, video or feedback on daily events, shoppers are using social media to support two-way conversations with their “friends.” Apparel retailers are finding their way into the social media landscape, and creating new ways to spur dialogue.

“We are entering an era where the consumer is pulling new technology from the retailer, and the consumer wants social media,” says Paula Rosenblum, managing partner of Miami-based Retail Systems Research.

Since social media users are often passionate about the information they share, it was the perfect outlet for King of Prussia, Pa.-based specialty retailer Lilly Pulitzer. Eager to service its shopper wherever she was, the multi-channel retailer created a Facebook page over a year ago. Today, the chain has 110,000 fans, and it continues to grow in popularity.

“We have an emotional connection with our shopper, and this keeps us in tune to what she wants to buy, when she wants it,” said Kendall Swenson, the chain’s senior promotions executive. “We saw this as an opportunity for us to get an insider view to consumer spending and customer profiles, and it also helps us stay on top of merchandise trends that appeal to her.”

BabyPhat.com is taking this concept one step further by using Facebook Commerce, a strategy that encourages its “fans” to use Facebook fan sites to sell merchandise. Upping the ante even more, BabyPhat.com is partnering with Redwood City, Calif.-based MyBuys.com to personalize the experience. A solution already integrated into its traditional e-commerce site, MyBuys.com analyzes consumers’ purchase behavior and uses the data to deliver personalized product recommendations.

By integrating the solution on Facebook, “shoppers can browse our entire merchandise catalog and checkout, without ever leaving the Facebook page,” Ebert explained.

Mobile “apps”

Smart phone usage is on the rise, and 80 percent of the U.S. population already has a mobile phone, according to Mumbai, India-based Tata Consultancy Services. This is good news for retailers as many of these mobile shoppers are ready to interact with their favorite retailers through specific retailing apps, text messages or optimized mobile web sites and search engines.

Lilly Pulitzer is using a mobile strategy to “stay more engaged with our shoppers, especially while they are on the go,” said Swenson.

Launched last summer with the help of Austin, Texas-based Digby, the chain’s m-commerce site allows iPhone and Android users to place orders directly through their smart phones. To expand its reach even further, Lilly is preparing for the spring launch of its iPhone app, “to streamline m-commerce shopping,” said Rachael Crews, the retailer’s senior manager of e-commerce.

And efforts are working as mobile-driven sales grow between 5 percent and 10 percent every month, she added.

While m-commerce is a good start, savvy retailers are looking at the big picture: smart phones are the catalyst they need to achieve the holy grail of marketing — a true one-to-one relationship with the shopper. The move to mobile is also close to hitting a tipping point because there is a low cost of entry, and it is an economically viable marketing tool.

“There is a dramatic and interesting intersection of retail and mobile,” explained Shaun Schooley, vice president of client success, MyBuys.com. “Smart phones can be the initial point of interaction for a shopping experience, and it is the key to personalization. As the technology evolves, retailers need to learn how to personalize the proper messages to encourage shoppers to make a purchase.”

Because BabyPhat shoppers are described as “highly wired, young hip shoppers,” it made perfect sense for the retailer to create a mobile optimized e-commerce site that utilizes the MyBuys framework.

“Since launching the mobile retailing strategy in November, incremental revenue

and traffic conversion has increased from .3 percent to .7 percent due to cross-sell and upselling opportunities the solution provides,” Ebert said. “This helped us to pay for the solution twice over in a month’s time.”

Geo-location solutions

Social media still may be evolving, but GPS-enabled smart phones are ushering in the next wave of the channel: location-based services that allow retailers to “reward” shoppers each time they use their phone to “check in” to a location. And the likes of Foursquare, Shopkick and Facebook Places are among the top solutions gaining retailers’ attention.

Companies such as BabyPhat.com are contemplating using the solutions, “and we continue to explore opportunities within geo-location solutions and how to exploit emerging social apps,” Ebert said.

Other companies are already reaping benefits. During the holidays for example, lululemon athletica offered shoppers “The Gift of Yoga,” or a pass for a free yoga class, every time a shopper checked in via Foursquare or Facebook Places.

“It helps drive our online shoppers into the stores, and we reward them for that visit,” said a lululemon associate in its Roosevelt Field Mall store located in Garden City, N.Y.

Target, American Eagle and Wet Seal are among an army of other chains that are trying their hands at the free Shopkick app that rewards shoppers for walking into partner stores nationwide. During the holiday season, participating retailers enabled shoppers to earn “kickbucks” for their check-ins, and redeem them for gift cards, song downloads and charity donations.

