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Digital Nervous System

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Extend Retailers' Reach

R A D

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Inside: *Profiles of the 5th Annual*

Retail Application Developer Award winners

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R.A.D. Winners Address Multi-Channel Challenges

The Digital Nervous System, Microsoft's vision for retail information technology, involves a simple idea—getting the right information to the right people at the right time. But as many retailers know, making that simple idea work can prove anything but simple.

Fortunately, leading technology vendors—including the finalists for this year's Retail Application Developer Awards—share the vision of the DNS. Many of the solutions they offer leverage the power of the Internet to make data flow faster and more cost-effectively than ever before.

These vendors, and especially the winners profiled in the following pages, also recognize that today's retailers are competing in a multi-channel environment—even if they still only operate bricks-and-mortar stores. E-commerce has created new levels and types of competition for retailers in virtually all categories,

emphasizing all retailers' need for increased flexibility, adaptability and maneuverability.

Many of the finalists offer technologies that address the complexities of multi-channel retailing, providing common systems to support sales through physical stores, catalogs and the Web. Such solutions, providing a common database and "one version of the truth" throughout the enterprise and the wider extraprise, will be needed as retailers reach out to customers who may visit their website one day and their store the next.

Microsoft's DNS strategy also addresses retailers' multi-channel needs, with its combination of the strong platform of Microsoft products; the company's development and support of retail technology standards; and its partnerships with

numerous technology partners. Together they offer a broad array of retail solutions designed to work in concert.

Microsoft® congratulates the winners of the Fifth Annual R.A.D. Awards as well as those finalists meriting Honorable Mention, who are identified on page 14. These leading technology vendors will be honored at Retail Systems 2000 in Chicago, April 16-19.

Representatives from the 18 R.A.D. Awards 2000 finalists presented their top technologies to the panel of judges in Dallas, March 7-8.

> *"E-commerce has created new levels and types of competition for retailers in virtually all categories."*
>
> *- Tom Litchford, Retail Industry Manager, Microsoft Corp.*

Data Movement Key to Retail Responsiveness

The Internet, growing fast and changing even faster, has retailers of all kinds demanding new levels of flexibility from their information technology.

"We're getting to the point that the ability to share data throughout the whole enterprise is becoming very important," said Brent Brown, Manager of In-Store Solutions for Houston-based Compaq. "Data needs to be accessible no matter where a person is, and we feel our technologies enable the movement, collection, storage and retrieval of all that information," whether at a POS terminal, a kiosk or at a manager's workstation.

This vision of flexibility applies to all types of technology used in the retail enterprise. "Older technology had restricted you to performing certain functions on certain devices—you could only perform a point of sale transaction on a POS terminal," said Brown. "But with the technology that's available now, what someone can do should be based on a profile of the user. It shouldn't be limited by hardware and software."

Such an architecture also supports the move toward increased customer self-service, especially within the store. "A customer in the store is worth two on the Web," said Brown, although he noted that the Internet's growth has made customers more willing to use technology in the store.

"The whole concept is to let the customer begin to participate in the processing of the transaction," said Brown, whether they use an in-store kiosk to look up product information or place an order.

Kiosks can also be a valuable tool for employees to bridge the culture gap between the stores and the retail headquarters, noted Brown. In addition, many of the interactive applications now available on kiosks can support fast, cost-effective employee training.

This year's Retail Application Developer Award winners demonstrate the flexibility that is rapidly becoming a retail requirement. "A lot of applications are using the Web as a means to perform transactions, and that's going to be increasingly important as we move into this next phase of in-store technology," said Brown, adding that Compaq congratulates the finalists and the winners of the R.A.D. Awards 2000.

"What someone can do should be based on a profile of the user. It shouldn't be limited by hardware and software."

Brent Brown,
Manager, In-Store Solutions, Compaq Corp.

Compact, Consistent Kiosk Technology Realigns Retail Attitudes

NCR
Duluth, Ga.

Chairman/CEO:
Lars Nyberg

R.A.D. Award Category:
RETAIL IN-STORE
Grocery & Drug

In-store kiosks have often suffered in the retail equation, which states that every square foot not devoted directly to the sales process is wasted space. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the grocery and drug channels, with their combination of numerous stockkeeping units, limited store sizes and customers who are typically in a hurry.

With hardware based on laptop technology and a Web-based software platform that allows a retailer to offer a consistent look and feel throughout the store, NCR's technology is seeking to reconfigure the retail equation in kiosks' favor.

These kiosks boast a "zero footprint—it can be hung on the wall" of a retail store, according to Tracy Flynn, Vice President for Food Industry Marketing at NCR's Retail Solutions Group. The kiosks include an integrated bar code scanner, as well as a self-service printer for coupons. Kiosks designed to facilitate photo processing, which print the envelopes that customers place their film into, require a larger laser printer.

Multiple Contact Points

This compact footprint allows retailers to place kiosks throughout the store, with specific services keyed to each location. Kiosks in a deli department would allow customers to pre-order, completing the rest of their shopping while their cold cuts or party platter are prepared. A kiosk in a supermarket bakery department could offer its entire "cata-log" of birthday and special occasion cakes.

