REFLEXIS

3 Ways to Simplify Work for Retail Store Associates

While Improving Customer Experience and the Gross Margin

Retailers foster more engaged and effective store associates by creating more efficient labor schedules and helping them prioritize their daily tasks.

3 Ways to Simplify Work for Retail Store Associates

Retail is changing faster than ever before.
Much of this is driven by retail's growing complexity.

- Store workloads are rising because of an increase in omnichannel services. These include "Buy Online, Pick Up in Store" and system-driven tasks from emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, Big Data, and the Internet of Things.
- Customers expect an experience augmented by experiential store design, innovative technology, and their own smartphones.
- Labor budgets are largely stagnant across retail, placing a strain on store managers who have to accomplish more with fewer resources.

All of this has a dramatic impact on the store associate, who is now expected to accomplish more work and provide tech-enhanced customers with a new and improved retail experience. But many retailers aren't hiring more specialized or more qualified store associates to tackle this problem. If retailers are fortunate enough to find qualified, specialized employees, chances are they will have a hard time retaining them, as turnover rates are still extremely high, and many retailers cannot afford to pay the higher wages that they would require.

Store associates are still an invaluable resource for retailers. Without them, retail as we know it would cease to exist. As such, it is immeasurably important to simplify work for them, equipping them with the proper tools and information to handle this new retail complexity. With these tools, they can increase sales and provide customers with a great retail experience.

Here are three tools that retailers can implement to simplify work for store associates:

1. Prioritized List of Store Tasks

With store associates burdened by a store's increasing workload, it's inevitable that mistakes are made. Confused by the amount they have to do, some tasks, possibly critical ones, aren't completed on time or at all.

With a mobile device, store associates have immediate access to all of these tasks and know exactly what they need to accomplish at all times.

There is a solution for this. With mobile devices, store associates can leverage a real-time task management solution that supplies them with a prioritized list of activities and projects they should be completing during their shift. They also receive alerts in real time from any system or device that tells them if a high-margin or fast-moving item is out of stock, if a truck is running late, or if they need to fulfill a "Buy

Online, Pick Up in Store" purchase. With a mobile device, store associates have immediate access to all of these tasks and know exactly what they need to accomplish at all times.

A real-time task management solution also has the intelligence to throttle task distribution. This way, store associates aren't flooded with too many tasks to complete or are given so few that they're standing around during their shift.

With access to a real-time task management solution at their fingertips, store associates become more productive. They are able to finish their work on time, ensure high-priority work is completed, and they have more time to better serve customers.

2. Intelligent Workforce Scheduling

Problems arise when labor schedules are manually created or based on old labor models.

When customer traffic isn't accurately accounted for during labor scheduling, it creates a misalignment between the task workload and the number of store associates on the schedule. This misalignment leads to lost sales, reduced customer service, and higher labor costs.

When alignment occurs between the labor schedule, customer traffic, and task workload, store associates are more productive and provide a great customer experience.

With a workforce management solution that uses advanced analytics, the number of associates on the schedule are accurately aligned with forecasted customer traffic. When integrated with a real-time task management solution, labor schedules can also be aligned with task workload, accounting for the tasks associated with promotions, product launches, and other projects. When alignment occurs between the labor schedule, customer traffic, and task workload, store associates are more productive and provide a great customer experience.

Workforce management solutions guarantee that there is enough labor at stores to keep them operating efficiently, and it keeps store associates from being overburdened or having little to do.

3. Integrated Tasks from Store Auditing

Ultimately, store associates have to rectify safety, loss prevention, and other out-of-compliance issues in the store. But what happens when they don't know that these issues exist?

When district managers discover out-of-compliance issues during store audits, these discoveries aren't always communicated effectively and translated into tasks for store associates. This undeniably places strain on store managers and associates, who may not know that crucial tasks such as ones related to safety (e.g., recalls) need to be completed.

With a mobile store auditing solution, district managers conduct retail store audits following standardized processes and spread best practices to all stores. Managers also automatically trigger follow-up tasks for store associates to complete. These tasks are routed intelligently into the prioritized list of tasks that a real-time task management solution creates, ensuring that all out-of-compliance issues are immediately visible to store associates.

When communication to store associates is streamlined, they have a more complete view of what needs to be accomplished during their shifts. Giving district managers store auditing solutions, where they can immediately send follow-up tasks, makes it easier for store associates to complete all of their tasks, increasing compliance levels at the store.

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With increased workload and higher expectations from smartphone-enabled customers, store associates need all the help they can get. Real-time task management, store auditing, and workforce management solutions do just that, providing invaluable support for store associates, leading to increased sales in stores and lower turnover rates for retailers. With this support, retailers simplify work for store associates, giving them more opportunity to create the perfect customer experience.

If you would like to learn more about how real-time store operations solutions simplify work for store associates, visit Reflexis Systems Inc. at www.reflexisinc.com or send us an email at info@reflexisinc.com.

About Reflexis Systems, Inc.

The Reflexis cloud-based Real-Time Store Operations Platform helps retailers simplify store operations, provide improved line of sight for field managers, and streamline corporate processes. Reflexis store execution, labor operations, mobility, and analytics solutions enable retailers to unleash the power of store associates, giving them more opportunities for customer engagement, providing customers with a more consistent brand experience.

Since 2001, Reflexis has helped more than 250 of the world's best retailers improve store-level execution and drive quantifiable business value and significant ROI.

Reflexis Systems, Inc. is privately held and headquartered in Dedham, Massachusetts and has offices in Atlanta, London, Düsseldorf, and Pune (India), with additional sales presence across Europe and Latin America.

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