“Mobile apps are still in their infancy, but as retailers learn to tie in these apps as touch points, they can continue to personalize the experience,” said MyBuys’ Schooley. “As they learn to use mobile apps to deliver value that matters to consumers, retailers are primed to strengthen their shopper relationships and build loyalty.” ■

Deena M. Amato-McCoy is a New York-based journalist who covers retail technology.

700 Million and Counting

Retailers are always seeking better insights into what shoppers want and how consumers interact with their stores and merchandise. Store trafficking solutions can provide the business intelligence to help improve operations and increase sales.

Shoppers: they're out there. And you can only hope that they're coming into your store. But once they walk through your front door ... then what? Did they pay any attention to the prominent front-of-store display your staff labored over, or did they breeze right by? Do they gravitate to one particular area of your store, and if so, why?

There are increasingly sophisticated solutions on the market to help answer these and other questions. Retailers striving to optimize their operations are turning to store trafficking systems to better understand how shoppers experience their facilities.

Shoppers' habits have changed

The combination of the economic downturn and the explosive popularity of smartphones is driving shoppers into stores with different priorities, habits and expectations.

"Three to five years ago, shoppers might go to a store on Friday and Saturday and Sunday," explains Bill Martin, co-founder and executive vice president of Chicago-based ShopperTrak. "Now, they manage their visits differently. They don't want to waste gas money. They do some investigation online before going shopping. They're cautious about impulse buying. It's a big difference from the past to where we are today."

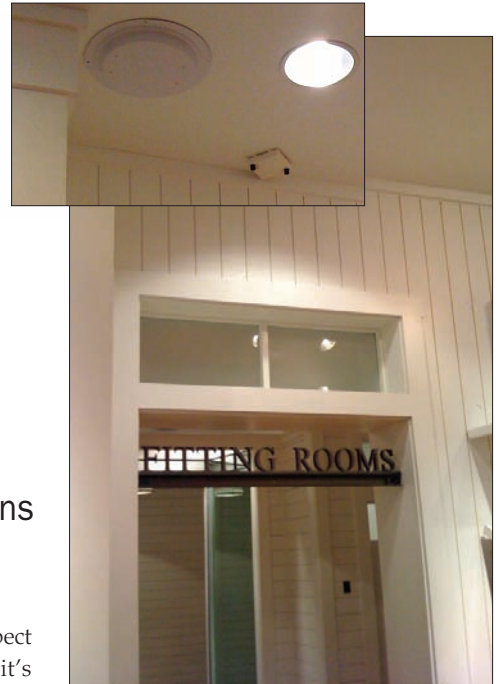
Martin maintains that, if retailers expect consumers to part with their money, it's critical to know all of these things and then offer shoppers the high-end experience they demand.

The original counter

Founded in 1992, ShopperTrak is the original player in the traffic-counting game with 70,000 devices installed in 70 countries. Its website features a counter that reflects the number of shopper visits counted this year, much like McDonald's famous hamburgers; as this report went to press, the tally stands at about 700 million and counting (shopper visits, not hamburgers).

ShopperTrak's system involves Orbit Technology cameras with stereo lens sensors, enabling a 3D view of the area being counted. The Orbit cameras filter out any potential traffic-counting problems such as too much glaring sunlight, children — by discounting persons under a predetermined height — and shoppers walking arm-in-arm, issues that traditionally go unfiltered by monocular-lens cameras.

The solution also is able to tag employees and remove them from the traffic count. InsideTrack adds an RFID component to the counting device and an RFID tag to an employee's name badge. Once the employee passes the counting device, he or she is identified by name



Installing cameras near fitting room entrances can help staff monitor when to attend to messy dressing rooms, one of customers' top complaints about apparel retailers.

and serial number. This feature is most useful to retailers whose employees are highly mobile inside and outside of the store, who may, for example, need to help customers bring purchases to the parking lot. As a result of the filtering technology, ShopperTrak's traffic count is generally between 96 percent and 98 percent accurate.

On the back end, a router connects the data from the cameras to ShopperTrak's corporate offices, and when retailers want to access the cameras' data, they simply log into the web browser to view their dashboard. Martin says retailers tend to prefer technology solutions that they don't host themselves. "They can focus on being world-class retailers and not traffic data managers," he explains.