Photo processing, notoriously labor-intensive and error-prone, could be simplified with a kiosk that "reads" the customer data on a frequent shopper card, printing out an envelope for the customer's film that is already filled out with the name, address and correct pickup date.

NCR's kiosk environment "provides a consistent way to get data," said Flynn, noting that NCR has developed its own retail applications as well as provided an environment for third-party vendors' applications. In addition, "the application providers might be the retailers themselves," he said.

Cashing in on Consistency

Despite the variety of functions the kiosks are capable of offering, the browser software that runs the kiosks as Microsoft Windows NT thin clients allows the retailer to offer a "single look and feel as the consumer walks into the store," said Flynn. "Retailers don't want to have four different devices with four different looks. Large retailers are taking advantage of the consistency these kiosks offer."

Retailers who run a loyalty card program can use the kiosks to make "targeted offers based on the customer's frequent-shopper card," said Flynn. The kiosk can also give retailers greater leverage in a tight labor market, by providing expert information in a specialty department such as wine or gourmet foods.

Flynn added that NCR, which uses a SQL Server 7.0 database to maintain content on the servers supporting the kiosks, is looking into having the kiosks supported by the Windows 2000 and Windows CE operating systems.

For more information contact NCR at
770-623-7000, or on the Web at www.ncr.com
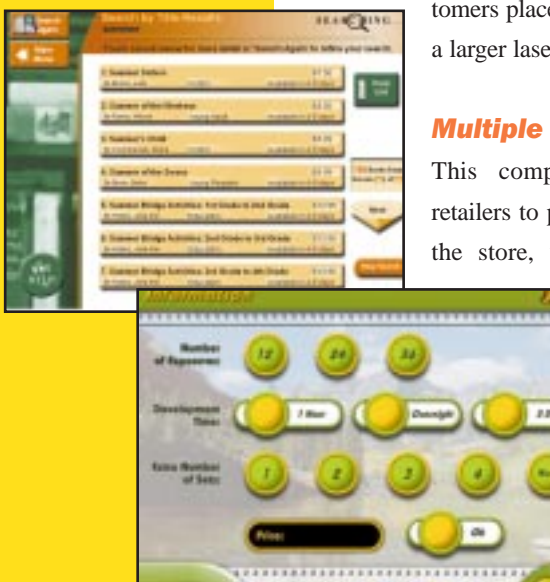
POS System Eases Integration, In-Store and Chainwide

Convenience stores are rapidly becoming more complex retailing environments, adding fuel sales as well as a wide range of other products and services. Retailers in this channel are seeking point of sale systems that can handle the increasing variety of transactions while still addressing c-stores' basic POS needs: reliability and ease of use.

Radiant Systems' Lighthouse POS addresses reliability and fault tolerance by operating as a Windows CE-based 32-bit application. The system, which includes POS and consumer-activated terminal applications, can be integrated with a set of Web-enabled management applications, providing site and host-level business functionality and business intelligence applications, according to Jon Bolen, Managing Director, PCS, Global Solutions for Radiant.

Changing Cost Structures

This architecture also allows convenience store chains to provide remote upgrades, "not just to the application or the configuration but to the operating system itself," said Bolen. In current client/server environments, by contrast, retailers may be forgoing upgrades and sacrificing improved functionality because "it costs so much to touch 1,000 sites," he noted. Business decisions on whether to upgrade change dramatically, however, "when retailers can do those upgrades remotely," he added.

Some of those improved functionalities were displayed at a beta test and rollout of the Lighthouse technology last year, at 115 Circle K Hong Kong convenience stores.

"This was the first time they had automated their sites," said Bolen. "We delivered a touch-screen application to them, with all the product descriptions in Mandarin Chinese." He added

that the simplicity of the user interface meant that system training time was "literally at or under 30 minutes per clerk, which is important in this industry because of its high turnover."

The system's ability to integrate bar code scanning at the POS allowed the retailer to "move to an item-level inventory management business module, which they hadn't been able to achieve before," said Bolen.

The system's close integration with the headquarters system simplified the process of setting up the POS with new items and price files, noted Les Barchard, Radiant's Lighthouse Product Line Manager.

Customizable Configurations

He added that the system's architecture allows retailers to select from among a wide variety of extended business objects, such as for product scanning, controlling a fuel pump or selling a combo food package. "Retailers can pick and choose which ones they want active at different locations," said Barchard.

Future advances to the Lighthouse system will "see devices that are now peripherals become extensions of the POS," said Bolen, noting that Radiant has a large-scale initiative to place Windows CE devices into fuel dispensers.

"But for all the sophisticated features, the POS still stands on its own as the place to drive a much lower total cost of ownership for operators of any size, whether they operate one site or 1,000 sites," said Bolen.

For more information contact Radiant Systems at 800-229-0991, or on the Web at www.radiantsystems.com.

