Berg Liquor Controls.

Speed, Efficiency, and Security:
RetailNOW 2017's Show Floor Features Solutions to Address Industry's Hottest Topics

RSPA's technology-focused committee, the STS Committee, had a visible role at this year's RetailNOW including participating in the Shark Tank sessions in the Champagne Ballroom (the event's main stage). After walking the Show Floor, STS Committee members discussed what they thought were the most interesting or unique products and services.

WHAT WERE SOME OF THE TRENDING TOPICS THAT YOU SAW ON THE RETAILNOW 2017 SHOW FLOOR?

Uwe von Sehrwald (vice president, Wholesaler & Business Development, Truno Retail Technology Solutions): Wow—payment solutions were all over the exhibit floor, and this tells me there must be huge opportunities after the EMV fallout. Maybe it is not completely settled yet?

Secondly, the grocery retail industry represents $900 billion in sales (depending on what publication you look at), but only 6% of that is ecommerce. That compares with 8.5% of all retail sales. Retailers need to recognize this and get on the ecommerce train because Amazon is looking to grab more of the 90%+ of sales conducted in stores.

Finally, customer experience and satisfaction grading continue to evolve as retailers struggle to keep their revenue share. How to retain, recover, and keep customers through the use of new technology is topical and still emerging. There are a ton of great options available to improve the customer experience, as we saw at

RSPA STS Committee:

Luis Artiz

Nick D'Alessio

Velda Goodin

Thomas Greenman

Kevin Kogler

Uwe von Sehrwald

Jordan Thaeler

KNOWLEDGE

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the RetailNOW Shark Tank session, including the winner! This tells me focus on in-store customer experience is becoming more important than ever to retailers if they want to keep that 90% of retail sales in-store instead of going elsewhere.

Nick D'Alessio (senior business development manager, Brother Mobile Solutions): RetailNOW 2017 was

another great show from a hardware vendor perspective. One of the most interesting discussion topics that seems to be gaining ground is HaaS (hardware as a service). I had firsthand conversations on this. There are resellers that have figured out how to make this work to overcome the investment barriers that retailers would otherwise have in a capital-constrained environment. Mobile

device management also continues to be a key differentiator with the increased numbers of mobile solutions making their way to the retail store operations. There appears to be great opportunities for resellers that can implement and manage these solutions.

WHICH COMPANY PRESENTED PRODUCTS THAT YOU THOUGHT WERE UNIQUE TO THE RSPA COMMUNITY?

Luis Artiz (group product manager, Epson America Inc.): I thought that the most unique product was the Berg Liquor Controls (www.bergliquorcontrols.com) system that manages the dispensing of liquor, beer, wine, and other beverages at all types of venues. They sell integrated software/hardware solutions including an integrated KDS [Kitchen Display Systems], a touch screen watch, and wireless liquor delivery into one solution. This system makes it easy for bartenders to provide accurate/fast drinks and provide better cost control for the bar owner. This was different than other products and services shown at RetailNOW, and their tiny booth was full all the time.

WHICH PRODUCT OFFERED A CLEAR VALUE PROPOSITION TO RETAILERS?

Thomas Greenman (service manager, Skurla's POS Solutions): Given Skurla's focus on cloud-based POS, we've had the need for an affordable, managed ISP failover solution for years. The problem is that most of the available solutions in the market consist of expensive hardware with setup and maintenance that is too complicated for small- to medium-sized merchants. I visited with Accelerated Concepts (www.accelerated.com) at RetailNOW; and I found they had affordable, purpose-driven routers that will provide

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Accelerated Concepts

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dual-WAN with a failover to a cellular connection solution (all in one box).

Typically, these devices are a hard sell to merchants, even though there is a clear need for the solution. Today, not being able to process credit cards is a major loss for a merchant, even if it's for a short period of time. With the EMV shift, dial-up Internet access is no longer an option. The Accelerated Concepts product can provide back-up Internet connectivity at a price retailers can afford. I see this solution as an easy way to add value to our merchant services clients.

