

POS Printers and Scanners

New printing technology improves retailers' business processes. By Dave Kelley

POS remains one of the areas where retailers are making major investments, particularly in printers and scanners. Improved printer and scanner technology are allowing retailers who upgrade to improve checkout speed and accuracy. Retailers cite durability as one of the most important considerations when upgrading POS printers and scanners. Ease of maintenance, which minimizes service time and increases total system availability, also is cited as a prime criterion when choosing new printers or scanners.

Zagara's Marketplace, an independent grocer based in Cleveland Heights, Ohio, for example, recently upgraded its entire POS system, including printers and scanners. The new, 15-lane POS system handles customer service, front-end checkout, and transactions at the deli, café and liquor store, and includes the NCR RealPOS 80c terminals with the NCR DynaKey cashier interface, NCR RealScan Bi-Optic scanners, designed specifically for high-volume checkout environments, and NCR RealPOS thermal receipt printers.



Epson's Mobilink Label printer

Software included in the deployment includes NCR Advanced Checkout Solution (ACS), the WinEPS electronic payment solution from MTXEPS, and the BRdata back office application.

Owner John Zagara explains the upgrade: "Zagara's Marketplace has been a tradition in Cleveland Heights for 70 years, yet we never stop looking for ways to build a better business. This is a solution that's flexible, highly dependable, and streamlines our transaction processing. We always strive to offer our customers a personable, reliable, and convenient shopping experience. Best in class technology helps us do that."

Integration with Legacy Systems

Many retailers opt to upgrade only their POS peripherals instead of the entire system. The peripherals may have reached the end of their lifecycle, or the retailers may

want to take advantage of new capabilities. Whatever the reason, when the decision is made to upgrade the peripherals instead of the entire system, the new equipments' ability to integrate with legacy systems becomes a consideration.

Crate & Barrel found itself in a position where the peripherals needed upgrading. The company's POS printers began having serious problems a year before a new POS system was scheduled to pilot. A bridge between the legacy and the new system was required — POS printers that would easily integrate were the answer.

Crate & Barrel worked with Epson and Direct Source, an Epson Strategic Business Partner, to install Epson Connect-It interfaces that would allow some 700 Epson TM-H6000II printers to integrate with the company's legacy NCR POS system in 91 stores throughout the U.S. The interfaces were the key to easing migration to the new, open-architecture systems, as it allowed the printers to work with both the legacy and the proposed system. When the new system was ready, the interfaces were removed and exchanged (standard serial interfaces were installed at that time), and

SCORECARD: POS Printers		
The chart below is a comparison guide of product specifications and functionalities in a specific category to help retailers begin their search for vendors in the RFP process. The chart is not a comprehensive resource. Please visit vendor Web sites for further information.		
VENDOR NAME/WEB SITE	PRODUCT NAME	SPECIAL FEATURES
Epson America www.pos.epson.com	TM-H6000III; Mobilink	TM-H6000III: Delivers receipt and slip printing, endorsement, two-color graphics and advanced check processing; includes MICR reader for ECC implementation. Mobilink: Wireless mobile printer available as receipt or label printer; comes with either industry-standard 802.11b or Bluetooth Compact Flash wireless cards.
IBM www.pc.ibm.com/store	4610 SureMark	All models offer direct thermal receipt printing and include choice of RS-485/RS-232 or USB/Powered USB interfaces; some models offer impact document insert printing; check imaging models support Electronic Check Conversion and Check 21 with a single-pass check imager that includes MICR reader.
NCR www.ncr.com	Two-sided receipt printers: RealPOS 7168 Multifunction, 7198 Single-sided receipt printers: RealPOS 7167 Multifunction, 7197	All models offer 52 lines per second, modular serviceability and drop-in paper loading. 7168/7198: Print simultaneously on both sides of receipt; drop-in replacement for auto-split paper saver; command receipt turn back in promotional vehicle.
O'Neil www.oneilprinters.com	O'Neil Compact (OC)	All models are portable, lightweight printers. OC2: Prints direct thermal receipts and invoices on 2.5" media. OC3: Prints labels, price tags, receipts and invoices on 1" to 3" media. OC4: Prints labels, price tags, citations, receipts and invoices on 1" to 4" media.
Star Micronics America www.starmicronics.com	TSP1000; TSP800; TSP100 futurePRNT	TSP1000: Prints tickets and receipts with large paper roll capacity; built-in ticket stacker. TSP800: Prints two colors, wide format, with locking and non-locking versions; available as desktop label printer TSP100 futurePRNT: Contains internal power supply, drop-in paper loading, Plug & Play USB drivers; prints 25 receipts per minute
TallyGenicom www.tallygenicom.com	MTP4P/Mobile Thermal; Serial Matrix in Vehicle Mobile: MIP480, 360; Mobile Impact: MIP3t/p/f	MTP4P: Ruggedized, withstands six-foot drop to concrete; long battery life; weighs 2.2 lbs. MIP480: Rugged; easy paper loading; prints 480 copies per second. MIP360: Prints multipart forms; offers accounting/DSD applications. MIP3t/p/f: Prints up to four 80-column copies; stores paper internally.
TransAct Technologies www.transact-tech.com	Ithaca Inkjet: POSjet 1500; POSjet 1000 Ithaca Thermal: Series 80PLUS Ithaca Impact: Series 90PLUS; Series 150	Inkjet: Prints two-color logos, coupons, illustration and special offers onto receipts; offers four color options in combination of any two; drop-in paper loading; available with auto-cutter. Thermal: Prints 5.3" per second; accommodates 4" diameter paper roll. Impact: 90PLUS: Prints 12.5 lines per second; offers snap-in cartridge and optional MICR reader. 150: prints 9.5 lines per second.
Zebra Technologies www.zebra.com	M2220 Mobile Receipt Printer	New model; weighs 0.7 lbs, but tolerates four-foot drop to concrete; prints on 2" or 3" paper; can be worn on belt; 802.11b/g interface with all wireless security features for CISP compliance; compatible with ZebraNet Bridge Enterprise remote printer management; offers Bluetooth, RS232 Cable and IrDA interfaces.