Radiant Systems
Atlanta

CEO:
Erez Goren

R.A.D. Award Category:
RETAIL IN-STORE
Convenience Store

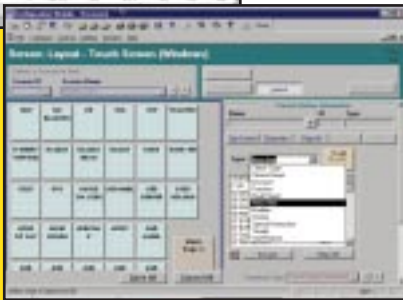# POS Architecture Combines Reliability and Scalability

> **"The system has the ability to manage a literally unlimited database of customer information."**

InfoGenesis
Santa Barbara, Calif.

President:
Karl Willig

R.A.D. Award Category:
RETAIL IN-STORE
Hospitality-Food Service

Retailers' desire to make the point of sale increasingly convenient has increased their need for systems that can bring the POS to the customer, rather than vice versa. This need is particularly urgent in the hospitality arena, especially in large resort environments.

InfoGenesis, which provides POS systems to large resort and gaming properties, cruise ships, amusement parks and hotels, has developed the Revelation POS Version 2.2 to address these issues. The system's underlying database architecture uses SQL Server 7.0 and Windows NT®, "which allows the product to be very scalable and deployable over wide area networks," said Brent Christensen, Manager Strategic Programs for InfoGenesis.

The system uses TCP/IP to communicate to the terminal applications. "Any typology that can run TCP/IP can be used, including ethernet and token ring typology," said Christensen. "This means that the actual food and beverage outlets running the POS terminals can be completely separate from the back officer server, the hardware and all of the information technology infrastructure.

Robustness Requirements

"The terminals also have offline capability, so that if there is any problem with the connection, the system continues to function, and then it catches back up when it's reconnected," he noted. "Restaurants are inherently dangerous environments for computer systems, but with the Revelation system, the remote printer networks all run on ethernet cabling, as do the terminals, which makes for a robust, fault-tolerant network. That's something that can be appreciated by even the smallest restaurant."

In addition to easing communication and ensuring reliability, the Revelation system has the capability of incorporating large volumes of customer data. "There's an ability to manage a literally unlimited database of [customer] information," said Christensen.

For example, the system is being deployed by the food service operations at Microsoft's corporate locations in Redmond, Wash., and San Jose, Calif. "They will be able to do payroll debit and posting directly from the food service terminal, because the system will maintain a database of all employees, their account information and charging limits," he said.

Staying On Course

Another example of the system's ability to access customer data was seen by the Tournament Players Club PGA golf resort. "They wanted to put terminals out on their golf carts," said Phillip Hilgaertner, Technology Specialist at InfoGenesis. "They used a handheld solution in an offline mode, because of the size and scale of the golf course. However, they were able to upload the entire club membership database into the handheld, so that the club members could charge items right out on the course."

The transactions are uploaded into the POS system when the carts are restocked, so the solution not only improved customer service levels, it "gave [the resort] an accurate picture of their sales," said Hilgaertner.

For more information contact InfoGenesis at 805-681-8600, or on the Web at www.infogenesis.com.

System Bridges Bricks, Clicks and Retail Headquarters

Multi-channel retailing—combining physical stores with online, phone and catalog sales—has been the buzzword since e-commerce began to take off as a retailing medium. What has been lacking are information technology systems that actually allow retailers to leverage their strengths in any and all of these channels.

QuickSell Commerce, a Web-enabled point of sale system designed for bricks-and-mortar general merchandise retailers, seeks to bridge the online and offline arenas. "Our software allows a traditional retailer to set up virtual shops anywhere and everywhere," said C.N. Phan, president of Sales Management Systems, which produces QuickSell.

"Retailers want to be able to set up online shops at more than one website, to derive income from those sources," he added. "The problem with other applications is that they have one database for the virtual store and another, separate database for the storefront. Retailers want to combine these into one single inventory management system."

Feeding the Funnel

The QuickSell Commerce software allows retailers receiving orders from multiple channels, including the Internet, mail order and phone sales as well as physical store sales, to "funnel all the orders into one central database, so they can control their inventory," Phan added.

QuickSell's Multi-Channel Retail Management brings such basic retailing functions as stock replenishment, sales information, customer histories and demographics into this centralized database. Designed to run on the Windows 2000 operating system, it can also run on Windows 95/98 and NT. The system also makes use of XML and standard messag-

ing formats, which facilitate application integration and data sharing across platforms.

In addition, QuickSell Commerce uses Microsoft's SQL Server 7.0 database, which provides it with a high degree of scalability and interoperability. ActiveX® controls allow POS business rules to be invoked from a variety of sources, including Application Service Providers.

Dealers' Choice

The system's flexibility and scalability will be demonstrated in a major rollout, to 2,900 Volkswagen dealerships in Europe over the next 36 months. "In their first phase they will use QuickSell Commerce to collect deposits from customers," explained Eric Hawthorne, SMS' Director of Product Development. When customers return to complete their purchase, "QuickSell can take the current transaction and easily import and export the data to a Web server, where Volkswagen keeps its headquarters data."

