

## Kiosks Enhance the Shopping Experience for Self-Service Customers

**P**oint-of-Purchase displays are a valuable sales tool for most retail stores. Typically a customer will stand in front of your wine shelf scanning cards that tout ratings or sale promotions, trying to decide on a selection. As much as 70% of purchase decisions will be made at this spot, and yet the task of maintaining this important sales tool often seems haphazard.

As part of the growing trend towards retail self-service, stores are increasingly strengthening this vulnerable link in the sales chain with a technical solution. Interactive kiosks have been quietly sprouting up in wine stores, especially where knowledgeable sales help is in short supply. Supermarket chains and discounters are a natural fit for providing additional product information electronically. However, upscale specialty retailers are also adopting interactive kiosks to augment salespeople and to drive home important promotions.

Kiosks typically feature touch screen monitors with barcode scanners to provide a convenient and less intimidating interface that appeals to the majority of customers. Video can provide a high impact experience similar to TV to attract browsers, while the barcode scanner gives instant access to product information. In some cases a printer is added to offer a portable version of tasting notes or a recipe to take home.

Retail kiosks have been successfully used in stores that sell video, music and software where multimedia content is readily available. One of the biggest challenges with installing a kiosk in a wine store is sourcing and maintaining high-quality content (images, text, video) for your products. Some vendors supply a content service along with the kiosk, and may allow the store to add their own descriptions. Another successful approach has been to allow wholesalers login access to provide content on their products. For specialty retailers who seek harder-to-find selec-

tions, sourcing content on important products will always be a challenge.

### Keeping Your Kiosk Current

It is also important that your customers don't discover products on the kiosk that are out of stock. Regular updates from the store's point-of-sale (POS) system are the only practical way to stay current with available inventory. You will also want consistency with your product information and promotions as you add new technologies. The risk is that your marketing messages get lost if it is difficult to share content across applications. One solution is to maintain product classifications and tasting notes in your POS system that can be updated to kiosk and other applications along with inventory changes.

Kiosks are different from websites and have unique design considerations. Certainly having a website available in the store can be a great tool for introducing customers to an additional sales channel. However, a successful kiosk will probably appear simpler than a website with promotions and information targeted at closing the sale.

While stores mostly use kiosks to provide product information, there is scope for this technology to become more actively involved in providing service and building loyalty. By adding a card scanner to the kiosk it can take an order, confirm stock availability, and process a credit. It could also bring up a customer's loyalty program with targeted recommendations or a review of their purchase history.

The retail kiosk is not a new technology, but has suffered from early projects that weren't well thought out. As with websites, kiosks will fail to provide a return for a store if they are poorly conceived. The key is to reinforce your branding through a consistent shopping experience and a strategy that leverages the kiosk to increase sales.

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To learn more about how the Beverage Media can help with a website for your store, contact Ian Griffith at [ian@bevmedia.com](mailto:ian@bevmedia.com), (212) 571-3232 x318, or visit [www.bevnetwork.com/retailweb](http://www.bevnetwork.com/retailweb).