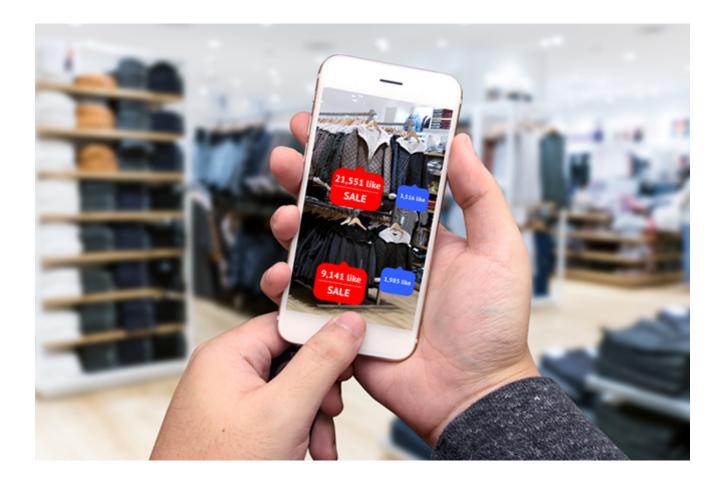# Can Technology Save Brick and Mortar Retail Stores from Extinction?

As the holiday season approaches, retail stores are preparing for the increasing traffic of customers. The major advancements in today's computer technology and the emerging increase in the popularity and success of online businesses have changed the retail industry landscape.

In order to thrive in an environment where many people prefer to browse and buy from online stores such as Amazon.com in the comfort of their homes, retailers need to evolve and adapt to bring customers back through their doors. In order to be responsive to consumer desire for convenience and new shopping preferences, retailers need to embrace the technology that impacts the way the retail industry is doing business and allow customers to have a choice to take more control of their own shopping experiences. Failure of such attempt could have serious consequences. They could follow in the footsteps of well-known retailers such as Toys R Us and RadioShack, which were forced to shut down a majority of their stores due to declining sales.

Many retail stores are creating online counterparts to remain competitive. Brick and mortar stores offer something that online stores can't - the ability to touch, examine and sample their products before purchasing them. In-store

kiosks, smart cameras and interactive digital signage also improve in-store experience, retail store learning and customer engagement. Providing a positive customer in-store experience, coupled with becoming a smarter retailer, will increase customer satisfaction and can increase the likelihood of customers returning to the store and purchasing more products.

Improving Customer Experience with In-store Kiosks

One reason people may choose to shop online is due to the ease of finding the right product that they desire. Imagine their frustration over taking the time to travel to a brick and mortar store for a specific item, only to fail at finding it and leaving the store dissatisfied. This can be remedied by an online store where customers can ensure that the products they are looking for are available at the store of their choice. They can choose to have the items shipped to their home or pick them up in store.

For those who like to visit a brick and mortar retail store, the presence of kiosks with touch panel screens used for information can help enhance their in-store shopping experience. These kiosks can allow customers to browse through the store's catalogue, compare different products, read reviews and easily locate the items they look for with aisle information. Sales associates present on the floor can also help guide customers and teach them how to use the technology if they are having any trouble.

The kiosk can personalize product recommendations via interactive and personalized customer surveys. For example, in beauty stores, customers can specify what kind of skin type they have and receive recommendations based on which products are best for their skin. In furniture stores, customers can pick and choose different products and place them in virtual rooms onscreen to visualize how all the furniture will look together. If the item is out of stock, the kiosks can suggest similar items or allow customers to order the item for a later pickup day or have it delivered to their home.

Another useful function of the kiosks is to allow guests to leave any feedback or comments. Not only does it encourage customer engagement and allow them to feel more valued as customers, but it also provides retailers valuable information that can be used to improve the overall in-store experience.