"What distinguishes us is that we're focused on conscientiously applied data capture and collection and validating that information for accuracy," says Martin. "We have profit transformation specialists to help retailers understand where they should be looking to improve margins."



ShopperTrak's solution also helps retailers understand service in the fitting room area. It's important to know what's happening in fitting rooms because once shoppers make it that far, both the average ticket size and the conversion rate are higher, Martin says.

ShopperTrak also offers a new solution, FlashTraffic, which has been installed in only a few locations. FlashTraffic pushes traffic data to a retailer's POS system on an hourly basis so the user can see the conversion rate for the past hour. This information can help the retailer see if traffic was different from projections, and if so, the store manager can adjust and optimize labor levels.

ShopperTrak also offers the ability to provide traffic data within geographic markets. "We can tell how many shoppers were out on any given Saturday in Chicago," Martin says, which can help set local retailers' traffic expectations for their own stores.

An IT-friendly system

"Penetration for traffic counting solutions is surprisingly low but picking up," says Alexei Agratchev, founder and CEO of BVI Networks, headquartered in San Jose, Calif.

BVI's RetailNEXT solution ties video feeds and POS data into a secure appliance, routing that information from a store's facility to BVI headquarters. The data is always accessible via a web browser and customized dashboard.

The company has worked hard to make its trafficking solution IT-friendly. In particular, BVI strives to optimize video access for its users. "IT managers are always nervous that pulling video data from our headquarters will require a lot of bandwidth," Agratchev explains. "We can guarantee that our clients will never use up more than a predetermined amount of bandwidth so that the rest of the store's operations don't slow down."

BVI allows users to customize how traffic data is produced. Retailers can run reports on a weekly or monthly basis and customize that information according to employees' needs; executives and senior-level staff could generate reports showing stores' general trends while store managers could create more granular reports.

"What makes us different is we help you see how many people go down a particular aisle, who looks at a particular display," says Agratchev. "We can match a product SKU to a display and tell you how much time shoppers spent at the display and how many ended up purchasing from it. If you make a merchandise layout change, you can see how it impacts what happens traffic-wise throughout the store."

According to Agratchev, one of the top complaints among shoppers in apparel retail stores is unkempt fitting rooms. BVI's solution can monitor traffic in and out of fitting rooms, helping store personnel keep track of when dressing rooms need to be refreshed.

Keys to success

"The biggest challenge is to put the right training and processes around your technology," Agratchev says. "If you don't communicate with your staff, they might have a negative reaction to new technology. Involve the right departments and the right people up front. Don't do a pilot in a silo."

Agratchev knows retailers that have had the solution implemented for four or five months whose key staff weren't getting the information they needed. As a result, those users don't buy into the system largely because they aren't seeing its effectiveness.

BVI customers achieve ROI in an average of three months. "A 1 percent increase in conversion will pay for the system in 12 months," Agratchev says.

Los Angeles-based American Apparel has implemented BVI's solution in many of its stores. The retailer chose BVI after evaluating another solution because of its attractive price point. "They saved 40 percent in capital costs per store because our one platform does multiple things," says Agratchev. Indeed, Stacey Shulman, American Apparel's vice president of technology, confirms that BVI's cost per store was "significantly" lower than the competing solution's approximately \$11,000 price tag for a traffic counter and digital video recorder. With the technology up and running, American Apparel aims to have analytics for store traffic data in place later this year.

The future of trafficking?

Eventually, Martin says, retailers will be able to see where shoppers go in a store by interacting with consumers' cell phones. As of now, most stores that have wireless or mobile programs — usually involving geofencing — generally require consumers to opt-in in order for consumers' smartphones to interact with the retailer once inside a facility. "One hundred percent of consumers will never opt-in," says Martin. "It won't provide a legitimate traffic count, but if 1,000 people come into your store and you only sample 25 percent of them, that's still a good enough sample to know what your customers are doing."

Retailers who optimize online, mobile and brick-and-mortar operations will be successful in the future," Martin says. ■

Jessica Binns is associate editor of Apparel. She can be reached at jbinns@apparelmag.com.

You Say You Want a (POS) Evolution

Not your father's cash register — today's POS systems are an integral component of building customer loyalty and driving profitable growth.

In posing the following question to apparel companies: **How is POS evolving at your company to become more of an overall business strategy vs. just a tool to ring up sales?** it is evident that even small-sized enterprises have moved well beyond that counter-focused approach. As one respondent put it: "POS has evolved so much recently that I think they should change the name."