"We were selected by Volkswagen because of our ability to interact with the corporate applications of their POS system," noted Phan. Later rollouts of the system will allow dealers to sell auto accessories.

"Retailers are very demanding in the general merchandise marketplace," said Phan. "They need a POS and back office management system that's complete and comprehensive. And with the development of the Internet, they want the traditional POS to integrate with the Web."

For more information contact Sales Management Systems at 714-701-1600, or on the Web at www.smspos.com.

Kiosks Bring Mall Shopping Up to Internet Speed

CENTERLINQ
A Division of GenesisIntermedia.com, Inc.

"The consumer is approached in a way that's beneficial to them, while they are already in the shopping mode."

GenesisIntermedia.Com
Van Nuys, Calif.

Chairman/CEO:
Ramy El-Batrawi

R.A.D. Award Category:
RETAIL HEADQUARTERS Marketing

CENTERLINQ, a shopping mall-based communications network that uses the bandwidth available with T-1 connections, combines public space with cyberspace. Consumers can interact with large touch screens located throughout participating malls, getting information about bricks-and-mortar retailers as well as high-resolution views of linked websites.

The interactive kiosks are designed to serve first as marketing tools for the mall, providing not only a store and product directory but also coupons, sales information and upcoming events.

Individualized Information

In addition to these mass marketing functions, CENTERLINQ can be tied to customer loyalty programs co-branded with the mall's name. "It gives the shopping malls, which are our clients, a way to interact with consumers on a one-to-one level," said Michael Costa, Vice President Product Management at GenesisIntermedia.Com. "The system's frequency program has an individual page for each customer, which they can access either with cards or readable key tags, to see personalized sales and product information."

Because the kiosks operate as a continuous communications link, they can also "gather profiling information on consumers, to track their interests and spending habits," Costa added. This not only helps the system sharpen the offerings on each loyal customer's page, "it provides detail to the shopping mall developer and participating advertisers for their direct marketing campaigns," he said.

The CENTERLINQ system is currently operating in 20 malls, and the company estimates that the kiosks offer 20 million consumer impressions per month. "We're rolling out to an another 60 to 80 malls this year, and will have close to 100 million impressions per month by the end of 2000," said Costa. A typical shopping mall will contain six to nine kiosks, and the system is supported via advertiser revenue.

Bricks and Clicks

CENTERLINQ can also help the offline world connect with e-commerce activities. "Everything that's on the kiosk is also available on our home site," noted Costa. "The entire network system is a great way for retailers, consumers and mall developers to interact as a clicks-and-mortar concept. The physical presence in the mall as well as the website bridges the gap between all those parties."

Such connections can provide powerful messaging to consumers, especially in the mall itself. "It's a great direct marketing tool for retailers, the developer and advertisers," said Costa. "The consumer is approached in a way that's beneficial to them, while they are already in the shopping mode.

"If someone is promoting a brand or a new product, the awareness that's created provides a valuable opportunity for advertisers and sponsors," he added. "The majority of the time, the consumer doesn't know exactly what they're going to buy when they come to the mall. CENTERLINQ can operate almost as a shopping agent, to help them quickly find what they're looking for."

For more information contact GenesisIntermedia.Com at 818-909-6655, or on the Web at www.genesisintermedia.com.

Solid System Supports Built-In Flexibility

stssystems™

Retailers faced with doing business at the breakneck pace known as "Internet time" require information technology that's both powerful enough to meet their needs and flexible enough for rapid change.

MerchantWorks, the new core system of the Connected Retailer suite from STS Systems, is a merchandise management application that supports perpetual inventory programs for multi-channel retailers, incorporating elements such as purchase orders and pricing. In addition, the system is designed to provide "unprecedented flexibility in applications, so retailers can make changes as events, or competitive pressures, may require," said Bill Robinson, STS' Vice President of Marketing.

Typically, when retailers take actions such as opening or closing a warehouse, buying another chain or changing their merchandise movement procedures, "most of these things require software changes," said Robinson. "With MerchantWorks, we wanted to separate these business rules from the software."

The system is built on "thousands of COM and DCOM [Component Object Model and Distributed Component Object Model] objects," he noted. Such an architecture makes modifications, whether large or small, easy to accomplish.

Power to the Users

"The application is soft and user-defined," explained Diane Randolph, STS' Vice President of Merchandising Systems Development. "That applies to elements like the organization of data, naming conventions, transaction processes and pricing elements. It's all at the user's discretion."

While the MerchantWorks system is primarily a headquarters application, "it can be extended out across the enterprise, to the store but also

for trading partner relationships," noted Robinson. "We use Internet Protocol at all the distribution points, which enables retailers to distribute out all the software's components to clients automatically."

Truth, Version 1.0

At the same time, the system is designed to provide retailers with "one version of the truth," according to Randolph. "It provides central common data—such as merchandise and transaction results—for the entire retail enterprise, including stores and suppliers."

Microsoft technology, including Windows NT and Windows 2000, as well as Microsoft's Transaction Server and the data transformation services that are part of SQL Server 7.0, are "fundamental to MerchantWorks," noted Robinson.

