

# Mobile solutions for retail success

**Dattaguru Hegde** explores the benefits of using Mobile-RFID  
Web-based solutions in retail or CPG organisations

Retail or consumer packaged goods (CPG) organisations look for technology products or solutions that help them run their businesses efficiently. CIOs are keen to adopt the latest technologies to enhance customer experience or increase the productivity of employees in these organisations. At present, some of the latest mobile, RFID and Web technologies are used in silos to support part of the retail or CPG value chain.

A team from the Retail Industry Group at MindTree recently unveiled a solution in Osmosis (the annual tech festival at MindTree) to harness the power of the integration of mobile, RFID and the Web to enhance customer experience and the productivity of the employees. This solution is further explicated with two business scenarios:

- ◆ Applicable to CPG organisations to take orders from retailers, which in turn increases the productivity of employees and enhances the retailer's experience
- ◆ Applicable to fast food retail chains to provide superior customer experience

## Technology helping CPG organisations provide better experience to retailers

Let's first have a look at CPG and retail interaction. It is within this scenario that business development executives (BDEs) of CPG companies can take orders from retailers in their shops, synchronise the orders with the head office and inform the store managers when the products ordered will be supplied.

BDEs carry a mobile phone that is installed with a lightweight application downloaded to key in the orders. As soon as they visit retail shops, mobile phones embedded with or externally attached to an RFID reader will read the store and location data into the mobile application. This data will be read from an RFID tag kept in the stores. Mobile applications will be filled with store and location details as and when BDEs are ready to enter the order in the application. BDEs can then key in other details of the order and submit the order. The inputted orders can be fed into the system at the head office via GPRS connections (it is possible to synchronise the orders at the end of day or whenever the BDE goes online again). Representatives at the head office can view the orders using the Web. BDEs can enquire about the order's status via their mobile, and inform the retailers when the

products will be shipped. The mobile-RFID-Web integration solution enhances the productivity of employees as they can capture the orders and synchronise them immediately. This enhances the retailer's experience, and they can acquire the status even on the move.

## Mobile-RFID-Web integration enables superior customer experience

Let's look at another scenario for retailers and how it can be used in a fast food retail chain: In this scenario, a customer with children walks into a fast food retail chain. This customer approaches the table to place the order instead of standing in a queue. The customer can plug in the RFID reader kept on the table to a mobile phone and download the menu before placing an order. The RFID reader will read the RFID tag placed in the outlet and download these menus into the mobile phone. The customer can then order his items using the downloaded menu in the mobile phone without having to stand in a queue. The service counter in the fast food chain will recognise the table from which the order was sent, and the food will be delivered to the table in a few minutes. The bill can be sent to the customer with the mobile service provider's help. If the customer has registered as a regular customer on the website of the fast food retail chain, redeemable points can be added to the customer's account, and he/she can view these points by logging into the account. The retail chain can use the Web application for announcing promotions or loyalty schemes. The integrated solution enhances customer experiences, especially for families with children, by avoiding long queues for placing an order and making payments quickly.

Thus, mobile-RFID integration with a Web solution can be used in various scenarios of supply chain and point of sale as well. Many Retail/CPG firms are already conducting such pilot projects in various countries. Going forward, the trend of using such technology will greatly enhance the customer experience in the retail landscape. 🇮🇳

## About the author

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