From the responses we've received, it's clear that POS by any other name would still go well beyond the checkout, with the traditional POS cash register and the data it holds becoming interconnected with other software systems — and also moving onto portable devices.

Apparel retailers are using POS systems to manage inventories across channels in real time, providing their customers with a seamless shopping experience regardless of how and when they choose to shop.

Companies are using and interacting with POS data in a multitude of ways, from checking daily sales figures via iPhone and analyzing sales associate performance to making upsells and reducing shrink.

POS is allowing apparel companies to make their stores more efficient, better manage their promotions and markdowns, and fine-tune inventories.

In short, it is allowing companies to improve their stores while freeing up time to focus on that most important driver of sales — the customer.

—Jordan K. Speer



Masha Lirovich
Director of Sales
Big Drop
www.bigdropnyc.com

When we originally purchased our first license with Visual Retail Plus we were looking for a standard POS software to ring up sales. We quickly found out that we can have our entire inventory managed accurately in all locations. We have multiple stores on the East Coast and the communication between the stores needs to be efficient. The POS System allows us to track sales, run loss prevention reports and forecasting for either each store or all the stores together. VRP features a CRM system allowing us to easily access necessary customer information.

To maximize sales, we realized that we have to cross channels and in November 2010 we launched our first fully integrated POS online store using VRP's web integration. The integration allows the website to pull directly from our current stock, eliminating the need for a separate online inventory and additional storage warehouses. As products are purchased off the web, the inventory deducts items from a specified location and maintains an overall correct stock. The software allows our customers to track orders online, review past orders and reduces customer service time. One of the greatest benefit to online sales is having a retail store that is open 24/7, maximizing sales without paying for a retail space and sales staff.



Nick Sakai
Co-owner
CRSVR
www.crsvr.com

Establishing a successful POS system that integrated more than just over the counter sales was something very important to us when creating the CRSVR Sneaker Boutique concept. Being in such a competitive marketplace, we wanted a system that could provide an emphasis on customer service and customer interaction, multi-store functionality, and increase overall customer

satisfaction. LightSpeed from Xsilva Systems was our solution. It covers all the necessary areas needed in small business from timekeeping, to extensive reporting, to purchase orders and inventory. Having just opened our second retail location at The Cosmopolitan Hotel in Las Vegas, it was important that LightSpeed could support our growth. Aside from the multi-terminal system at our cash-wrap/checkout station, we are also using iPod touch wireless terminals running LightSpeed Mobile on the floor. This mobile Point of Sale system is great for customer service, provides immediate answers, gives the store a very cutting edge look and feel, and most importantly, eliminates making trips to the stock room when interacting with customers. We look forward to continuing to grow and build with the LightSpeed team.



Kristopher Davis

Manager of Information Technology
J. McLaughlin
www.jmclaughlin.com

At J. McLaughlin we realize that the retail market is ever-changing. Our business strategy has been adapted to our customers' needs. We have leveraged our Celerant Command Retail POS system as a part of our business strategy in three key ways:

First, we use our Celerant Command Retail POS to capture crucial information about our customers and what they purchase. This allows us to target our communications with them through postal mail or email based on what we have learned they want.

Second, we recognize the extreme importance of an accurate inventory across all 47 of our stores. By maintaining an accurate inventory with Command Retail, we are able to make a sale to a customer even if exactly what they want isn't physically at the location in which they are shopping. We are able to ship the merchandise directly to the customer's home from another location. We call this Direct Ships to Customers, which has proved to be an essential part of our operations. Direct Ships allow us to service our customers, while maintaining a minimal inventory stock level at each location.

Third, we have our website integrated with our POS Database. This allows us to automatically allocate and process web orders from all of our locations. Again, this is a business strategy that allows J. McLaughlin to better serve our customers.

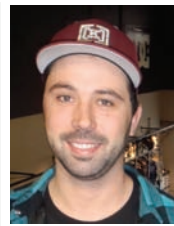


Eric Goldstein

Owner
Jean Shop
www.worldjeanshop.com

POS has evolved so much recently that I think they should change the name. At the Jean Shop, our POS system is a critical tool in running an efficient and informed company. The old style POS that was just used for ringing up sales is history. We use our cur-

rent system, LightSpeed from Xsilva Systems, to run a faster, smarter, more informed, fully integrated, more profitable and leaner company. There is a tremendous amount of powerful data accumulated in the system. We are able to manage the inventory in both of our retail locations as well as our warehouse. We also use LightSpeed to collect customer data that is used to drive sales, to track employee hours for payroll, and to use its accounts receivable module to assist in tracking customer credits and balances. The system is the backbone of the organization. I love the fact that I can touch an icon on my iPhone and have immediate sales results for the day, month or year, including what was sold and to whom. The new LightSpeed Mobile is also a tremendous tool to save money, expedite transactions and work closer with your customer.



