



A Large College Publication Retailer



Case Study

Client

As the most diverse company serving the U.S. college bookstore industry, the Client sells over six million textbooks to nearly 2,500 college bookstores, including 280 bookstores of its own. In one way or another, the Client's publications reach approximately 80 percent of the 15 million students attending institutions of higher education today.

Challenge

At the start of every term, college students flood the Client's bookstores to pick up their reading for the semester, creating long lines and a sub-par customer service experience. "The demand for our merchandise is very seasonal," explained the Client. "We needed a solution that allowed us to quickly add more checkout capacity without taking up valuable floor space."

Additionally, the Client's participation in off-site sales at special events, such as book signings and football games as well as their own pop-up stores by the college dorms at the beginning of the school year, was increasing. They needed a reliable point-of-sale (POS) solution that would allow them to sell merchandise and accept payments on the go. "We were looking for a mobile POS solution that enabled us to sell where the students were instead of waiting for the students to come to our stores."

Previously, the Client had to bring a "POS in a bag" to all off-site sales events. Consisting of a notebook computer, a cash drawer and a printer, it was cumbersome to transport and set up – and it required electricity and a local network connection, which were not always available. "Remote sales events required a lot of planning and the 'POS in a bag' was heavy to carry and complex to set up," said the Client.

Solution

CRI immediately took a strategic approach to understanding the Client's challenges by collaboratively conducting research with them to identify all feasible options and by formalizing an overall mobile strategy. After the Client decided on a mobile POS solution that delivered a myriad of benefits in an all-encompassing handheld device, CRI designed, developed and launched a native POS app on the iOS platform with the following features:

- iPhone and iPod integration
- Infrared barcode scanning
- Magnetic card stripe reading
- Thermal printer
- Smart-card processing capabilities

together we
get it great

“The mobile POS solution empowers our associates to provide better service in the store. But, more importantly, it allows us to sell merchandise in places we could not even imagine before.”

– Vice President of
Application Services,
A Large College
Publication Retailer

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Throughout the engagement, CRi utilized a collaborative and iterative project approach that involved the Client's personnel providing continuous knowledge transfer. Upon deployment of the solution, CRi furnished user and technical documentation and formal training followed by post-launch support services including ongoing maintenance, updates and small-scale enhancements.

"What is intriguing with the mobile POS solution is that it can be used not only for traditional back-office tasks and line-busting but we can also take it outside the store and use it for remote POS," describes the Client. "Another benefit is the intuitive and familiar user interface, which has reduced the training time of the store associates from days to hours."

Result

The Client was able to hire additional temporary staff during peak times to ring customers up from anywhere in the store. Conveniently, the mobile POS solution provided all the same functionality as the standard cash register – and more:

- Mobile cashiers could also look up the customer's financial aid and charge against it on the spot
- Along with being a POS app, the device was integrated with the store's backend systems, enabling a suite of back-office functions such as real-time inventory
- The Client could now set up remote retail operations outside of its brick-n-mortar retail store

The Client was thrilled with the results. "The mobile POS solution empowers our associates to provide better service in the store. But, more importantly, it allows us to sell merchandise in places we could not even imagine before."

The mobile POS solution produced numerous immediate and long-term benefits for the Client, including:

- Drastically reduced wait-periods at registers during peak retail times
- A vastly improved customer experience
- Increased sales at the Client's retail stores
- New streams of revenue at outside customer events
- Minimal training time as a result of the device mirroring the existing full-sized POS system
- New market-share opportunities through the ability to pop up retail stores anywhere and at any event, independent of the nearest power source

"The mobile POS solution allows us to take the bookstore to the students with almost no extra effort as long as the site has cell phone service," said the Client. The Client was so pleased that they have already engaged CRi for additional mobile application solutions.

About CRi



CRi is the technology partner that business leaders turn to for on-demand technology solutions and IT talent. From the conventional to the cutting edge, we employ some of the best IT talent and thinkers to leverage technology in pursuit of our clients' goals for greater productivity, operating effectiveness or business growth. Learn more at www.clientresourcesinc.com.



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