The combination of a strong base with a high degree of flexibility gives retailers the ability to "integrate the system with their existing information assets, or those they might buy later, without throwing out the baby with the bathwater," he said. MerchantWorks is designed to "bolt onto the best of breed products that STS offers, such as for planning, warehouse management, allocation, sales audit and point of sale."

In addition, the application foundation is "fundamentally extensible," said Robinson. "I see it being used in wireless and handheld applications, as well as in HTML- and XML-based programs, including Microsoft's BizTalk Framework, later this year."

For more information contact STS Systems at 514-426-0822, or on the Web at www.stssystems.com.

"The system provides central common data—such as merchandise and transaction results—for the entire retail enterprise, including stores and suppliers."
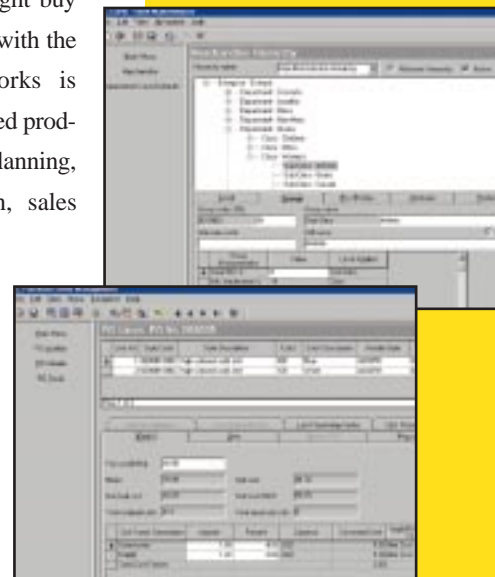
STS Systems
Pointe-Claire, Quebec, Canada

President:
Howard Stotland

R.A.D. Award Category:
RETAIL HEADQUARTERS
Merchandising

Fuel Buying System Cuts Product Costs, Manpower Needs

"By recommending fuel that can be purchased at the lowest delivered costs, the system can drive costs down dramatically."

The Pinnacle Corp.
Arlington, Texas

President:
Bob Johnson

R.A.D. Award Category:
RETAIL SUPPLY CHAIN
Supply Chain Execution

One of the hottest trends in both the convenience store and supermarket industries has been adding gasoline sales to the basic business. But both for companies entering this market for the first time and for those with many years of experience, the supply chain has been one of the most difficult areas to control costs and offer excellent customer service.

One reason for these challenges is that basic processes—buying and transporting fuel at the best price, for example—are themselves far from basic. "There are hundreds, sometimes thousands of discrete variables on each fuel buy," said Bart Johnson, National Accounts Manager for The Pinnacle Corp., which provides the Fuel Smart fuel management application.

"At any one store, they may have 15 different suppliers they could buy from, and these could supply product at any of eight different terminals in different locations," Johnson explained. "So we're dealing with eight separate freight rates, and there may be multiple carriers serving each terminal. Simply put, there are a lot of different ways to buy product."

Separation of Powers

Retailers themselves often add to the complexity, by separating the internal departments responsible for different aspects of the fuel buying operation. While one department "decides which stores need fuel and on which date," said Johnson, another group actually buys the fuel from suppliers. "These buyers have to make assumptions about which loads are going to be needed and hauled.

"Fuel Smart puts together these two functions, which are typically separate," he added. "It allows retailers to manage their inventory and shop for fully configured loads. By recommending fuel that can be purchased at the lowest delivered costs, it can drive costs down dramatically."

Lowering Labor Costs

In addition, "by unifying functions that in some companies are in separate departments, Fuel Smart can drive down the need for manpower," he added. He gave the example of two companies, one of which uses Pinnacle's application suite to handle its fuel sales, which total approximately 500 million gallons per year. "Their entire fuel staff is five people," said Johnson. "Another company, operating on the same business model but doing about half the sales volume and using our primary competitor's system, employs 12 people to do the same functions."

Recent improvements to the Fuel Smart application include providing the ability to integrate the transportation dispatching functions of retailers and wholesalers. This allows a wholesaler to place a short load—less than a full truckload—on a retailer's load and dispatch them together.

"There's been a tremendous amount of consolidation in this industry," Johnson noted. "That means the small players need to be more efficient to survive. Fuel Smart can help them, and it can also handle the larger systems that are brought together when companies merge."