Enhancing Product Displays and Optimizing Sales with Digital Signage

Digital signage can also play a part in enhancing customer experience in physical stores. Sometimes looking at products and reading reviews isn't enough- people want to see products in action. Demos and short videos of products can be played next to their displays to reassure customers that the products are reliable and meet their expectations. The interactive nature of the digital signage solution can help spark the interest of others that may have otherwise just passed by the displays without a glance. Thanks to advanced digital signage player technology, retail stores can maximize the shopping experience and better compete with the increasingly popular online shopping world – as well as with other brick and mortar retail stores.

Smart Retail Analytics

Smart cameras and advanced computer systems with the right software can capture valuable information about their customers. The resulting analytics can provide many details including demographics, store layout effectiveness, customer's emotions while in store, etc. It can provide actionable learning that can lead to ways to enhance their store loyalty and sales.

Axiomtek's Advanced Retail Solutions

Axiomtek manufactures a series of products that can be incorporated into brick and mortar retail stores. Their touch panel PCs and monitors come in various LCD display sizes with flexible options of resistive or projective capacitive touch screens for ease and practicality of use. For outdoor use in harsher conditions, they feature anti-scratch designs, IPX1-rated enclosures and IP65/NEMA 4-rated front bezels for water-proof and dust-proof operations. Axiomtek's wide range of touch panel PC products offers scalability, a wide variety of features that suit most requirements, and ease of expandability and customization. They can withstand heavy customer use, making them ideal as in-store kiosks. The touch panel PCs come with flexible communication options, including Wi-Fi and Bluetooth, to allow customers real-time access to product availability and other information.

The touch panel monitors can be connected to Axiomtek's digital signage players for smart retail uses. The digital signage players offer scalable computing performance and excellent graphics capabilities. These products include features such as multiple independent displays, high brightness and super slim designs to fit in space constraint environments such as small areas behind the product displays in retail stores. They can be used to deliver information, offer product demonstrations and deliver customized promotions next to the products to encourage purchase.

Many public kiosk systems integrators may look to provide smart kiosk products that are run on high performance motherboards. Axiomtek designs and manufactures highly reliable, comprehensive lines of embedded boards in a wide variety of form factors that have been integrated into many public kiosks. These kiosks can make customers' lives easier and help increase sales.

It is possible for brick and mortar retailers to coexist with online shopping today- they only need to learn to adapt to the constantly changing environment and embrace the use of more technology. Retailers need to focus on providing choices for customers and a positive in-store experience more than ever to build brand loyalty and customer satisfaction. It is the key to saving retail stores from becoming extinct today.

Design Assistance and Engineering Services

Axiomtek's design assistance and value-added service teams have years of experience in successfully assisting automation industry customers with their critical project needs, providing overall project support or task-specific assistance during development, testing, deployment and post-deployment phases. Axiomtek's capable and experienced teams, which include hardware, software and application professionals, can deliver what is needed, when it is needed and with the highest quality available that is known to exceed customer expectations.

About Axiomtek Co., Ltd.

As one of the world's leading designers and manufacturers of PC-based industrial computer products, Axiomtek specializes in data acquisitions and control systems of rich diversity and modularization. With the upmost enthusiasm in serving their customers, Axiomtek has mirrored PC evolutions in various industries by shifting its focus toward the design and manufacture of PC-based industrial automation solutions, standing as a trustworthy long-term provider of industrial computers.

Established in 1990, Axiomtek has partnered with more than 60 distributors globally, offering more than 400 products through product lines of Industrial PCs (IPCs), Single Board Computers (SBCs), System on Modules (SoMs), Fanless and Rugged Embedded Systems (eBOX and rBOX), Intelligent Transportation Systems (tBOX), Industrial IoT Gateway, Industrial Firewall, Touch Panel Computers (TPCs), Medical Panel Computers (MPCs), Digital Signage Solutions (DSSs), Network Appliances (NAs) and Industrial Ethernet products.

As an associate member of the Intel® Internet of Things Solutions Alliance, Axiomtek continuously develops and delivers cutting edge solutions based on the latest Intel® platforms.

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