



# Make Every Second Count on the Sales Floor

**With shoppers flocking to stores for entertainment as well as to shop, it's imperative that store managers and staffers spend as much time on the floor as possible.**

Retail growth hinges on customer experience. People are looking for fast, flexible and flawless customer service that includes a smile; they want to be entertained while making their purchases. Case in point: Despite an increase in online shopping, the majority of customers say that the in-store experience — particularly customer service — is a major driver of purchases.

This is why retailers have to focus on “ways to get customers into stores and convert them from browsers to buyers [by] ... concentrating on in-store experiences that can't be replicated virtually,” according to STORES Magazine, which is published by the National Retail Federation (NRF).<sup>1</sup> Increasingly, store managers are at the heart of that process.

## Give Managers What They Need

Store managers are the glue that holds a retail location together. They act as point person when customers are upset, and they are the ones associates turn to for training, advice and answers to customer questions. However, store managers are often charged with so many back-office duties it can be difficult for them to spend as much time as they'd like on tasks that contribute to customer satisfaction. In many stores, managers are so focused on scheduling, inventory management and administrative paperwork that they have little time for training and supporting retail associates and working with customers directly.

Store managers also suffer from a lack of support resources. They don't have access to competitive pricing data or instant access to the forms, brochures and merchandising materials they need to do their jobs. This is happening at a time when they should be embracing emerging mobile technologies that can help boost promotional activities and personalize the shopping experience for customers. How can they get from here to there?



## Invest in Basic Building Blocks First

Retailers need to invest in infrastructure and integration technologies that empower store managers and sales associates to better meet customer needs. “It's imperative that stores do everything they can to reduce back-office burdens on the front-office team,” explains Tim Rowland, vice president and general manager, retail and manufacturing at Lexmark. “Store associates and managers must be freed up to concentrate on delivering exceptional customer service.”

Part of that is the need to improve business process management, according to Tom Litchford, National Retail Federation vice president of retail technologies.<sup>2</sup> When automated processes and workflow occur, store managers get instant access to relevant information, better and faster business metrics, and analytics that guide decisions such as product merchandising and pricing.

## Automation Gives Employees the Tools to Upsell

One of the biggest enablers in the back office is the multifunction printer (MFP). The store manager is often overwhelmed



by the amount of paper that must be processed or printed during the day — human resources hiring and onboarding forms, loss prevention forms, credit applications, layaway forms, extended warranties and loyalty program signups, not to mention rebates, sales agreements, service contracts and vendor invoices.

Managers who have to manually input information into many disparate systems end up spending nearly all their time in the back office — away from the sales floor. However, when point of origination and intelligent data capture technologies are combined with business process management, manually processing incoming documents and time-consuming data entry become a thing of the past, freeing up hours of time weekly. These technologies also potentially reduce the number of keying errors, giving retailers more exact information, which leads to smarter business decisions. It also helps them more effectively cross-sell and upsell, since they have the most up-to-date pricing and merchandising information available — often at the touch of a button.

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—*Tim Rowland, vice president and general manager, retail and manufacturing, Lexmark*

### Turn Your Team into Brand Ambassadors

When everything comes together, retail managers and their associates become brand ambassadors, able to give customers the service and support they expect when walking into a store. This leads to customer loyalty and repeat business, says Rowland. “A recent study reports that 76 percent of consumers make purchase decisions in stores, so it’s critical for retail associates to be on the floor engaged with their customers. Otherwise, e-tailers will win the sale.” ■

**To learn more about how you can achieve the best customer service in your retail organization, please visit [www.lexmark.com](http://www.lexmark.com).**

<sup>1</sup> Stores Magazine, National Retail Federation, July 2012

<sup>2</sup> Stores Magazine, National Retail Federation, April 2013

### ▶ CASE STUDY

**Company:**  
*Burlington Coat Factory  
Warehouse Corp.*

**Company size:**  
*482 stores across the U.S.  
and Puerto Rico*

**Location:**  
*Burlington, N.J.*



### MFPs Save Burlington Coat Factory Time – and Money

Several years ago keeping equipment running and signs current was a challenge for Burlington Coat Factory Warehouse Corp. At the time, it was using large legacy printers for all its printing needs, but there were some problems with its technology implementation. The printers took up valuable store space and were slow. Printing quality was poor, too. That’s not acceptable when printing up to 25,000 pages per month as some stores do.

Looking to reduce its total cost of printing and the number of help desk calls coming in, Burlington turned to Lexmark laser printers and multifunction printers (MFPs) to solve its challenges. It is also tapping Lexmark Markvision Enterprise network device management solution to manage all of its printers from one central location.

Today, the chain uses these printers to print daily business reports including sales, payroll, and price change reports as well as all of its stores’ signage.

These improvements helped the company recoup the cost of its new hardware within 18 months, says Brad Friedman, Burlington’s vice president, information services. Most important, though, it’s improved the speed in which new signage can be posted in its stores. “Lexmark is a valuable business partner,” says Friedman. “They understand our business and our business printing needs. Lexmark continues to approach us with new and innovative ideas. They are always striving to improve our business processes and reduce our printing costs.”

### ABOUT LEXMARK

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