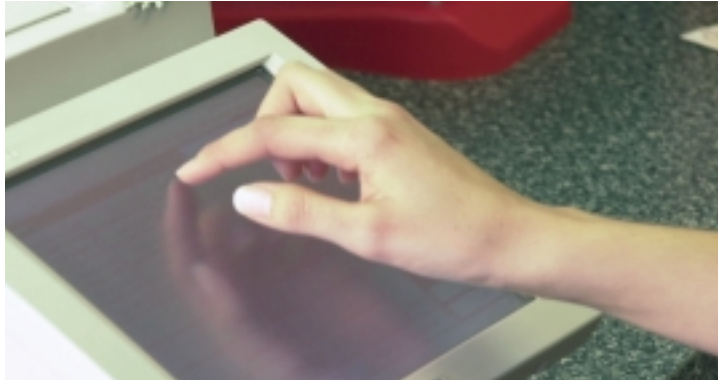


At the "Four" Front of Efficiency



Quatro

While large businesses and enterprises continue to spend hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of dollars on systems to streamline their supply chain management (SCM), a small store located just off Sydney's General Holmes Drive is showing them how it's done. At the Kyeemagh 4 Square convenience store, proprietor Mrs Nawal McKewan has implemented a powerful retail technology solution based on an EPSON IR-310 point-of-sale (POS) terminal and the Quatro online ordering system.

By virtue of a business relationship between a number of retail industry service and technology providers, Mrs McKewan has been able to join the growing ranks of retail convenience store owners who are ridding themselves of inefficiencies associated with stock control and ordering, till dipping, profit margin monitoring and high pressure sales representatives. Consisting of services and technologies from companies such as EPSON Australia, Eposode Data Solutions, Quatro Four Retail and EposCommerce, the solution at the heart of this has been designed specifically to overcome supply chain inefficiencies within the retail convenience channel.

Bringing all the services and technologies under a single umbrella of the C-Store solution is Eposode, one of EPSON's leading POS technology partners. Eposode director, Mr Warwick Dennett explained: "Essentially, it [C-Store] is a marriage between EPSON POS systems, the Internet, Quatro Four Retail services and the Store Trader POS application from EposCommerce. What it

represents to convenience store owners though, is the consolidation and streamlining of a great number of previously disparate processes they undertake every day just to keep their businesses rolling."

By utilising the Internet portal concept, convenience store owners use an EPSON IR-310 terminal with an Internet connection to access the Quatro Four Retail system. An industry solution, the Quatro portal enables its users to conduct on-line transactions, such as order placements, accept invoices and make payments, with suppliers.

Simplicity Hiding Complexity

For Mrs McKewan, the incredibly complex technologies that have been brought together to form C-Store are made transparent by the EPSON IR-310 intelligent cash register sitting on the store's main counter. With no previous knowledge of computers – and no desire to acquire such knowledge – she is able to exploit the potential of leading technologies simply by means of the IR-310's touch screen. "I'm constantly coming across situations where C-Store saves me time and money," she



said. "For example, one of my suppliers came into the shop and after examining a product display, told me that I needed to replenish stock level of a particular item to the tune of 20. Previously, I'd just taken his word, accepted the stock and signed a cheque. In this case, I simply pressed a couple of buttons and within 20 seconds, told him that I only needed 15. For a convenience store owner, these are the small things that build up to represent significant amounts of money saved."

Ordering stock is another area where Mrs McKewan sees enormous potential for streamlining the operations of her store. Already, Quatro provides on-line and real-time ordering facilities for several of a convenience store's fastest moving items and is in the process of expanding out to cover nearly 80 per cent of typical lines. "Rather than physically checking stock levels, getting on the phone and placing an order, I simply use the Store Trader software to check stock then access Quatro to place an order," explained Mrs McKewan. "One of the great things about this feature is that I'm no longer restricted to having to place orders during normal business hours. I can do this either after hours or during off-peak times."



While Mrs McKewan is one of the fortunate store owners in having staff that don't dip into the till, she recognizes it is one of the major problems faced by most convenience store owners – and one that is eliminated by C-Store. "Every transaction is recorded," she said. "The transaction time, amount and product is automatically captured and discrepancies between the actual till amount and what should be there can be identified in a matter of seconds. This full accountability easily represents a saving of anything from between \$50 and \$100 a day."

The EPSON Rationale

While there are a number of contenders in the Australian POS terminal industry, Eposode's use of the EPSON IR-310 pays testament to C-Store's key objectives – ease-of-use, reliability and efficiency. "The convenience store market requires all these things in technology," said Mr Dennett. "Ease-of-use is delivered by means of the Quatro portal design and the Store Trader software that runs on the IR-310. Efficiency; that's the combination of all the components. Reliability though, is in most part, delivered by the IR-310. Once store owners start to use C-Store, it quickly becomes one of the most business-critical tools they



have. Everything from tracking sales, ordering stock, creating GST reports and operating the till is built in; and because the terminal provides the interface between the store owner and all these functions, anything less than total uptime is simply unacceptable.

"With the EPSON IR-310, we can virtually guarantee C-Store users that the equipment on their counter is the best and most reliable in the world," he said. "And from a systems integration perspective, the IR-310's standard architecture means we're able to use the best-of-breed Microsoft Windows software and connect easily to the Internet and through to Quatro."