

Waitrose Case Study

Waitrose, which has been using Symbol's self-scanning system in its Quick Check stores since late 1996, has installed the latest generation technology, the Symbol (PSS) in its Banstead store, Surrey. Based on Symbol's (WLAN), the system is completely RF and uses the new ergonomically-designed PSS scanner.



The system eliminates the most tedious part of the shopping experience - unpacking and repacking the trolley at the checkout queue. As they select groceries from shelves, customers use to scan and tally purchases. Having finished, the shopper returns to the Quick Check area and pays for the purchases through the dedicated Quick Check checkout.

Says Mike Buckle, EPoS Development Manager, Retail Systems, Waitrose: "The new Quick Check scanners are smaller, lighter and straightforward for our customers to use. The screen is bigger and easier to read. Customers can also scroll through the entire list of items they have scanned, right from the beginning, instead of just the last four items."

The key advantage for Waitrose is the fact that the system is completely wireless, communicating directly to the Quick Check PC over the . The whole store design can be far more flexible because the need for cabling between the PC and the scanning rack is completely eradicated. Once an RF network is installed, it may be used for other equipment, providing the opportunity, for example, for additional temporary points-of-sale. Scanner racks can be mounted against a wall (not possible with batch handsets); and scanners do not need to be returned to the original location. In terms of service to customers, RF scanners have access to more information because they are not restricted to the product file downloaded to the batch scanner overnight. Information to customers given via the scanner may also be personalised to reflect data provided at time of registering for an account - e.g. allergy sufferers can be alerted to traces of nuts in products they have scanned.



"With the earlier implementation of the technology," commented Mike Buckle, "we were restricted to placing the handsets into a specially designed wired rack holding a minimum of eight scanners plus the entry station (for swiping customers' account cards). Now everything is wireless, we can arrange any number of scanners in whatever pattern we like. This makes it easier to deal with double-ended stores and more economic to install in smaller sites, where the cost of cabling alone would have ruled it out before. We don't need to run 100m of cabling across the ceiling, or dig up the floor to put in ducts. From our point of view, the sheer flexibility of store design that it delivers is by far the biggest benefit."