



➤ STRATIX WHITE PAPER

New Horizons for
Brick-and-Mortar Retail

How mobile technology and the Android platform is changing the definition of “in-store”

You see, that perfect value proposition that serves as the “gamechanger” for retail is a simple one: Choice.

INTRODUCTION

Blurred Lines

In the current post-COVID business environment, retailers with brick-and-mortar locations are frantically searching for the perfect value proposition to ensure their survival.

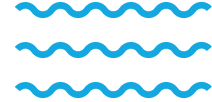
What is the item or service we can offer to customers to secure their patronage and loyalty – even in a time of anxiety, uncertainty and challenging headwinds for brick-and-mortar retail? Is it delivery from the stores to customer homes? Is it encouraging Research Online, Purchase Offline (ROPO) behavior by engaging customers with native apps filled product information and reviews? Perhaps it is Buy Online, Pick-up In Store (BOPIS) models that encourage same-day in-store visits for immediacy that delivery cannot match? Maybe it's Curbside Pickup that takes BOPIS even further by making it unnecessary for the customer to even leave their car?

The answer is yes. You see, that perfect value proposition that serves as the “gamechanger” for retail is a simple one: Choice. Customers want retailers to have the flexibility to meet them wherever they want to be, and that means that they have multiple preferences for shopping channels that retailers must account for. It's no longer a paradigm shift from offline to online, but rather a shift from single focus to flexible.

In fact, Target offered some eye-popping statistics to this effect during their most recent earnings announcement¹. Digital sales grew a whopping 195 percent in the second quarter as the COVID pandemic ramped up. During the same timeframe, however, their curbside pickup offerings grew an “astonishing 730 percent” year over year, while their “store-to-home” delivery service Shipt grew a massive 350 percent year over year.

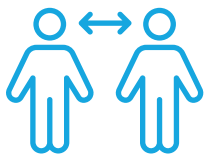
It's obvious that your customers crave the safety and convenience of persistent multichannel commerce, and that means your stores and store associates are crucial to your omnichannel success. Now's the time to ensure your store operations are based on an ecosystem that is just as flexible and capable as the wide range of retail use cases your customers expect you to offer. Similarly, the devices your associates rely upon must be deployed faster, managed more efficiently and securely, and supported in a strong and sustainable fashion. That's why modern retail in-store operations depend upon Google's Android Enterprise software and professional caliber devices from trusted manufacturers such as Zebra.

Read on to learn more about how to give your in-store associates the tools necessary for flexible, efficient operations.





SUCCESS DEPENDS ON SAFETY AND SECURITY



A key component of retailers establishing any sort of “normal” – new or otherwise – will be re-establishing the bond of trust between them and their customers. Even when shoppers can afford to make discretionary purchases² low confidence in their safety while doing so constrains their spending at physical locations. Nathan Hendren, a Harvard economist, states that “the main concern here is really fighting the virus. Unless we remove the threat of getting sick or getting your family members sick, it’s hard to imagine that [in-store] spending will recover to the pre-COVID levels.”

That means stores must shift their thinking and take tangible measures to exhibit they’re serious about mitigating this threat such as:

Managing social distancing

Maintaining safe distances will be critical for both retailers’ own employees and their customers. While floor decals indicating 6-foot spaces were a primary method in the early stages, retailers need to be considerably more sophisticated to make this viable in the long run. Retailers must reimagine the store experience by leveraging apps, from their own brand apps to reservation/queue systems not unlike OpenTable to manage how many people are in the store at a given time.

Personal Safety

In-store technology was already moving in the direction of being a more sensor-driven experience from smart shelves that monitor stock levels to cameras that help inform detailed heat maps on customer movement. The next

horizon for that technology may be temperature checks for both employees and customers coming in. Previously, this simply meant infrared cameras, but accuracy for large, constantly changing crowds may not be enough. Some state-of-the-art solutions, however, combine AI technology with deep machine learning⁴ to not only identify at-risk customers, but also alert sales staff. Additionally, ultraviolet light-based solutions offer stores the means to continually disinfect high-touch areas such as kiosks and payment pads.

Contactless In-Store Commerce

Contactless payments are getting their time in the spotlight thanks to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The total in-store experience, however, still contains a number of touchpoints that may require customers to be in more proximity with store associates than they are comfortable with. That's why retailers are implementing shopping methodologies such as frictionless checkout⁵. Here, customers scan their own purchases as they put them in their cart, then simply pay through the store's app when they're ready to leave or maneuver through a designated checkout lane and get charged through a digital wallet they set up beforehand.

Now, more than ever, retailers must understand that bringing these facets of modern flexible retail together in a cohesive fashion means starting with the right foundation. Google's Android Enterprise operating system

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offers enterprise-caliber stability, as well as a robust ecosystem of certified professional-grade devices, apps, accessories and service providers to handle mobile device management and other services. Most important, it offers best-in-class data security⁶, via on-device suites such as Zebra's LifeGuard, facilitating updates and management to shield customer data and employee privacy. This is incredibly important when a single in-store device may be accessed and used by multiple associates, and even more so when retailers are transitioning to a 1:1 model to discourage high-touch device sharing among employees.

