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**EDITOR’S NOTE**

At this early stage in the smart mobile device revolution it is fair to ask some hard-nosed questions. After all, a great deal of time and money will likely be devoted to mobile platform projects in coming years and these need to be justified. So, based on my interviews with retailers and internal research, here goes a mobile retailing Q&A.

**Q:** Despite reports of a half dozen retailers rolling out mobile platform projects, does this make it a trend or is it just a small group on the bleeding edge?

**A:** It is a strong trend. A recent RIS study about mobile POS found that 62.6 percent of retailers are actively involved with a mobile POS project right now. A virtually identical number was found in a POS benchmarking study by Boston Retail Partners.

**Q:** Is mobile POS, or what we used to call line busting, the primary function for mobile deployments?

**A:** No. First, understand that currently deployed mobile POS projects don’t stop at POS functionality. Many combine online and enterprise access to applications and services, task management workflows, and capabilities for clienteling, endless aisle selling of out-of-store products, creating custom orders, and much more.

**Q:** Are mobile projects right for every retail vertical?

**A:** Long-term, yes. For POS specifically, probably not. This is especially true for mass merchants, supermarkets, drug stores and convenience stores. The point to keep in mind is that mobile technology is not tied to an application, like POS for instance. Instead, it is a platform that is application agnostic. What matters most is what you do with it. If benefits like increasing productivity, driving sales or improving customer satisfaction are high on your priority list, then enabling them through a mobile platform will make sense to your company, and this applies to all retailers.

**Q:** Is the mobile platform a game changer in retailing?

**A:** Yes. The day will come faster than most of us imagine when virtually every employee throughout the enterprise will be using smart devices as everyday parts of their jobs. This will not only force retailers to adapt solutions for the mobile platform, but it will force retailers to adapt solutions for the mobile platform, but it will force rethinking about how retail works and how labor roles are defined.

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**A:** Yes. The day will come faster than most of us imagine when virtually every employee throughout the enterprise will be using smart devices as everyday parts of their jobs. This will not only force retailers to adapt solutions for the mobile platform, but it will force rethinking about how retail works and how labor roles are defined. Not every retailer will adopt the Apple Store concept and leverage mobile devices for most functions, but every retailer will be affected by the booming mobile revolution and the impact will be profound.
THE MOBILE IMPERATIVE

MOBILITY IS NOT TECHNOLOGY FOR TECHNOLOGY’S SAKE, BUT A PLATFORM TO TRANSFORM THE STORE, ENTERPRISE AND WORKFORCE

Most retailers understand that technology should be mostly invisible in a store to ensure that nothing distracts shoppers from their mission, which is finding products they are seeking and purchasing them. However, retailers also know that if a technology is available that can help associates do their jobs better and deliver a return on investment, then it will be fast tracked for deployment by eager retailers.

Few technologies have more upside potential to deliver these benefits than the mobile platform, which was pioneered by consumers and is now being adopted by retailers at a furious pace.

Retailers who closely follow the competitive landscape (and who doesn’t?) are likely aware that Urban Outfitters, Nordstrom, Home Depot, Victoria’s Secret and several others are in some phase of a mobile smart-device rollout.

But a fair question to ask at this early stage in the mobile boom is: Do these examples indicate evidence of a trend or are they just a small group of retailers on the bleeding edge? Research from multiple industry sources indicates the mobile revolution is indeed a trend and not an isolated event.

According to the recent RIS report, “Mobile POS at the Tipping Point,” 62.6 percent of retailers today are actively involved in a mobile POS project ranging from the early planning phase to a full rollout. This is a sizable majority of retailers, and this level of activity indicates that one of the core applications in retailing — POS software — is rolling out on the mobile platform at a rapid rate.

It is also important to note that these deployments don’t just stop at POS functionality. The Home Depot mobile initiative, for example, combines inventory management, walkie-talkie communication, label printing, mag-stripe scanning, credit card processing and more to go along with thin-client POS software.