For more information contact Pinnacle Corp. at 800-366-1173, or on the Web at www.pinncorp.com.
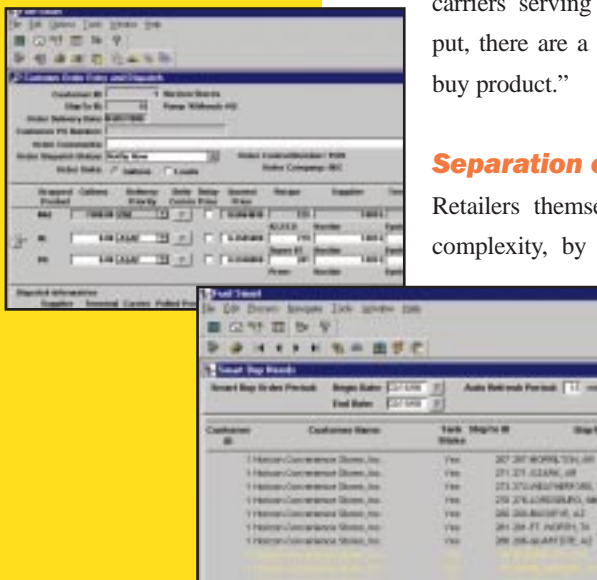
Trading Community Provides Information as Competitive Edge

Technology that leverages the Internet's business-to-business functionality for "loosely coupled" supply chains is provided by the RetailTrade.net Open Trading Community, from Ipex.

"The loosely coupled supply chain refers to one that involves numerous intermediaries," explained Aaron Samuel, Vice President Products Group at Ipex. "These intermediaries have relationships with buyers and suppliers, and there's a huge variety of both, ranging from small to huge, from local to overseas."

RetailTrade.net addresses the widely varying information technology abilities and requirements of these companies. "It gives them the ability to interchange all the information they need to buy and sell," said Samuel.

The system provides product suppliers with tools that enable them to send product catalogs to customers, maintain those catalogs and receive orders. Retailers can access these catalogs with an offline application that is installed on their own PC, or they can access the online version with browser-based technology using ActiveX controls.

Information, Please

But suppliers and buyers already have numerous ways to send product information and receive orders. RetailTrade.net's competitive advantage is that it allows wholesalers to provide retailers, especially small mom-and-pop companies, with other value-added services.

"We're providing a tool that not only allows retailers to place orders—an electronic fax machine—but also one that will give them value when they come in in the morning," said Samuel. When they access RetailTrade.net, "they can look at their orders, get the latest updates, see what's running out of stock and what won't be available for re-order.

"The retailer can also see what the hot products are in their region this season," he added. "Retailers that run one, two or three shops typically don't have access to that kind of market knowledge, so that's the value that the intermediary can give them.

"In addition, the system allows the retailer to get rid of products that they are stuck with from last season," he added. "An individual retailer can't get rid of five shirts, but a wholesaler can aggregate them and get rid of 500 shirts."

Supply Side Solution

Suppliers, too, can get access to levels of data detail that can help their business. "Medium-sized suppliers generally don't have huge information technology systems," noted Samuel. "They can use ActiveX or an Application Service Provider (ASP) to connect to RetailTrade.net. This gives them the option to fax documents traditionally or electronically."

In addition to simplifying communications, the suppliers can begin to analyze how various orders came in to them and to aggregate that information. "They can see which shops are selling what, and perhaps note that the red color of one style of ladies' shoes is not selling in the southern region of a country, but is working well in the northern region," said Samuel. "They can then associate this data with other market knowledge that they have."
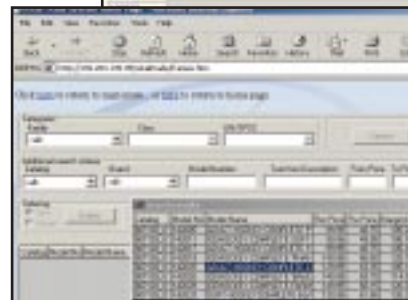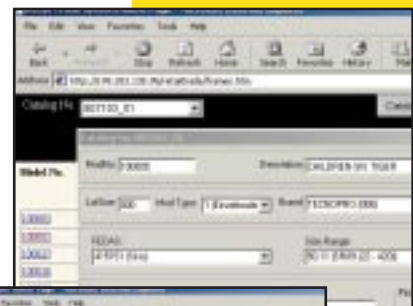
> *"The retailer can see what the hot products are in their region this season. Retailers that run one, two or three shops typically don't have access to that kind of market knowledge."*

Ipex
East Bentleigh, Victoria, Australia
Managing Director:
Joel Schwalb
R.A.D. Award Category:
RETAIL SUPPLY CHAIN Supply Chain Integration

Multi-Channel Solution Synchronizes Online and Offline Data

SMS SALES MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Sales Management Systems
Anaheim, Calif.

President:
C. N. Phan

R.A.D. Award Category:
BEST USE OF WEB TECHNOLOGIES

Acknowledging the Internet's enormous impact on virtually all aspects of retailing, this year's Retail Application Developer Awards have, for the first time, honored the technology vendor making the best use of Web technologies. The R.A.D. Award judges, choosing from among all the finalists, considered solutions that most effectively integrated Internet technologies, either for business-to-business or business-to-consumer applications.

Seeking to provide a solution that would allow small- to medium-size retailers to take advantage of the Internet's potential, Sales Management Systems (SMS) offered QuickSell Commerce, a Web-enabled point of sale system.

Many of these retailers have difficulty linking their new online storefront, and the orders coming from it, with their existing POS, merchandising and operational systems. Many retailers struggle with inventory control, order fulfillment and shipping, and also encounter problems utilizing their newly gained sales and customer data.

