



Mobile POS Empowers The North Face Associates to Venture Beyond the Cash Wrap

Retailers are adapting their store environments to meet consumers' heightened demand for ease and convenience. At the same time, they're trying to help associates feel empowered in an increasingly busy, high-pressure environment. Nearly half (**46%**) of retailers surveyed in *Retail TouchPoints' Store Operations Survey* noted that they provide **mobile POS** to associates — and an additional **31%** plan to implement the technology this year.

The North Face rolled out mobile POS in its stores leading up to the 2022 holiday season, knowing that the technology would better support its associates. At the same time, the brand wanted to streamline the overall flow of traffic in stores and reduce wait times, especially during peak selling periods.

"We were really excited about the idea of eliminating the cash wrap and [allowing associates] to walk away from it," said Jerry Smith, Director of DTC West U.S. and Canada for The North Face Division of VF Corp. "But we had to really go through and take a structured look at how to remove barriers, to allow mobile to really come to life and be truly mobile. Because there are a lot of mobile devices that you'll see in other stores and they're behind a cabinet or locked in a drawer."

But why do the deployment during Q3, arguably the entire industry's busiest selling season? "We wanted to make sure that we gave it our best," Smith said. "Because it was either going to work or it was going to fail, and if it was going to fail it was going to fail with the most people in the store. It was a **\$15 million** outlet, so if that location could run mobile POS, others could too, and we helped remove those barriers."

The North Face was the first brand within VF Corp to test mobile POS as a fleet. The experience, powered by Aptos ONE mobile POS, was seamlessly implemented thanks to the technology's overall ease of use. "Store employees check out their device, log in for the day, sign in for their shift and they can hang on to the mobile device all day. It was a really easy transition," said Rene Marrufo, Store Manager for the North Face's Las Vegas outlet.

Associates now have the power to start their engagement with customers as soon as they enter the store and until they make a purchase — something Smith said was critical to the mobile POS rollout. The power of mobile POS has allowed the North Face to completely transform the static cash wrap and eliminate **8 additional feet** of space on each side of the smaller setup, allowing the retailer to add more space to the sales floor for product and customer engagement. Additionally, mobile carts now are stationed throughout stores to house sensor removers along with mobile printers in the event consumers want traditional printed receipts.



"By shrinking the size of the desk, it takes away that feeling of you needing to walk around the desk to complete the purchase," Smith explained. "It puts the onus on the employees to take the device out of their pockets while they're having a conversation with a customer."

The static desks are equipped with stationary tablets with swivel bases that

support better customer interactions. Although these are more "traditional cash wraps," the mobile devices can detach from their bases to give associates another device to use throughout the store. "You can have that back-and-forth [with the customer], you can show them prices as they're scanned, support tap-to-pay, any card or payment method, etc.," Marrufo said.



Tackling the Unknowns of New Store Technology

To maximize the ROI of in-store tech, retailers need to ensure associates are fully trained in how to use it — especially if errors or issues emerge.

Marrufo admitted that field training was a very particular issue because “we overthink and tend to overcomplicate things based on the past POS issues we’ve had.” A lot of questions emerged during the rollout, based on possible usability errors and technical issues.

When the rollout began for the fleet, Smith convened with his boss, IT and the brand’s current president, and there

was an “enormous book of training” that the IT team created, he said. “It didn’t fully represent how easy the devices are. We added some store associates to the mix, and they were the ones that said we didn’t need all that. Because the kids we hire know how to pick up the phone, scan products and email receipts.”

The process has been simplified, largely because the iPhone is so ubiquitous, and the interface is so seamless. The team put together a **two-page** manual for the holiday season outlining quick training and key use cases. The team also developed a series of videos and one-pagers and held

Zoom-based training sessions to walk through different scenarios. Each store has a designated “captain” or power user for the technology, and each store runs periodic role-based sessions so associates can get accustomed to using the technology for specific scenarios.

Now, associates use the mobile devices to achieve daily mobile transaction goals, check real-time stock levels and verify prices and promotions. The North Face also ensures that associates are “zoned” in specific areas where quick transactions are most likely, such as footwear and accessories.

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📞 +1.866.880.4200

✉️ info@aptos.com

🌐 www.aptos.com