THE MOBILE PLATFORM

With so much buzz and hype surrounding mobility in retail it is only fair to pose the question: Are smart device projects right for every retailer? One expert retail analyst recently addressed this question and basically said, no, it wasn’t appropriate for every retailer. He noted that grocery and drug verticals, for example, will probably skip the mobile POS revolution and, by implication, the rest of the mobile platform boom.

But Kroger is already in the midst of a mobile test project right now, Walgreens is getting ready to roll out tablets in its “store of the future” concept, and Stop & Shop has been using mobile devices in stores for years.

The point is that mobile technology is a transformative platform with wide-ranging potential. The question isn’t if a retailer should
MOBILE POS SOLUTIONS ALLOW RETAILERS TO SELL ANYWHERE

EMBRACING MOBILE TECHNOLOGY HELPS RETAILERS DRIVE SALES AND STREAMLINE OPERATIONS

How do you see mobile POS impacting the traditional POS in the next 12-24 months?
NAHAS: It is clear that the use of mobile technology in retail is not just a passing fad, but is an important tool that can help retailers run their business more effectively. Mobile technology connects retailers with their customers in new and different ways and provides them an opportunity to sell anywhere. While mobile POS won’t replace the traditional POS in the near-term, it will provide options that simply weren’t feasible in the past. Radiant’s new mobile POS product launching this fall, CPMobile, helps retailers achieve a high value and ROI. This new technology is easy to adopt and connects retailers even closer to their customers. By blending a traditional POS strategy with a mobile POS strategy, retailers have more flexibility to leverage the power of a sophisticated retail management system, while taking advantage of the capabilities offered by mobile devices to engage with customers and increase revenues.

What are the first steps you would recommend to a retailer in implementing Mobile POS?
NAHAS: The first thing a retailer should think about when adding mobile technology to their operations is “what is the purpose of the device?” Is it something that will be used to enhance back-office functionality or will it be used to enhance front-of-house operations and customer service? What is the potential impact on the overall operations and current business practices if a mobile POS is implemented? Retailers should ask tough questions of a mobile POS solution—how are payments handled? Can receipts be mailed or printed? How will security be managed when selling remotely? This new technology can help turn cashiers into true customer service and sales associates as they are now engaging with the customers directly during the sales process. This is a valuable tool that helps retailers assist the customer in making a buying decision. Implementing a mobile strategy is not just a technology decision, but a strategic business decision that can dramatically impact a retailers’ bottom line in a positive manner if implemented properly.

Radiant Systems is launching CPMobile to compliment its CounterPoint POS Solution for retail. What are the primary benefits of CPMobile?
NAHAS: CPMobile helps retailers run their business, connect with customers, and sell anywhere. One of the key benefits is obviously providing the flexibility to retailers to engage more directly with the customer throughout the sales process and provide a level of customer service that will differentiate them from their competition. We want to help our retailers service their customers better, faster and smarter. With on-line integration, the mobile POS provides real-time customer, inventory and sales updates and secure credit card payment processing alleviating concerns for retailers trying to manage multiple systems or business processes when looking to expand sales capabilities. Finally, going mobile truly gives the retailer the freedom to creatively extend their business in new ways, inside the store, or outside the four walls and sell wherever their customers gather.

Can CPMobile be integrated with other POS solutions such as NCR?
NAHAS: While CPMobile integrates directly with Radiant’s CounterPoint POS today, it has been designed in a manner that will allow us to connect with other third-party POS and inventory management systems in the future.
develop uses for smart devices, but rather how to best take advantage of a technology that offers vast potential for transformation.

WORKFORCE TRANSFORMATION
One good example of how retailers can achieve benefits from mobile technology outside the realm of POS is under way right now at 50 Sears department stores. Approximately 50 smart devices at each department store are picked up by employees every day when they enter the store and punch in. The employees log in with personal identification codes, and a screen pops up that shows them three tasks that need to be done that day.

The employee clicks on the first task and drills down into the workflow screens checking off boxes until the task is completed. Then, when the employee returns to the main screen, the task is recorded as done. But tasks don’t stop at three. A new task scrolls up as each one is completed.