YOU'VE MADE SAFETY A PRIORITY. NOW WHAT?



Making your stores safer is just a first step to pushing traffic back to brick-and-mortar locations. It's more important than ever to offer the best possible in-person experience to customers re-entering stores. As your online and offline channels meld into a singular commerce platform that accommodates multiple shopping preferences, in-store associates must be fully connected and empowered to deliver the same seamless brand experiences your customers encounter online. No tool is more important to your associates achieving this than their handheld devices. Not all handheld devices are created equal, however.



Modern professional Android-enabled mobile devices such as Zebra's TC21 Touch Computer empower your associates to:

- Process payments efficiently and accurately throughout the store and outside of it.
- Manage inventory to help ensure that the products customers want are available when they want them.
- Quickly and accurately access product information to add value to in-store experiences.
- Build customer loyalty by offering digital rewards, coupons and other promotional tools.
- Enable associates charged with store-to-home delivery to perform

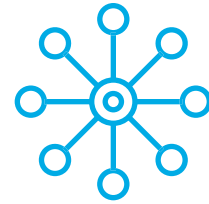
sales and route management tasks efficiently while connected to the store.

- Integrate seamlessly with accessories such as Bluetooth ring scanners for hands-free scanning.
- Carry out these tasks and more without disruption via robust battery life.

Equipping your associates with the right infrastructure, devices and support gives them the flexibility they need to turn disruptions into opportunities. A recent survey of business decision makers about their strategic moves during the COVID pandemic cited strong, flexible IT infrastructure as the most important factor for readiness and agility related to the COVID pandemic. Conversely, lack of flexible technology infrastructure was the top barrier to businesses unable to respond in a strong fashion.

The good news is that consumers are ready and waiting. While the pandemic has shifted much behavior to virtual/online channels, shoppers continue to significantly value the physical experiences at brick-and-mortar locations. Recent research by Stellar Global⁷ found that 59 percent of consumers would not buy products costing more than \$325 without personally testing them and understanding how they work firsthand.

Furthermore, 8 out of 10 respondents indicated that they would buy products once they've had a chance to try them firsthand. These customers are informed and ready to buy once they make a visit to brick-and-mortar locations. Make sure you have the empowered and connected associates ready to meet their needs.



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CONNECT TO THE NEW NORMAL

There is much prognostication about what form “the new normal” of commerce will take, but it’s clear that it is more of an evolution of existing online and offline consumer preferences than a radical transformation. Choosing the right tools such as professional-grade devices from trusted manufacturers such as Zebra leveraging the Android Enterprise operating system is crucial.

Just as crucial, however, is backing up these solutions with end-to-end support throughout the lifecycle of the device. While your organization might have relied upon do-it-yourself (DIY) IT support in traditional times, DIY simply isn’t enough to meet the device support and management needs for fully connected associates at hundreds or thousands of brick-and-mortar locations. Your customers won’t wait for you to accommodate mobile Point of Sale

(mPoS), contactless payments, BOPIS/ Curbside and ship-to-home models in a sustainable, scalable way. Even more importantly, your organization can’t wait for a smarter mobile blueprint that lowers total cost of ownership, boosts employee productivity and elevates your brand experience.

The time to innovate and evolve into a more flexible retail organization is now, and strictly entrusting this to in-house IT resources limits flexibility to pivot to larger strategic initiatives. It’s time to seek partnerships with providers who can help you manage and support your Android Enterprise-enabled devices, apps, accessories and services efficiently so that your associates can help you attract, keep and grow customers in this “new normal” retail landscape.



About Stratix

As the largest pure-play enterprise mobility specialist in the U.S., Stratix is dedicated to guaranteeing nonstop mobility. The company leverages 35+ years of expertise and experience to accelerate and inspire business mobility transformation for some of the world's most iconic brands. Their SmartMobile programs ensure each client has the right technology, tools and support programs in place to stay ahead. For additional information, visit www.stratixcorp.com

About Zebra

Zebra (NASDAQ: ZBRA) empowers the front line in retail/ecommerce, manufacturing, transportation and logistics, healthcare, public sector and other industries to achieve a performance edge. With more than 10,000 partners across 100 countries, we deliver industry-tailored, end-to-end solutions to enable every asset and worker to be visible, connected and fully optimized. Our market-leading solutions elevate the shopping experience, track and manage inventory as well as improve supply chain efficiency and patient care. In 2020, Zebra made Forbes Global 2000 list for the second consecutive year and was listed among Fast Company's Best Companies for Innovators. For more information, visit www.zebra.com

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Let's get started.

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