

# WHITE PAPER



# Instantly-Mobile Kiosks: Security Meets Convenience

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By Richard Slawsky | Contributing writer,  
KioskMarketplace.com

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Tablet kiosks are reshaping the way retailers do business, adding another convenient channel for customers to interact with stores.

A 2017 survey of 1,000 U.S. consumers found that 75 percent of retail customers say they have a better in-store experience if there are self-service tablets available for use, while the same amount said they were more likely to visit a store if technology was part of the experience. Shoppers are using that technology to check prices, locate the products they seek, order items not carried in the store and take advantage of promotions and discounts.

At the same time, a minority of those consumers say they've seen those tablets in the hands of store associates to assist in the selling process.

Obviously, then, there remains an opportunity for retailers to maximize the benefits they're achieving with tablet kiosks by re-thinking the manner in which those devices are being used.

## Overcoming the obstacles

Tablet technology is changing one of the critical parts of the retail customer experience: how associates interact with their customers. Brick-and-mortar stores are beginning to shift gears and focus more on the in-store shopper experience, especially as e-commerce continues to thrive and mobile commerce gains traction.

The benefits tablets offer in a retail environment include an enhanced customer experience, higher speed of service, larger purchases and streamlined operations. Today's consumers expect speed, mobility and efficiency in all that they do, including their interactions with retailers.

Retailers that stay at the forefront of these consumer expectations will not only understand their customers better, but capitalize on the wide range of opportunities tablets offer, whether as a tool for associates to share information with customers, ring up sales, locate products or perform other tasks. Incorporating digital technology into the shopping experience can have tremendous impacts in driving increased sales and customer loyalty.

But while traditional tablet kiosks do offer several benefits in a retail setting, there are some drawbacks to the fixed-kiosk setup.

One of the main disadvantages is that because those kiosks aren't mobile, they're not always convenient for sales associates to use with the customer. In a situation where a customer and associate are using an "endless aisle" or demonstration application and they leave the kiosk to find a particular product, there's a chance that customer will end up losing interest.

In addition, many traditional kiosks are fit-for-purpose tablets or displays that do very much just one thing. From the retailers' perspective, they don't always have the flexibility to generate a lot of unique content, change operating systems or add additional features such as payment processing or database lookup, all which will further engage the customer and improve the experience.



“When a retailer is looking at a kiosk, they want a system that is flexible enough to use different types of commercial tablets, incorporate a variety of content and add peripherals such as card readers, scan guns and the like,” Sankey said.

They also want a unit that is easy to use, adjusts for height, and swivels back and forth so it aids in a conversation with a customer instead of being a hindrance. And ultimately, those devices need to incorporate the ability to quickly and easily detach from their mounts while retaining their usability.

With the addition of mobility, the associate can take the tablet with them as they walk with the customer, allowing them to have the information they need at their fingertips.

“So when I’m ready to take that next step, to maybe walk with the customer to show them the product they are interested in or complete a demonstration, the ability to quickly transition from a fixed kiosk system to a mobile sales tool becomes very important,” Sankey said.

“A kiosk system that enables that transition to quick mobility is the way businesses will improve the customer experience,” Sankey said. “By enabling that ability, associates can take the tablet with them as they walk through the store with the customer, introduce them to new products and process transactions quickly, increasing sales in the process.”



That ability to transition the kiosk to a mobile sales tool opens the door to additional features that make the device easy for associates to handle. Those might include hand and/or shoulder straps and frames designed to easily fit in the associate's hand.

And by adding a card reader and allowing the tablet to function as a mobile point-of-sale system, businesses can eliminate lines at the checkout, increasing conversion rates, reducing cart abandonment and ultimately increasing profitability.

## Tracking the tablet

Although having the ability to detach a tablet from its mount opens the door to a variety of selling opportunities, it creates a number of issues as well. Paramount among those is security. Having the tablet undocked from its mount means anyone can pick it up and walk away. Knowing who undocked the tablet from its mount can be a key part of keeping track of the device.

In addition, in a commissioned-based environment where several associates may be using the kiosk, it's important to be able to track what transactions were conducted by each associate.

InVue's CT300 tablet kiosk solution, for example, features rapid undocking using InVue's exclusive CT Key technology and software-controlled auditing features, monitoring who undocked the tablet. The CT300 includes two USB 2.0 ports to support peripherals and data connectivity, and can accommodate 8" to 13" tablets.

The unit is also designed with an ergonomic frame and hand strap for trouble-free mobile use.

But security extends beyond just tracking the tablet when it's undocked; it also means keeping the unit operating when it's attached to the stand.

"We talk a lot about customer experience and assisting those customers, but we also want to address those customers who want to be left alone," said Skip Hinshaw, VP of Commercial Solutions at InVue. "You want a kiosk system that provides for rapid mobility, but is still secure enough to be left unattended."

To address those issues, the CT300 keeps its tablets locked down and powered up, charging both the tablet and peripherals such as mobile payment terminals when attached to the stand. Cables and power connections are hidden to prevent tampering. In addition, the CT300 can withstand up to 200 lbs. of force.

While the security, flexibility and quick mobility of the InVue solution are important, though, what's equally as important is the customer experience those components come together to create.

“What we’re seeing more and more is that the interactive experience of the customer and technology is critical,” Hinshaw said. “That ability to have a kiosk go mobile quickly and seamlessly enables the associate to have that interactive experience with the technology and the customer, keeping them shopping in the store instead of having them go elsewhere.”

## How tablets are changing the retail customer experience

### **In-store payment processing**

Retailers are gradually replacing traditional point-of-sale hardware with mobile POS devices. While some businesses prefer POS tablets for their sleek, high-tech look, many retailers also benefit from the easy-to-upgrade software and the data-collecting abilities of mobile apps. Tablets for POS applications are often more cost-effective as they require less upfront expense and do not require costly maintenance fees.

### **Customer self-service**

In-store tablets allow customers to help themselves. If the store has a loyalty program, the customer can easily interact with the program as well. They can search for products and place an order quickly. It’s convenient, easier and research shows that customers are more comfortable with completing actions they can do on their own, as opposed to getting associate help.

### **Product displays**

Smaller retailers don’t have a lot of space for large volumes of inventory in the store. Tablets can display their full range of products online, and even complete the transaction in the store so the customer doesn’t have to look for it elsewhere.

### **Signage and in-store advertising**

Instead of putting up printed signs and flyers that can be costly and are often only used for a limited time, some retailers are choosing to broadcast their announcements via in-store tablets. These enable the retailer to quickly and easily change, rearrange and schedule displayed content, so that a retailer’s only real cost is the price of the tablet itself.

## **About the sponsor:**

*Headquartered in Charlotte, N.C., InVue provides global retailers and commercial businesses with innovative sales enablement solutions. InVue products balance the need for excellent sales and customer service with best-in-class security requirements and store aesthetics. From helping retailers secure and display high-theft merchandise to leveraging tablets for commercial business use, and partnering with OEM brands to securely display their merchandise, InVue solutions provide an exceptional value to our retail, business and brand customers.*