It is still early in the mobile device revolution, but as it picks up steam it is becoming clear that retailing is entering a new era where virtually every employee from the sales floor to the DC to the headquarters will be using a smart device as everyday parts of their jobs.

When this happens, what will retailing look like and how will it be different than what we know today? For one thing, it will force retailers to redefine labor roles throughout the enterprise, especially the mission and execution of in-store employees who come into contact with customers.

Instead of tightly constrained in-store roles, many retailers will redesign them to accommodate broader responsibilities using smart devices as powerful enablers. This new breed of multi-tasking workforce can be trained to help drive sales, handle cross-channel services, do POS checkout, and help change merchandising floor sets.

As a result of their multi-tasking roles, employees like these will be more valuable to store managers and may qualify for higher paid positions based on well-defined performance incentives. The net result could be the creation of new career paths in stores that promise the possibility of improved employee engagement, lower turnover, higher sales and better customer satisfaction.

CHANGING THE RULES OF THE GAME
The number of in-store mobile devices is currently four, according to research by Motorola Solutions, and is projected to rise to 16 within a few years. This is probably a conservative number. Home Depot added 15 smart devices per store in its First Phone roll out, which are in addition to mobile devices already in place. Sears, as noted, is adding 50 smart devices per department store.

Obstacles still need to be overcome to enable mainstream, chainwide mobile rollouts in retailing. These include solving such new issues as wireless network management, wireless PCI and systemwide security, and the breakage/loss of smart devices. In addition, some familiar tasks will also have to be accomplished, such as writing or integrating enterprise applications for the wireless platform, and installing wireless networks in every store for those retailers who have not already done it.

But these challenges are not insurmountable, and, frankly, they will have to be overcome by retailers who want to maintain relevancy with shoppers. Stores are under attack by powerful cultural and competitive forces, and retailers need to find ways to fight back to survive and thrive.

For many retailers, investing in smart devices not only improves employee productivity and compliance to enterprise standards, but it also offers a way to visibly refresh the shopping experience in the store by adding a “cool” factor that most shoppers expect to see. Consumers are passionate about their smart devices and expect retailers to share their enthusiasm.

We are just at the beginning of the mobile device revolution, but the impact of this major new platform on business processes, IT systems and employees will be profound, and it is no exaggeration to say that in the post-mobile world stores will never be the same.
FOCUS ON THESE THREE AREAS TO PROTECT DATA AND CUSTOMERS

As the retail industry rapidly equips on-the-go executives and in-store sales representatives with mobile capabilities, one of the biggest areas of concern is protecting data from unauthorized leaks. Although establishing effective mobile security can be a complex task, CIOs can cover all bases by limiting their security to three main levels of focus: network security, on-device security and data security. By focusing on these three areas, retailers can design and deploy effective mobile security to protect their wireless networks and customer data.

**Network Security**

Controlling access to the wireless network in a retail environment is the first line of defense against threats. Two-factor authentication to access the network is a good first step. By requiring anyone accessing the wireless network to use two-factor authentication, the majority of data breaches can be prevented. This is the simplest, most basic form of security.

Rules-based access control to the wireless network is also critical to keeping a wireless network secure. These rules allow different access levels for different users connecting to the network. With them, the IT manager has a different level of access than a salesperson on the retail floor. This protects both the user and the network.

Whether an IT manager or salesperson is accessing the wireless network, mobile device access control products for Wi-Fi networks also keep the network secure. These products can detect device types, authenticate the devices if possible and download a self-generated authentication certificate if one is not available. In some products, device fingerprinting is built into the authentication process, allowing IT managers to apply device-specific policies to different types of mobile devices.

In a retail environment, customers often want to use a store’s wireless network, posing a potentially huge security risk. Retailers need to set up a guest network to accommodate their customers’ needs. The guest network runs in the same Wi-Fi space as the retailers’ Wi-Fi, therefore it should have a firewall between it and the enterprise network data.

In addition, the IT managers can set a bandwidth cap on traffic for guests so that the entire network does not become bogged down. Access controls such as logging in and registering a mobile phone number with the guest network will further ensure its security.