QuickSell Commerce's key feature is that it routes orders received from multiple channels—including physical stores, websites, telephone and catalog sales—into one centralized database, allowing retailers to achieve greater control of both their inventory and crucial business data.

Other elements of the QuickSell Commerce solution include:
- Online Internet shipping and order tracking from FedEx and UPS
- Using the Internet to deliver multi-media advertisements to customers in checkout lines
- Participation in future business-to-business procurement efforts
- Maintaining graphical receipts in digital format, ready for Web access
- Employing the POS screen for cashier training
- Accessing and running corporate applications from the POS, and integrating corporate data into the POS process

In addition, each QuickSell package allows retailers to set up their virtual storefronts on multiple sites, providing them access to both high-traffic portals and more targeted locations.

Technologies Cited for Strongest Impact on Basic Business Processes

Familiar Interface Cuts Training Time

High labor turnover rates in supermarkets and convenience stores have increased these retailers' demands for technology that simplifies the training process for new employees. Versatil's Venezia combines simplicity, cutting training times to two hours or less, with a robust application that supports retail functions for both physical and online stores.

The training time issue is particularly impressive given Versatil's geographic spread. Its products are used by hundreds of small- to medium-sized retailers in Mexico, Panama, Ecuador and Brazil, and the company plans to move into Venezuela and Peru this year.

"The Venezia product was designed to be multilingual," said Versatil President Moises Galindo Tinajero. "But there are difficult language issues to deal with. For example, to 'cancel' a transaction means two completely different things in two countries. In Mexico it means 'Don't do this transaction, cancel it.' In Ecuador, it refers to how the payment will be made, or how one will 'cancel' the debt they owe."

Versatil addressed this issue by using the familiar elements of the Microsoft Office interface. "We asked customers what they wanted, and this was the most popular, best-known interface," said Tinajero.

For more information contact Versatil at 52-3-122-8411, or on the Web at www.versatil.net.

VERSATIL *The IT Company*

Versatil
Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico
President:
Moises Galindo Tinajero
R.A.D. Award Category:
GREATEST BUSINESS IMPACT

In a new category this year, the R.A.D. Awards recognize solutions that significantly improve a retailer's core business processes. All the finalist companies were considered for this Greatest Business Impact award. Criteria include increased productivity and responsiveness, and/or improved ROI, revenue or market share.

Web-Based Kiosks: In-Aisle and Online

Kiosks have been a tantalizing prospect for many retailers. But while they understand the technology's customer service capabilities, retailers have been frustrated by the size and single purpose of most kiosks. These factors have prevented many retailers from placing kiosks in actual selling areas, where they could facilitate the sales process while it is occurring.

NCR's Web-based kiosks combine "zero footprint" laptop-based hardware, supported by a software platform that allows retailers to offer services keyed to the units' location in the store. A kiosk in a supermarket's deli department, for example, through which customers can place their orders, can increase transaction sizes in this high-margin area by as much as 35%, according to NCR. Such an application can also help a retailer retrieve one-quarter of "walk-aways"—customers who leave when the line is too long. The walk-away percentage can run as high as 10% of all customers, said NCR.

The technology also gives retailers the opportunity to more closely link their online presence with the in-store shopping experience, by offering similar content and services on their Web page and through the kiosks. "We're really going to be dealing with a hybrid consumer in the future—one who is on the Web today and in the store tomorrow," said Tracy Flynn, Vice President for Food Industry Marketing at NCR's Retail Solutions Group.

For more information contact NCR at 770-623-7000, or on the Web at www.ncr.com.

NCR

NCR
Duluth, Ga.
Chairman/CEO:
Lars Nyberg
R.A.D. Award Category:
GREATEST BUSINESS IMPACT

Honorable Mentions

Compris Technologies
Kennesaw, Ga.
770-795-3300
www.compristech.com

The two newest additions to Compris' Restaurant Suite are a home delivery application and MS2, for Multi-Site Maintenance. The home delivery system, linked closely with the food service establishment's POS system, coordinates incoming orders as well as delivery and transportation logistics. The MS2 facilitates remote management of multiple sites employing concepts ranging from table service to quick service and theme restaurants.

Cost Plus Computer Services
Roseville, Calif.
916-773-2727
www.cpcsinc.com

Rim Central, a Web-based headquarters application, provides efficient assortment and category management analyses, among other functions. In addition to identifying which products should be deleted from a wholesale or retail assortment, Rim Central also suggests replacement products, using measures such as product sales, movement and profitability.

Dunn & Dunn Data Systems
Port St. Lucie, Fla.
800-354-4509
www.spiritpos.com

Spirit POS for Windows, a turnkey solution for small- to medium-sized retailers in the natural foods, pharmacy and pet food areas, provides users with automated inventory control. The system's SCOOP (System Calculated Optimal Ordering Point) method provides dynamic minimums and maximums for entire product categories or individual SKUs. The system also incorporates numerous customer relationship management functions.

