

The Body Shop Australia takes Epson to the point-of-sale

EPSON
EXCEED YOUR VISION

case study



"When we saw that the [TM-H6000 receipt] printer wasn't going to fall-over in a test environment, we put it on to the busiest lane of our busiest store for a month. During that time we didn't have one complaint or concern from that store's staff. That, along with the features and performance during the initial testing, gave us pretty well all the convincing we needed to replace our third-party printers with the TM-H6000s."

John Bartlett

IT Retail Systems Manager
The Body Shop

The Body Shop

A self-proclaimed "activist organisation and a retailer committed to customer service excellence", The Body Shop Australia has 77 stores across the country and employs over 1,000 staff members.

Challenges

- Reduce customer congestion at the point of sale
- Streamline cheque processing
- Select a receipt printer that would perform faultlessly in high demand situations

Solution

Epson TM-H6000 series receipt printers

Benefits

- High speed receipt printing reduces customer waiting time
- Approximately \$60,000 saved in receipt printer purchase price
- Easy integration with existing POS software system
- High levels of reliability

Since the 1983 opening of its first Australian store in Melbourne, The Body Shop has grown in store numbers, stature and reputation. Now, with 77 stores across Australia, along with on-line shopping and The Body Shop at Home direct selling network, the organisation employs over 1,000 staff members and is renowned as one of the country's most successful – and responsible – retail enterprises.

While business growth is an obviously highly valued outcome for The Body Shop, for IT Retail Systems Manager, John Bartlett, it is representative of an ever-increasing need for a reliable, robust and fully effective IT infrastructure. At the all-important point-of-sale, key components of that IT infrastructure are Epson TM-H6000 series receipt printers.

"People don't tend to give much credit to a receipt printer – unless they're in the retail business," Bartlett states. "When they are, then they know all too well how critical they are to smooth operations. When we were looking to replace our old receipt printers, we knew that it had to be a unit that performed faultlessly, could be easily integrated with our POS software and had top level vendor support."

Pushed to the limits

Following consultation with Epson Business Solutions Partner, Gun Pos, Bartlett short-listed the TM-H6000, recognising it as one of the few available printers that met all The Body Shop's receipt printer requirements.

According to Gun Pos Partner, Trevor Perry – a nine-year veteran of the POS solution delivery market – the Epson printers represented a perfect fit for The Body Shop. "We've been selling and implementing the TM-H6000 series printers for several years," he says, "and during that time, they've proven themselves in the field to have a very real edge over the competitors when it comes to performance and reliability."

Prior to handing down a decision in favour of the TM-H6000 printers, Bartlett did exactly what any careful IT manager does – subjected a unit to a pilot program

THE BODY SHOP®

designed to push it to the limits of its capabilities. “The first thing we did after connecting it to a test POS system was try as hard as possible to cause it to fail,” he says quite bluntly. “We fed paper in the wrong way, kept it printing for hours on end – essentially, the worst possible scenario that it could be expected to be subjected to in a high pressure retail environment.

“When we saw that the printer wasn’t going to fall-over in a test environment, we put it on to the busiest lane of our busiest store for a month,” Bartlett continues. “During that time we didn’t have one complaint or concern from that store’s staff. That, along with the features and performance during the initial testing, gave us pretty well all the convincing we needed to replace our third-party printers with the TM-H6000s.”

Among those features that The Body Shop requires of its receipt printers, high-speed thermal printing and dot-matrix slip printing are high on the list.

“High speed printing is absolutely crucial,” Bartlett says. “An EFT transaction, for example, means the receipt printer has to generate two separate slips. A slip for the customer to sign, which is placed in the cash-drawer, then an EFT-POS sales receipt for the customer.

“In a busy retail environment, even a couple of seconds extra on each of those slips can easily result in congestion at the point of purchase and, ultimately, customer dissatisfaction.”

With the TM-H6000 series thermal print engine delivering speeds of up to 200mm per second in single colour mode, even the busiest of The Body Shop stores are more than able to keep customer waiting times to an absolute minimum.

More than receipts

While EFT-POS and cash remain the predominant purchasing currency, there still remains the need to deal efficiently with those customers who opt for the cheque alternative. Even though there is a steady decline in cheque usage, approximately 10 per cent of The Body Shop purchases are made with cheques.

Once a cheque is received, it’s placed into the TM-H6000 slip printer feed, which uses dot-matrix impact printing technology. The printer then automatically prints, on the cheque’s reverse, store details and fields for proof of customer identification.

Precisely the same applies to the approximately 120,000 The Body Shop gift vouchers that are sold and redeemed each year across Australia. This single, yet vital feature, alone can easily save up to a minute for each transaction, once again contributing significantly to an improved The Body Shop customer experience.

Even bank deposit forms are printed by the receipt printer at each of The Body Shop stores. Bartlett explains: “The deposit forms need to be filled out in duplicate, so we have carbon two-ply forms, which are simply fed into the slip printer part of the TM-H6000 and the form is printed out in a matter of seconds.”

“When you combine [purchase price savings] with the high speed printing, which improves the customer experience, ease of use for staff, and an almost total elimination of printer support requirements, the initial savings of \$60,000 is only a single element in the larger return on investment.”

John Bartlett
The Body Shop

Epson Australia

Tel: 1300 304 POS (767)

Visit our Web site

www.epson.com.au

Head Office

Sydney

3 Talavera Road

North Ryde NSW 2113

Tel: (02) 8899 3666

The Christmas rush

Within the retail environment, a key measure of success of any POS system is its ability to perform faultlessly during periods of extremely high demand; and just as with so many other retail operations, for The Body Shop that means Christmas.

Throughout the six-week period from the middle of November to Christmas Eve, The Body Shop does around 30 per cent of its total annual retail trade. For any component of the POS system to fail during such a period, there can be a significant impact on end-of-day sales figures. "This," Bartlett states, "is precisely one of the main reasons we're keeping with the TM-H6000 series.

"The printers have proven themselves time and time again to have what it takes to support our retail staff members to deal quickly, efficiently and professionally with customers; and in any retail operation, that's a main feature of an operation that prides itself on being customer-centric."

Supply and demand...and price

Reliability and performance are only two parts of a larger equation that resulted in The Body Shop's decision to adopt and maintain an Epson TM-H6000 series receipt printer standard. According to Bartlett, it's the ability to get his hands on a new printer at any time that is every bit as important.

"When we need new printers, we place our order to Gun Pos and have them delivered to us within a matter of days; and it's been like that for the entire three-plus years that we've been using the TM-H6000 series," Bartlett says. "That's in stark contrast to our pre-Epson days when it could take up to six months! The only option available was to buy large numbers of printers and keep them in stock to cover supply and demand from the retail outlets."

Price, too, plays its role; and with approximately 120 receipt printers in action – each of which costs up to \$500 less than the third-party printer also evaluated – the company has made an immediate saving of around \$60,000.

"The initial purchase price is just the starting point, though," Bartlett says. "When you combine that with the high speed printing, which improves the customer experience, ease of use for staff, and an almost total elimination of printer support requirements, the initial savings of \$60,000 is only a single element in the larger return on investment."

For more information on Epson Receipt Printers please call 1300 304 POS (767) and quote reference 40051