

Solutions Frontline

Managing Supply Chain Strategies with Technology

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Instead of ignoring RFID privacy advocates, respond to their concerns.

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RFID: heavy investment and elusive return; implementers divulge operations details and concerns; global data synchronization vision still faces challenges.

Editorial Mission: Frontline Solutions is the only integrated platform to consistently provide collaborative business strategies and tactics for the cross-enterprise supply chain. It supports operations, IT, and senior managers in core vertical markets as they refine processes and technologies to improve enterprise competitiveness.

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Old World, New Lessons



General Motors and Volkswagen demonstrate that labor in Europe faces challenges likely to bring dramatic changes.
By John Vande Vate, Georgia Tech

Case Histories

POS System Permits Serial and USB Connections

Restaurants implementing point-of-sale systems often must upgrade PC systems. A proprietary software product provides a way to preserve the PC investment.

Process Improvement?

Let's Take a Walk

An auto parts manufacturer streamlines operations by walking through each process, using a stopwatch to determine the time required.

Executive View

How to Keep RFID Deployment Leadership in the USA

The most effective way is to let natural market forces operate, let an accredited standards body develop RFID standards, and let patent holders and suppliers deal among themselves to arrive at equitable licensing agreements.
By Thomas Polizzi, WCCN Publishing Inc.

Frontline Ticker

A Regular Fix on the Supply Chain Market

Each Tuesday, the Ticker speaks of a technology: automated data collection (December 7), software/middleware (December 14), computing/communications (December 21), and supply chain services (December 28).

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The Future of RFID



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Point-of-Sale System Serves Up Serial and USB Connections for Restaurants

Dec 1, 2004
By: [Steve Runkel](#)
Frontline Solutions



Keeping up with their healthy growth rate meant that several restaurant chains—such as Strickland's Custard, White House Chicken, and Tomato Tomatoe—needed to automate front- and back-of-house IT operations. Addressing a growing potpourri of restaurant challenges from recipe management to security to per-item costing meant finding a point-of-sale (POS) solution tailored to their business, a solution that would deliver the benefits of current technology without sacrificing previous investments.

The Price of Progress

As a result of the growing presence of universal serial bus (USB) devices in management information systems, communications options abound. USB technology, however, remains a not-so-standard option among restaurant hardware peripherals because of its high price point. "The POS industry has a tendency to lag in technology," says Scott Pritchard, president of Future POS Ohio Inc. "USB devices are plentiful. Ports are also plentiful and inexpensive on a PC. But the problem is that software is not often written in such a way that restaurant managers can use those ports with older hardware components."

So in many instances, the technology requires restaurant owners to buy a new PC. And they may also have to buy new peripherals if the ones they have are incompatible with the interface options available on the new PC. Replacing peripherals—such as touch screens, customer displays, liquor bar code readers, and receipt printers—can cost thousands of dollars.

Getting It All by Mixing Old and New

A more cost-effective alternative exists. Future POS is a proprietary restaurant management solution that accommodates software for serial or USB device hardware. Future POS runs on a Windows platform and incorporates a Quatech serial card to expand a PC's capability.

By providing a station's PC with the needed serial ports or connections, Quatech serial boards let restaurants get more out of their previously purchased hardware. This functionality is typically accomplished with PCI boards or with USB-to-serial adapters. High-quality serial products are required, however, because the new ports must function exactly like standard built-in communications ports for the system to function with the restaurant's software applications.

In a typical environment, Future POS becomes a restaurant's second-, third-, or fourth-generation point-of-sale solution. It integrates past technology purchases into a solution that meets each customer's needs. "A reliable point-of-sales system is no longer an option. It's a necessary tool in a restaurant environment," says Pritchard of Future POS. "A bus failure on a Saturday night in a busy restaurant is the kiss of death to a restaurant."

Incorporating a handheld device, which runs off rugged, custom hardware, Future POS integrates with a USB Web camera for security and to track restaurant events. It also incorporates scheduling, item and recipe management, time-keeping, sales and history tracking, and an Internet credit card interface.

Steve Runkel is president and chief executive at Quatech in Hudson, Ohio.

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