ICL Retail Systems
Dallas
972-716-8300
www.iclretail.com

Building on its GlobalSTORE platform, ICL's Auto Center Solution offers deep levels of product data to meet the needs of the auto repair market. Retailers can also use handheld radio frequency devices to take parts and pricing data with them into repair areas. The solution also manages repairs by ensuring that all needed parts for a particular job are in stock and that qualified personnel are available.

Kronos
Waltham, Mass.
781-890-3232
www.kronos.com

Workforce Express extends retailers' ability to collect labor data via PC, across multiple communication infrastructures. The product, part of the company's Workforce suite, is designed to work well in a Microsoft environment—for example, it can upload employee information on sick days, vacation and travel from the Microsoft Outlook calendar application directly to the retailer's payroll system. In addition, its use of SQL Server source code allows the data to be easily exported to various non-payroll systems.

Newmarket International
Portsmouth, N.H.
603-436-7500
www.newsoft.com

MeetingBroker.com is a business-to-business e-commerce solution designed to serve as a hub for group sales leads among meeting planners, hotels, regional sales offices and convention centers. The service, currently in beta test and scheduled to launch in 2Q 2000, routes meeting profiles through established Electronic Request for Proposal (e-RFP) sites to hospitality retailers. Automatic application integration is possible for retailers using a well-established Newmarket hospitality program.

Pinnacle Corp.
Arlington, Texas
800-366-1173
www.pinncorp.com

Palm, a Windows-based touch screen POS system for the convenience store industry, integrates the wide variety of transactions offered in this environment. Fuel sales can be authorized with one keystroke, cutting down on transaction time and the possibility of error. Links to UPC scanners and credit card readers are also built into the system. User-definable touch screens can be varied by day part, and in general they cut down on training time, a key issue in this high-turnover retail segment.

RNetEC
Sacramento, Calif.
888-763-8334
www.rnetec.com

The company, formerly known as R-Net EDI, offers a feature-rich online catalog that allows retailers to capture essential UPC information, including product images and detailed descriptions. These can be downloaded via a browser, or retailers can request documents to be sent via traditional EDI. Vendors can create, update and edit their catalogs online. Retailers' subscription fees cover multiple buyers within their organization, who can access the catalogs as often as they wish. RNetEC was acquired by SPS Commerce, St. Paul, Minn., in March.

SASI
Bristol, Pa.
215-785-4321
www.sasipos.com

The company's Allegiance system provides a full range of customer relationship management reports, from basic market basket analyses to more detailed views that link buying habits to individual customer data. In addition, retailers can employ Allegiance's data mining, modeling and forecasting functions to more accurately target their marketing and promotional programs. SASI was acquired by Toronto-based Trimax in February.

Meet the Judges

James R. Poll, Architecture Program Manager, Meijer, Grand Rapids, Mich.
In his 22 years with Meijer, Poll's retail information technology experience has encompassed development, architecture and vendor relationship management. He previously worked for Dow Chemical Co.
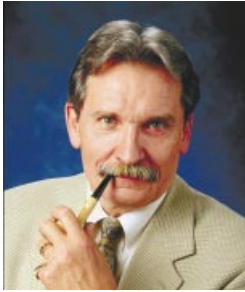
Richard Mader, President, Mader International Consulting, Executive Director, Association for Retail Technology Standards of the NRF, Washington
Mader has more than 25 years' experience in retail information management, as CIO for Boscov's and Bon-Ton Department Stores, as well as in posts with Federated Department Stores and McCrory's.

Tia Potter, Publisher, Executive Technology, Editor/Publisher, Newsletter Group, Fairchild Publications, New York
Potter has advised both national and international retailers on merchandising issues over the last 18 years, and continues to provide retailers with business information through the WWD/DNR/Specialty Stores Newsletter.

Matt Nannery, Senior Editor, Chain Store Age, New York
Nannery writes frequently about how retailers use technology to improve operations, cut costs and better understand their customers. He writes a regular column for Britain's Retail Automation magazine.

Barry L. Wise, President, Wise Retail Consultants, Flower Mound, Texas
Wise's 15-plus years' experience in retail included positions in merchandising, operations and store management. His consulting company advises both retailers and technology vendors on providing standards-based open solutions.

Robert Grimes, Chairman and CEO, CynterCorp, Gaithersburg, Md.
Grimes' company provides a wide variety of technology integration services to the food service, retail and hospitality industries.
He founded FS/TEC, the food service industry technology trade show and conference.

John Stiehler, Senior Manager, Kurt Salmon Associates, San Bruno, Calif.
Stiehler brings more than 20 years of retailing experience to his work in KSA's Information Technology Practice. His project management experience includes ERP implementations, business process reengineering and supply chain management.

David M. Szymanski, Associate Director, Center for Retailing Studies, Al and Marion Withers Research Fellow, Associate Professor of Marketing, Lowry College and Graduate School of Business,
Texax A&M University, College Station, Texas
Dr. Szymanski's research focuses on retailing and marketing strategy, international marketing, product innovation and personal selling and sales management. He has published widely in leading marketing journals.