

WHITE PAPER:

# THE RETAIL ECOSYSTEM REINVENTED

POINT OF SERVICE BECOMES THE NEW POINT OF SALE



World over, the COVID-19 outbreak has changed everything. Hard-hit retailers have been forced to pivot, virtually overnight, to new models ranging from eCommerce to contactless delivery. Survival – let alone growth – now depends on their ability to adapt to radically revised consumer behavior.

By lockdown order or choice, many consumers are simply staying put, ordering online and relying on home delivery. For those able or willing to venture out, current social distancing requirements mean they're eager to get in and out of stores as quickly as possible or that they prefer curbside pickup.

In the third week of March alone, retail foot traffic in the United States was down 97.6 percent compared to last year.<sup>1</sup> And nearly one-third of U.S. households used an online grocery delivery or pickup service in March 2020 versus only 13 percent in August 2019.<sup>2</sup>

On a positive note, customers had already grown quite comfortable with “buy online, pick up in store” (BOPIS) models well before the pandemic, making it easier for them to embrace eCommerce and contactless curbside pickup on a larger scale.

Yet more than ever, retailers must be prepared and willing to serve customers where, when and how they need to be served. Now and in the future. Continuing to deliver an excellent customer experience is going to play a key role in successfully transitioning to new business models – ones that are more high-tech than high touch. A VDC Research survey last year found the







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top strategy for improving the customer shopping experience was faster checkout (63 percent), followed by more checkout options (48 percent) such as self-checkout, express lanes, associate mobile POS and customer mobile apps.<sup>3</sup> Clearly, these strategies are even more important in today's retail climate.

### **Turning to technology to improve the customer experience**

Pre-pandemic, the grocery sector lagged in moving to a digital business model. Moving forward, whether you're a grocer, retail warehouse, online business, convenience store, specialty retailer or part of the T&L supply chain, optimizing technology for sales and operations will be absolutely essential for success.

Smart mobile technology solutions fuel the efficiency, agility and responsiveness on which positive customer experiences are built. For example, versatile state-of-the-art mobile devices and wireless mobile printers are game-changers in the new digital-dependent retail landscape for a number of reasons:

- They speed POS checkout, keeping queues short allowing customers to distance.
- Indoors or out, they're ideal for accurately scanning and labeling takeout, "grab and go" or curbside pickup orders in establishments from convenience stores and big box stores to restaurants and bookstores.
- In stores, they quickly print shelf-edge tags, markdown labels, fresh food labels and receipts for items – in the aisle or virtually anywhere across the store.
- In warehouses, they efficiently print a variety of barcode, shelf, shipping, return and other identifying labels to support packing, picking, receiving and cross-docking.
- Through clear, proper labeling, they reinforce quality assurance and reduce fulfillment errors by ensuring packages contain the correct items.

## Choosing the right technology

For retailers already struggling to juggle multiple priorities, selecting the technology that best matches their needs can feel daunting. Here are the most important criteria to consider when evaluating mobile printing and labeling solutions:

- **Performance.** Can they print a variety of barcode, shelf, shipping and other identifying labels quickly, clearly and easily? Are they rugged and durable enough to withstand constant use (including occasional bumps and drops)?
- **Affordability.** You need value and performance readiness. What features matter most to you? Does everything your employees need to get to work come included in the box (think battery, belt clip, power supply and other must-have accessories)?
- **Integration.** Are the printing solutions easy to use out of the box – without the aid of a professional IT team? Will the printers integrate seamlessly with your existing software or include bundled software?
- **Connectivity.** Do the printers have NFC quick connection and robust wireless connectivity, including MFi, Bluetooth® and Wi-Fi® so they can connect nearly anywhere with almost any mobile device?
- **Ease of use.** Are the printing solutions easy for your employees to use without a major investment in training? Are they compact and lightweight enough to fit in a pocket or hook to a belt clip?
- **Reliability.** Can you count on your new technology to deliver for the long haul? For example, direct thermal printing technology uses fewer moving parts, boosting reliability. Do the solutions you're considering feature reliable battery technology, smart battery management and the capacity to last an entire shift? Do the printers have premier two-year limited warranties?
- **Scalability.** Are the printing solutions flexible and versatile enough to grow with your business?





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### **HaaS offers predictability, flexibility and affordability**

Finding the funds to pay for new technology is never easy for retailers, given the industry's notoriously tight margins. Cash flow is squeezed even more tightly during this current market upheaval, making it especially challenging to deploy advanced technology – despite the clear need and proven benefits.

The Hardware-as-a-Service (HaaS) model offers one answer to clearing procurement hurdles. This model shifts acquisition costs to operational expenses (OpEx) rather than capital expenses (CapEx). Instead of paying a lump sum up front, enterprises can take advantage of an affordable and predictable monthly payment for the mobile printers, accessories and warranties that can help them meet fast-changing needs. In a nutshell, HaaS makes it possible for an operation of any size to utilize the latest technology without putting undue strain on the bottom line.

### **Thriving in the “new normal”**

As the retail landscape continues to shift and reinvent itself in today's highly unpredictable and constantly changing market conditions, the ability to scale, pivot and innovate is vital to survival for retail operations of all sizes and stripes.

Brother Mobile Solutions and our partners are committed to helping you deploy and fully capitalize on the technology you need to seamlessly turn your point of service into your point of sale. With our extensive experience, proven track record and commitment to innovation, you can trust us to deliver the right solutions, service and support to keep you agile and responsive as you rebuild and reboot.





**Multi-protocol  
support**



**Easy  
enrollment**



**Advanced data  
collection**



**Automation  
rules**

## Get smart about device management

Investing in a fleet of mobile or industrial printers delivers a host of benefits for retail enterprises competing in the “I-need-it-yesterday” world. At the same time, printers can present device management challenges for businesses paring down or working with partial staff resources. By nature, mobile printers are deployed in variable environments, with different locations, applications and degrees of use. Mobile device management platforms can help fill gaps and improve efficiencies, even with fewer resources.

Mobile printers carry a significant amount of business-vital data and perform key business process functions, so from both a compliance and a best practices perspective, businesses need to know where their mobile printers are, how they are performing and whether they are being used in a secure environment.

By providing visibility and control, a robust mobile device management (MDM) platform is critical to ensuring smooth, secure operations. When multiple printers work from a network, real-time visibility and control are key to maintaining maximum efficiency.

True IoT platforms (such as SOTI Connect) enable a remote administrator to automatically configure, add, upgrade or delete printers on the network, deliver insights on the current status and properties of the devices, and can even track and order supplies when needed.

With customer expectations for fast, efficient service at an all-time high, whether curbside or in-store, employees depend on their mobile printers to be up and running whenever and wherever they need them. The right MDM solution helps reduce costly, frustrating downtime, ensuring positive experiences for both customers and employees.

## Find solutions to meet your retail needs

From curbside pickups and deliveries to the aisle and the warehouse, leverage printers and labelers that help you work productively, compete effectively, and meet changing demands.

[Set up a free Digital Demo with a Brother expert.](#)  
[Request a free demo printer to try.](#)



RJ-2035



RJ-3035



RJ-4200WBL

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.vdcresearch.com/News-events/emob-blog/COVID-19-Impacts-Consumer-Behavior-Grocery-Retail.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.vdcresearch.com/News-events/emob-blog/COVID-19-Impacts-Consumer-Behavior-Grocery-Retail.html>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.vdcresearch.com/News-events/emob-blog/COVID-19-Impacts-Consumer-Behavior-Grocery-Retail.html>