

... The reason that the top 10 companies have remained fairly steady over the past few years is that they have learned to listen to what consumers are asking for, and deliver it. Food retailers face a tough situation in the future, and introducing new company policies, technologies and improving overall efficiency will help ensure that there will be a future.

RETAILERS INTRODUCE NEW TECHNOLOGIES

Many retailers are using new technologies aimed at improving consumer shopping experiences, adding convenience and improving business practices. Two unnamed U.S. grocery-store chains are testing an electronic shelf label (ESL) system in several of their stores on the East and West coasts, reported *RFID Journal* (Mar. 30). The ESL system created by Altierre comprises of radio frequency identification (RFID)-based technology and LCD display screens that attach to store shelves in order to identify products and their prices. Each ESL includes an RFID chip, which stores the product's stock-keeping unit (SKU). Pricing updates for these items are received electronically via an internet connection. Employees who utilize a handheld interrogator can also manage the system. On average, consumers purchase

around 10% more during every visit and increase the frequency of their visits by another 10% when using the scanners, stated Paul Schaut, Modiv Media Inc.'s chairman and chief executive officer. Mr. Schaut also claimed that about 10% of consumers choose to use the scanners when they are available.

Availability & Use of Grocery Departments and Services In 2008

(Source: FMI Grocery Shopper Trends 2009)

Product / Service	% Use At Least Once a Week	% Primary Store Provides
Savings Club/Frequent Shopper Prog.	59%	42%
Private Label/Store Brands	42%	92%
Health & Nutrition Information	29%	71%
Reusable Shopping Bags Available	28%	75%
Locally Grown Products	27%	50%
Exciting Store Environment	26%	62%
Self-Checkout	22%	52%
Fresh-Food Deli	19%	90%
Gas Pumps	19%	31%
Dietitian / Nutritionist	15%	6%
In-Store Bakery	14%	85%
Natural/Organic Food	13%	81%
In-Store Health Clinics	12%	8%
In-Store Recipe Kiosks	11%	27%
Selection of Ready-To-Eat/Heat-and-Eat Foods	11%	83%
Home Delivery	10%	15%
Butcher Available	7%	63%
Coffee Bar	7%	29%
Drive-Up Pharmacy	7%	14%
Fresh Seafood	7%	73%
Gourmet/Specialty Food	7%	69%
Olive Bar	7%	22%
Made-To-Order Sandwiches/Pizza	6%	56%
Expanded Gourmet Cheese Sect.	5%	55%
In-Store Pharmacy	5%	70%
Online Ordering	5%	31%
Sushi station	5%	19%
Expanded Houseware Section	4%	41%
Gift Cards to Other Stores	4%	64%
Sit-Down Eating Areas	3%	46%

% based on the # of respondents whose primary store provides the product or feature

"Stores just can't keep up with fast price changes," according to Sunit Saxena, Altierre's chairman and CEO. With the ESL system, a store can update product information displayed on 10,000 items in less than an hour. Stores that use the system typically install two RFID readers capable of controlling 25,000 shelf labels across a sales floor measuring 50,000-sq. ft. Altogether, RFID technology allows retailers to eliminate millions of paper labels a year.

Ahold's Stop & Shop introduced Modiv Media Inc.'s Scan It! hand-held scanning devices in several of its Con-