Kevin Kogler (founder/president, MicroBiz POS): How many complaints have you received from customers about the additional time it takes to process EMV transactions? Customers hate wasting time waiting for their card to be authorized and retailers hate seeing long check-out lines. Given these known issues with EMV, I was impressed with the value proposition offered by a semi-integrated payment solution and hosted gateway offering by a company named Index (www.index.com).

Index claims to have the fastest EMV experience in the U.S.—just one second to dip and remove an EMV card. I was a skeptic until they demonstrated this speed to me on the RetailNOW 2017 Show Floor. Impressive! When I asked how this was accomplished, I was told that it was through technical innovation. Index leverages the Quick Chip and M/Chip Fast specifications created by Visa, Mastercard, Amex, and Discover to enable cards to be removed before total authorization. Index also claims to have the fastest EMV software kernel. This kernel was coded to optimize performance after a card is inserted and also speeds up performance by eliminating the legacy parts of EMV that are not necessary for the U.S. market.

The result? An EMV experience that is so fast (1 second) that the user does not have to remove their hand from the card while dipping. This can lead to faster checkouts—up to 15% faster in certain cases.

WHICH PRODUCT SHOWN AT RETAILNOW WAS THE MOST FORWARD-LOOKING?

Velda Goodin (manager, Technical Services and Solutions Strategy, ScanSource): The marriage between retail/hospitality and security cameras should be an easy pairing. However, this has proven to be a difficult match. I discovered a service which seems to be a natural bridge for the two: a digital intelligence offering from a company named Glimpse (www.glimpsecorp.com).

Glimpse utilizes digital cameras to monitor and capture actual images of interactions between servers and customers. What makes this more revolutionary is that Glimpse uses proprietary software to filter and aggregate the data from these images into specific and actionable BI (Business Intelligence) for management.

In different market sectors, successful implementations of Glimpse experienced a 10% to 40% reduction in "at risk" transactions and an increase of 10% or higher revenues. Results are attributed to instant employee behavior change, compliance improvements, ongoing targeted guidance, and direct loss reduction. Glimpse can help retailers reduce bottom-line costs and increase top-line revenues, while improving both customer and employee satisfaction. Offering this as a service to your hospitality customers would be a quick ROI for them and a profitable revenue stream for RSPA resellers.
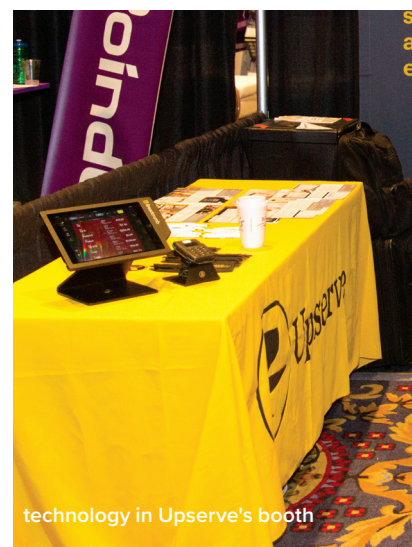
technology in Upserve's booth

Jordan Thaeler (president/co-founder, WhatsBusy)**:** I was most impressed—and optimistic—with the increasing use of data by brick-and mortar retailers. One company that caught my attention was Upserve (www.upserve.com). In reality, a payments organization (ISO), Upserve is tapping into restaurant POS systems to marry credit card data with item-level sales data. Their tools are aimed at helping restaurants with their operations, menu creation, and, to a lesser extent, marketing.

Though not yet prescriptive—as we demand at WhatsBusy—it was great to see software that forced merchants to be more objective in their decision making. The retail technology industry needs these sorts of mandates to find any measurable progress; and I was glad to see a software company presenting at RetailNOW that is stewarding innovation in an otherwise anachronistic sector. **c**