**On-Device Security**

The most basic type of security on a mobile device is password protection. If a customer in a store picks up one of the retailer’s mobile devices that is not password-protected, that customer could potentially have access to the enterprise network, including customer information and credit card numbers. Taking the most basic step of password-protecting the device can alleviate security nightmares before they start.

Some retailers allow their employees to connect their own personal devices to the enterprise network in a retail environment is the first line of defense against threats. Two-factor authentication to access the network is a good first step. By requiring anyone accessing the wireless network to use two-factor authentication, the majority of data breaches can be prevented. This is the simplest, most basic form of security.

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**Data Security**

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Mobile security in retail is rapidly equips on-the-go executives and in-store sales representatives with mobile capabilities, one of the biggest areas of concern is protecting data from unauthorized leaks. Although establishing effective mobile security can be a complex task, CIOs can cover all bases by limiting their security to three main levels of focus: network security, on-device security and data security. By focusing on these three areas, retailers can design and deploy effective mobile security to protect their wireless networks and customer data.
network. Securing and managing corporate data on a mobile device without touching the user’s personal data is the job of mobile device management software. Corporate data can be isolated from personal data on users’ own devices. The software is encrypted and there is over-the-air and point-to-point encryption. At the end of the device lifecycle, the corporate data can be wiped, without interfering with the user’s personal data.

**DATA SECURITY**

PCI compliance is at the top of the list of WLAN security concerns in a retail environment. The PCI Data Security Standard (DSS) (available at www.pcisecuritystandards.org) outlines the basic processes a retailer must take to ensure that cardholder data is protected over a WLAN. Some of the most important processes include:

- Perimeter firewalls between WLANs and the cardholder data environment (CDE) must be in place and configured to deny or control any traffic from the wireless environment into the CDE.
- Change wireless vendor defaults on all WLAN equipment and ensure all security settings are enabled for strong encryption technology for authentication and transmission.
- Ensure that the WLANs that transmit cardholder data or are connected to the CDE use industry best practices for implementing strong encryption for authentication and transmission.
- Restrict physical access to wireless APs and all back-end equipment.
- Implement alerts from rogue detection monitoring systems.

Intrusion detection system (IDS) and intrusion prevention system (IPS) solutions monitor the network for malicious activity and are key in securing a WLAN. Tokenization and end-to-end encryption over the network are additional best practice security steps that retailers should take to protect business and customer data over the WLAN.

Mobile security is complex and no network will ever be 100% safe. What retail CIOs need to do to protect their data and customers is make sure that all areas of security are constantly being managed and updated in order to keep up with changing technology and hacking capabilities, because as everyone knows, hackers never sleep.

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**MOBILE SECURITY Q&A**

By Ben Halpert

**Q:** How can an enterprise authenticate access to corporate assets from mobile devices?

**A:** When discussing authentication for access to corporate assets via mobile devices you need to consider two aspects. First, you need to be able to authenticate the mobile device to your network, which then provides access to the data you choose to make available to mobile devices. Second, you need to authenticate the individual employee to the mobile device. The individual authentication aspect is made up of two components: 1) authenticating the individual to the mobile device itself, and 2) authenticating the individual account credentials.

**Q:** Can third-party security solutions fully address OS weaknesses inherent to iOS devices?

**A:** One can never provide a fully secure environment. The reality is that you have no choice but to identify third-party solutions that can mitigate the vulnerabilities you are looking to address. If you work in an organization that is large enough and spends enough money with a particular supplier, you may have some say in what security capabilities get built into future product releases. However, most of us are not in that situation and will need to rely on third-party solutions to address our particular needs. Third-party solutions may not address all of your security needs, but they may be able to ease specific concerns you may have regarding device OS weaknesses.

**Q:** How often should an enterprise require employees to change passwords on their mobile devices?

**A:** Consider utilizing the same password that your users are already required to use for logging on to their more traditional resources (and making sure the password stays in sync). Alternately, you could consider requiring users to create a different password for their device that does not change.