Matt Standish

Co-owner
Premium Label
www.premiumlabel.ca

An effective POS system has become an integral part of success in today's retail landscape. Because of the changes to our industry over the years, being able to constantly manage margins and monitor expenses is critical. In order to accomplish this, a POS can no longer be just a tool to ring up sales. A good POS system will allow you to monitor your day-to-day activity almost as well as, and in conjunction with, an accounting program. We use LightSpeed by Xsilva and it does essentially everything we need — the ability to manage inventory, margins and sales across multiple stores — and if we run into any issues we call up support and the problem is solved. Overall, LightSpeed is a major key to our success and a mandatory tool for any customer-based business.



Asher Iancu

Co-Owner
The Ultimate Look

Ronnie Iancu

Co-Owner
The Ultimate Look

We've been in business for many years and about five years ago we came across Visual Retail Plus. After having used different systems and looked at different companies we were a bit skeptical. However, we liked the simplicity, features and the presentation given to us by VRP. For us, as owners, we can use its many other tools, such as inventory management and layaway. We no longer have to guess what styles sold better and faster. Due to easy access to detailed reports, we were finally able to sell clothes for all four seasons without being scared to lose inventory.

VRP allows us to input a lot of information regarding the garment, including fabrics and style elements such as long sleeve,

casual dressy, long dress, jackets, and a lot of other ingredients that go into a garment, making our reports extremely accurate.

At the end of the day we can see a sales performance breakdown including items on sale, items returned, who sold what and at what hours we sold the most. More than that, we can access all this information both from the store and from a remote computer. Though VRP is a point-of-sale solution, it is comforting to know that our salespeople cannot make mistakes in the calculations. Sales tax is added automatically, exchanges are handled automatically, and so forth; everything is clear. Most importantly, for us the support is a number one priority. Working with a knowledgeable and friendly staff makes all the difference to us. With VRP, the point-of-sale has become the smallest part of the software.



Danny Koch

Owner
Town Shop
www.townshop.com

By using Visual Retail Plus we have been able to use many of the tools that are built into the program in order to help us process orders, identify trends and restock items quickly. We have also been able to take advantage of the wonderful customer support that VRP provides in having them write specific queries that really help us maintain our inventory to levels that make our business more effective to run. One of those systems enables us to create a 60-day supply for our best vendors in which an order is generated in approximately 1.3 seconds and is generally 99 percent accurate in identifying what we need to reorder. As I get a bit older it is nice to know that my brain does not need to be used as much as it used to. The support which we have received in the past 10+ years is unsurpassed; we don't think of them as a software vendor, we think of them as a partner in our business.



Dee Slater

CIO
Wolverine World Wide
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Point of Sale is the second phase of our retail merchandise management strategy at Wolverine World Wide, having implemented SAP for Retail in 2008. We are in the process of replacing our legacy POS with a state-of-the-art POS system to enable store growth and expansion for our Merrell and Hush Puppies branded stores and our value banners, Rockford Footwear Depot and Track 'N Trail. POS will be the source of all in-store data about our customers and their purchases in real time; what customers are buying real time, with the ability to react in minutes instead of days. We can manage the customer experience, ensure our inventory is accurate, priced right and in the right stores, and conduct all sales audit functions. Our store employees will have a view into our merchandising system through a Wolverine corporate portal for all customer service and transfer inquiries. We anticipate additional benefits through out-of-stocks, better markdown and promotion management and headcount efficiencies. We can also capture, measure and analyze associates performance, both from a selling perspective as well as speed of service for the transactions. Finally, we expect to eliminate shrink, improve compliance, and raise the bar on staff training at a lower cost. ■

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The Porini solution for retail connects customers, your internal teams, customer feedback sources and suppliers in an innovative and cost-effective manner. All Porini solutions are built within Microsoft Dynamics AX and easily adapt to your organizational structure, store typology, product mix and methods of distribution. Porini is a Gold Certified Microsoft Partner renowned for delivering relevant solutions to the retail industry.