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top3 by design

Located in the fashionable Sydney homewares precinct Crows Nest, top3 by design has emerged as being truly unique in the retail industry. The store brings together the top three products in a broad range of categories by merit of their design; from the classic Aalto wave vase to the latest award-winning bottle opener ring. The design elements of form, functionality and quality underpin everything carried by top3—a guiding principle reflected in its use of state-of-the-art Point-of-Sale (POS) technology.

A POS solution for flexibility and functionality

Since top3 commenced operating in November 2001 it has grown in reputation and prestige; a growth evidenced in the 2004 opening of a second outlet in the iconic beachside suburb of Bondi Junction. To better manage this growth top3's co-founder and Managing Director, Terri Winter, recognised the need for an advanced POS solution designed specifically to meet the needs of *serious* retail operations.

"We needed a POS solution that would give us the flexibility and functionality to create a retail environment where customer service, rapid transaction processing and ease-of-management go hand-in-hand," Ms Winter said. "*Innovative* and *exceptional* are the criteria we use to select the products we carry so naturally we wanted a POS system that reflects those same values."

Easy to use, powerful functionality

Having established a strong relationship with EPSON Australia, Ms Winter worked with the company's specialists to identify the best possible software that would work in concert with EPSON POS technology. After an in-depth evaluation, she made the choice to replace top3's existing retail software with the recently released Microsoft Retail Management System (RMS).

To power the added functionality this suite provides, top3 upgraded its existing EPSON SR-600 to the more powerful EPSON MR-800 PC-based touch screen POS terminal, while continuing to leverage its investment in the versatile EPSON TM-88III thermal receipt printers.

Management beyond expectations

Since upgrading to the new EPSON hardware and Microsoft software combination, top3 has realised a significant increase in the speed and efficiency of managing its entire back office operations. As a direct result of this, the company has seen a reduction in ongoing operational costs and a definite return on investment in the technology.

"When it came to doing the end of year stocktake, it took just one afternoon as opposed to the four days, which it took me last year using the previous software," Ms Winter stated.



"When the customer is ready to resume, we simply scan the receipt's barcode, which is automatically printed by the TM-88III, and the system retrieves every detail of the on-hold sale. That way, regardless of how many times a customer changes their mind or decides to make just one last purchase, the system helps us guarantee incredibly prompt and efficient service."

Terri Winter
Managing Director
top3 by design

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In the past Ms Winter has had to do a number of manually intensive data entry tasks for stocktakes, inventory control and price changes. And when it came to forecasting and in-depth reporting, top3 staff members were forced to rely on intuition and memory rather than hard facts or accurate data.

With the EPSON MR-800 POS terminal and Microsoft RMS Store Operations, the new system *automatically* updates inventory levels, checks and amends pricing and generates meaningful reports in real-time. A once laborious process, which ran the very real possibility of introducing considerable human error, is now dealt with in seconds.

This is done either directly from the POS terminal or via Ms Winter's laptop computer which she connects to the MR-800's in-built high speed Ethernet port; effectively establishing a secure peer-to-peer network connection.

"I can't believe how easy it is to create reports that enable me to see exactly what's going on in my business at any second of the day - and I can export these directly to Excel," Ms Winter said. "The ability to monitor the store's progress and make decisions on accurate information is a major advantage."

Service beyond compare

Powered by an Intel Celeron processor with clock speeds up to 1.2GHz, the EPSON MR-800 has become a valuable tool in providing top3 staff members with the means by which they can enhance customer service.

The new touch-screen POS terminal allows top3 staff to leverage the functionality of the RMS software, which includes several innovative features designed to improve customer transactions and optimise sales. One such feature is the ability to hold a transaction midway through should a customer decide to make additional purchases.

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Potential beyond imagination

The new EPSON/Microsoft POS solution adopted by top3 has provided a strong foundation for the company's future growth and continual refinement of customer service and back office management processes.

While RMS's Head Office application will allow Ms Winter to effect remote inventory management and control supply relationships for top3's new store in Bondi, the EPSON POS terminals and thermal receipt printers will continue to empower top3's customer service staff. "I'm really looking forward to taking advantage of the enhanced connectivity features of the MR-800," she said.

"One aim is to provide floor staff with wireless PDA access to the terminals so they can prepare a customer's order on the fly. Then when the customer has finished shopping, our sales staff can say 'your items are ready for you at the counter.'"



"What the EPSON MR-800 represents to us is an incredibly powerful and easy-to-use POS terminal that has been designed to meet both the aesthetics and operational demands of progressive retail operations."