**Q:** How can enterprises protect and users’ privacy when it comes to individual-liable mobile devices?

**A:** Privacy in the age of the Internet is an interesting topic. Organizations that supply an Internet-based service (e-mail, social media, cloud storage, etc.) have the ability to (and many purport to have the right to) access, read and resell your personal communications. Let your employees know what information you can access on their devices and what you intend to do with that information, if anything. Several mobile security solutions provide a separation between personal and employer communications on the same device.
MOBILE’S MULTIPLE PERSONALITIES

IN-STORE SOLUTIONS CAN RANGE FROM POS AND CLIENTELING TO ADVANCED TASK MANAGEMENT

For many retailers, the rocket-like rise of consumer mobile technology was first seen as something between a minor annoyance and a major threat. The annoyance arose from the need to quickly ramp up mobile commerce sites and applications, putting time and money into a new digital channel before they could be certain its sales would justify the investment.

The threat came from the breadth of real-time information that customers suddenly had literally at their fingertips. Smart mobile devices gave customers the ability to compare products and prices and to purchase items from a competitor while they walked the aisles of a retailer’s store. In a worst-case scenario, mobility’s impact would turn stores into mere showrooms for increasingly price-driven e-commerce.

But where some saw threats, others saw – and see – opportunities. High-profile retailers including Home Depot and Nordstrom have deployed thousands of mobile devices providing point-of-sale and other customer-enhancing functionalities to their stores, and Urban Outfitters is testing a mobile POS solution. Sears has also rolled out mobile devices equipped with workforce task management solutions to 50 store locations.

At Home Depot, which went live with a chainwide rollout of 30,000 of its multi-function First Phone devices last fall, associates are now using the mobile devices to process an average of 100,000 POS transactions per week, for an annualized total of at least 5 million POS transactions.

These companies are unlikely to remain the only retailers using mobile POS technology for long. Recent RIS research indicates 28.1% of retailers are planning a mobile POS deployment for a 2012 deployment, and another 18.8% expect to begin deployments by the end of this year.

ENLIGHTENING THE STORE WORKFORCE

Mobile devices also offer a technological solution to one of the biggest challenges retailers face: the need for a better-informed in-store workforce. According to Paula Rosenblum and Steve Rowen of RSR Research, “The spectrum of what customers need from floor staff is more varied today than it has been at any other time in history.” In their June 2011 report, The 21st Century Store: The Search for Relevance, they write “The most informed and time-constrained customers may only require assistance during checkout, while the sales process for customers with buying questions demands an employee who is at least as knowledgeable as those asking the questions.”

Retailers want to provide store associates with devices that will help level the playing field, giving them access to detailed product information and putting real-time inventory and order data in their hands. So even if a store is out-of-stock on a particular item, the associate can locate it within the enterprise and arrange for it to be shipped either to the store or directly to the customer’s home. This

MOBILE POS AT THE TIPPING POINT

Planning now, will begin in 2012 28.1%
Planning now, will begin by end of year 18.8%
Deployed in limited rollout 9.4%
Rollout currently under way 6.3%

Source: RIS Custom Research, July 2011

The next 18 months will produce a wave of mobile POS activity, with more than 45% of retailers planning a deployment by the end of 2012.
capability both improves customer satisfaction and more effectively leverages the retailer’s overall inventory investment.

Among retailers surveyed in 2011 by RSR Research, 56% identified educating and empowering in-store employees using technology as a valuable opportunity for improving the in-store experience, up from 49% in 2010. Providing the ability to locate and sell merchandise from anywhere in the company also saw an increase, rising from 42% in 2010 to 54% in 2011.

Retailers’ mobile strategies also seek to use the versatility and functionality of these devices to make the in-store experience a fun and interesting part of customers’ omnichannel shopping journey. The increasing popularity of tablets that offer larger screen sizes than PDAs and mobile phones has retailers investigating rich media offerings such as photos and videos. Tablets are also ideal for clienteling functions, for example displaying pieces of an outfit that a customer has already purchased and then displaying how complementary items and accessories will look with them.

