
New Technology Driving In-Store Selling Revolution

The consumer goods industry is at a crossroads in the evolution of in-store activity. The relentless competition and proliferation of products vying for limited shelf space has changed the nature of the field rep's in-store role. The message from companies to their field reps is clear: spend less time merchandising and more time selling in-store. The arrival of technology-enabled selling will drive the change, supporting reps with access to the live data and presentation tools needed to make a successful in-store sales pitch.

“Working the shelf” as efficiently as possible is still absolutely necessary, but it’s no longer enough. It’s now also critical to actively sell the store manager on new initiatives, new line extensions and new product displays to improve a brand’s positioning, pricing and promotion in the store.

How do you sell a product or promotion in a competitive environment, where, in the USA for example, there are already 36,000 other products on the average grocery store’s shelves?

Game-Changing Technology Transforms In-Store Selling

The answer lies in new mobile technology that supports reps’ in-store sales activity: technology-enabled selling using handheld tablet computers. Until now, selling in-store has involved a piece of paper - an inefficient and unproductive approach where the data being used in the sale process are neither real-time nor pertinent to that particular store.

Technology-enabled selling has been made possible by the advent of both the right device – easy-to-carry mobile tablets with large, bright screens – and the right solutions to run on them: applications that facilitate access to live shelf, sales and pricing data and the ability to integrate that data into dynamic, customized multimedia presentations delivered directly to the buyer in-store.

The most effective presentations bring together data on sales, competitive intelligence, current store conditions, professional graphics and video. But the killer app is the ability to present dynamic ‘what if?’ modeling to the store manager.

A rep can show a store manager the extra sales and profit they would generate if they dropped a competitor’s product for one of the rep’s products at particular price points. It is the classic example of a profit calculator, dynamically presented in a multimedia presentation. Because the live data and presentation tools are in the one application, a rep can convert a sale into an order on the spot. That’s simply not possible with a piece of paper.

The Power of Pitch-Perfect Presentations

The integration of all those elements into a seamless presentation makes for a pitch that is engaging, professional and, ultimately, more successful. Reps can sell more by showing the manager what is already selling more.

Kimberly-Clark discovered the power of technology-enabled selling when it rolled out iPads to some of its field force and transitioned to the StayinFront TouchCG® mobile consumer goods platform in 2012. By moving from paper-based presentations to screen, reps were able to present photos of successful promotions in one store to make a compelling case to a manager in another store.

Craig Chiplin, National Sales Force Effectiveness Manager at Kimberly-Clark Australia described the response from store managers: “The rep will say ‘Look what they have done (in another location), can we try this in your store?’ A lot of times, the store says ‘Fantastic, let’s do it’.”

StayinFront’s live testing of its new in-store presentation module, PitchBook for StayinFront TouchCG, with a major US customer also proved successful. Previously, the company sent a stack of paper by overnight mail to its reps each week. When a store manager asked about cost or deal of the week, the rep could find a piece of paper with a number on it to answer the question - eventually.

Now, its reps are making dynamic pitches using interactive presentations delivered on tablet devices – and creating more sales. One example was the successful ‘pre-selling’ of a new range of confectionery in the lead up to Halloween. The rep showed the manager the candies in an on-screen presentation and made a plan to put the product out in a preferred location on her next visit. When the rep returned a week later, the store manager had already placed the product on the floor in the 5-star location they had discussed.

Sharing Information for Best Practice

Pitchbook can return detailed information about data and pitch usage to head office to show what is working in the field. By collecting data about how people in the field are using information and presentations to sell, the application’s analytics tool can help identify best practices and share them throughout the organization.

For instance, head office can easily identify the top five reps by sales and look at their selling patterns - what selling tools they're using and how, because Pitchbook tracks them every step of the way. Drilling down into the detail might show that when reps use a certain presentation, they will convert an order 30% of the time - but if a change is made in the presentation, the conversion rate goes up to 60%.

That detailed feedback allows the organization to develop better pitches, train reps and implement best sales practice across the team, raising the bar in retail performance.

Future-Proof Investment

Until now, most consumer goods companies have been stuck in the old paper binder world. Now, technology is providing a way out of that world. Those who don't prepare to adapt to the new technology-enabled fact-based selling landscape will not be able to sell effectively and their competitors will eventually wipe them off the shelf.

The scalability of the StayinFront platform means organizations can begin their journey using its in-store execution functionality, and, when their business is ready to take the next step, take advantage of technology-enabled selling tools such as PitchBook for StayinFront TouchCG, without having to invest in a new solution.

StayinFront TouchCG enables consumer goods companies to get more value from their field teams as they will generate incremental revenue by using technology to proactively sell more in-store.

Technology-based selling is not about being more efficient and 'doing more' in the store: it's about being more effective - and making a sale that would not otherwise have been made.

About StayinFront

StayinFront is an innovative global provider of enterprise-wide customer relationship management software, mobile sales force effectiveness and on-demand SaaS CRM solutions. StayinFront has been chosen as a strategic partner by many of the world's top life sciences, consumer goods and business-to-business companies, improving efficiencies in over 65 countries and more than 25 languages. Headquartered in Fairfield, NJ, USA, StayinFront has offices in the United Kingdom, Ireland, India, Australia, Singapore and New Zealand. For more information, visit www.stayinfront.com or log on to our blog at <http://blogs.stayinfront.com>

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