**OPTIMIZING WFM WITH MOBILE**

Customer-facing and save-the-sale functionalities are only part of today’s mobile technology story. Retailers embracing the mobile revolution are using the devices to improve their workforce management capabilities. One example is allowing employees to “bid” for open shifts. When a shift opens up unexpectedly, these applications automatically send text messages to the mobile devices of all employees who are qualified to cover the open job’s requirements. The first employee who responds gets the assignment. This not only simplifies the manager’s task but eliminates favoritism, even unconscious favoritism, in assigning employees.

Mobile devices really show off their WFM capabilities with task management solutions, which are proving to be increasingly important as the associate’s roles within the store grow more complex. “Task management is an important part of ensuring that the customer experience you want is what gets delivered,” says Bob Clements, senior principal at the WFM consultancy Axsiom Group. “We see task management as the most mature WFM technology, and mobile devices or tablets are the natural platform for it, because being tethered to the PC has held people back.”

Mobile devices can also be used as training vehicles, allowing associates to learn new skills or brush up on their existing ones during down times.

Retailers’ growing enthusiasm for mobile technology could run into a significant stumbling block: the lack of WiFi coverage within the four walls of brick-and-mortar stores. While 27% of retailers surveyed by RSR say they have wireless available throughout the store for performance management, POS and product-related tasks, a full 30% have no wireless network availability at all, and another 30% have wireless only for receiving and other inventory control-related tasks. Rosenblum and Rowen strongly recommend retailers move ahead with plans to Wi-Fi enable their stores. “We have seen far too many real-life instances of the store manager being the least technology empowered person in the store. That must change,” they write in the 21st Century Store report.
ENHANCING CUSTOMER SERVICE WITH MOBILE POS

BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN THE DIGITAL AND PHYSICAL RETAIL EXPERIENCE

Where do you see a bigger opportunity for retailers in the mobile space — In-store associate applications or shopper applications, such as mobile websites, etc.?

RIGHTMER: It depends on the retailer’s business model. Those who have built a brand around a personalized store experience would be better suited spending their money equipping sales associates with mobile solutions to improve service for their customers. Retailers who rely on a self-serve model (e.g., grocery or big-box) will get a better return from consumer shopping applications. For most retailers, both approaches will have a role — it’s hard to imagine a future where everyone isn’t empowered with mobile tools in the store.

Can a retailer expect improved conversion rates with the adoption of mobile POS?

RIGHTMER: Yes. Customers respond to human influence during the shopping process. If sales associates are able to meet, assist and transact with the customer in the aisle, then they are helping retailers extend their brand, improve customer service and sell merchandise.

What are first steps a retailer should take when implementing an in-store mobile platform for associates?

RIGHTMER: The first question a retailer should ask is, “How will mobile change my in-store processes?” The answer to this question will guide the business in selecting the right approach to using mobile in the store. Regardless of the response, most retailers will then be faced with questions and issues related to their wireless infrastructure and their ability to integrate a solution with the existing in-store and enterprise systems. Mobile POS requires secure, robust wireless coverage on the sales floor and real-time integration with the existing POS system. More advanced selling solutions will also require a reliable WAN and an integration architecture to support access to real-time inventory data, rich product information and customer order capabilities.

Are additional security requirements for in-store mobile applications a deterrent to implementation?

RIGHTMER: A properly architected and implemented mobile POS solution doesn’t introduce any additional security risks for the retailer. The combination of mobile device security, network security and the appropriate application architecture result in mobile solutions that are more secure than their fixed-location counterparts.

What are the advantages of implementing a packaged mobile POS solution over adapting existing POS software to the mobile platform?

RIGHTMER: Retailers need a tool that addresses the unique needs of a mobile sales associate. A packaged mobile POS solution is designed around the processes and features required by a sales associate on the floor to interact with a customer before, during and after the sale. Many of the features required to address this larger part of the shopping process are missing from existing POS solutions — primarily because those features wouldn’t make sense at a cash register. For example, access to product descriptions, images, ratings and reviews, and complimentary products and services are useful features on a mobile device, but largely useless (and missing) in a traditional POS system. A mobile POS solution isn’t constrained by the features, architecture or usability of a traditional POS.