



# Best Practices for Retail-IT

Maximize your potential with Retail-IT!

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Best Practices for Retail-IT  
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# Overview

In today's competitive retail world, it is becoming increasingly challenging to stay competitive and achieve success. Of the myriad considerations you have in running your retail operation, the selection of the appropriate retail management system (RMS) can be one of the most difficult.

Almost daily, it seems, there are new systems and new vendors on the market. If you're looking to modernize your POS and retail systems, this is great news – more choice than ever and more bang for your buck. However, while at first pass this may seem too good to be true, it can also be overwhelming. Who do you trust? How do you pick the right system?

The first thing you need to do is get an idea of what some of the best practices are in terms of RMS capabilities. This paper is designed to outline several of the key issues and best practices in today's retail environment. As you'll see, Retail-IT is a richly featured, powerful RMS designed to improve your business processes, reduce your costs, and increase your sales through the application of best in class business processes and technologies, coupled with real-time management and reporting tools.

The next thing to do is find a partner who not only has a powerful RMS solution, but also has extensive experience and know-how, and will work hard to earn your trust. At Qualicom, we've designed Retail-IT based on extensive experience working with both small and large retailers. And we've worked hard to not only earn their trust, but also to help them succeed and grow their businesses.

Retail-IT is designed to meet the needs of small and large businesses – whether you run a single store with one terminal, a small retail chain, or are a national retailer or franchise. As well, Retail-IT is designed to work for whatever retail business you are in – we have solutions for restaurants, fashion stores, mobile phone and electronics stores, and for other types of retail merchandise. What's important to know about Retail-IT is that all of our solutions are based on the same foundation, and you can grow your system at the same pace you grow your business!

# *Key Business Functionality*

Retail-IT offers a tremendous amount of functionality that will help you improve your retail operations. Below is a summary of some key retail business best practices, and an outline of how the features and functionalities of Retail-IT allow you to implement the best RMS solution possible.

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## **Never Miss A Sale**

In today's competitive retail environment, you can't afford to miss *any* sales opportunities. Period.

Retail-IT provides you with the tools you need to never lose a sale. With our "buy now, take it home now", "buy now, pick up later" or "direct ship to customer" sales features, you can complete the sale even if you don't have an item in stock at the store.

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## **Give Yourself Real-Time Control**

To stay on top of your business and remain competitive, you need to know what's happening right now, not what happened yesterday.

Retail-IT is built with immediacy and awareness in mind. The best way, and only way, to achieve this is to operate your business on a real-time basis. With Retail-IT, everything always has been and always will be done in real-time. With each sale, your store's inventory is updated immediately. Allocating inventory from the warehouse to a store automatically updates the store's inventory in real-time. Updates to store information, business rules, system settings, etc. done now are reflected in the system immediately.

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## **Get To Know Your Customers**

These days, providing an exceptional customer experience is vital to creating a successful retail environment. A key part of this experience is provided by your choice of the right RMS; one that not only provides quick and accurate service, but also ties into other information sources and sales tools. As well, it's good to establish a relationship; but it's even better to reward your customer's loyalty.

With Retail-IT you can go the extra mile to know your customers and ensure they are kept satisfied. You can create and modify customer profiles and accounts, look at past purchases, and create and manage your own points-based loyalty and rewards programs. As well, in a great POS system like Retail-IT, the purchase and payment processes are directly linked into other key sales tools and sales processes, such as customer management (customer profiles, loyalty programs, previous purchases, etc.) and sales management (promotions, discounts, up-selling, etc.).

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## Improve Your Sales Processes

No one likes line-ups. In today's retail world, line-ups can mean lost sales. You need to know that your POS system is designed to create a quick, accurate purchase and payment experience. You also need to quickly process other transactions like returns, exchanges, repairs, and warranty items.

Retail-IT's POS system—the engine of Retail-IT—is designed with efficiency and ease-of-use in mind. It's been designed to work with most POS hardware on the market, including standard keyboard and mouse systems, but also with touch screen systems as well. It also gives you full control over your cash drawer – you can set float levels, specify when to add or remove cash, and monitor cash levels in real-time.

Sales orders are processed efficiently, and items are quickly and accurately added to the receipt. Prices are automatically calculated, including discount and promotional pricing. All applicable taxes are automatically added to the total.

Payments are processed quickly and accurately, especially when utilizing the integrated payment gateway option. You can also specify the types of payments and rules you require (cash, credit cards, gift cards, cheques with two pieces of ID, etc.).

Returns and exchanges are also processed quickly, and can be done separately or as part of a sales order. The original transaction record can be found by scanning the sales receipt, or for serialized products, by scanning the serial number on the product. You have complete control over the acceptance and processing of returns, including specifying reason codes, whether or not manager approval is required, and how to issue funds (cash, credit card refund, credit note, cheque from head office, etc.). Repair and warranty items can be processed from the POS terminal, and a loaner product can be assigned to the customer, if desired. As well, our RMA processing capability can ensure that repair and warranty items are sent to the right place.

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## Master Your Inventory

In highly competitive retail environments, having the right inventory at the right place at the right time is crucial to success. Low levels of inventory, or not enough stock in the right place, can mean lost sales. High levels of inventory, or too much at the wrong place, can mean wasted investment in products and higher costs.

Retail-IT makes inventory management straightforward, from creating the purchase order for the supplier, right through to handing the product to the customer in the store. And again, it's all done in real-time.

Purchase orders are created and processed easily, and Retail-IT even automatically generates your P.O. with all the relevant data for you to print and send to the supplier. Purchase order shipments are easily received and processed into the warehouse, either by scanning products individually or through use of our batch scanning facility.

Inventory can be allocated to stores either using predefined distribution templates, or based on other criteria such as requests for inventory, sales patterns, etc. Retail-IT also allows you how to transfer inventory from store to store, either as part of a customer sale or to move inventory to where it is selling the best. As well, Retail-IT allows you to ship products directly to the customer either from a store, or more likely, from the warehouse. And again, Retail-IT will automatically generate all the necessary shipping documentation, as well as product labels for use in the stores.

Finally, Retail-IT gives you full control over your inventory. You can track and monitor all inventory levels, orders, allocations and shipments in real-time. You can issue inventory count sheets to stores on an ad hoc basis to conduct product category or supplier counts. And you can manage all of your inventory level and reordering rules as you see fit.

## Take Charge of Your Products

It's not good enough these days to rely solely on offering great products and services in your stores. To maximize sales and profits, you also need to make sure you're on top of your product and supplier information, purchase orders, pricing, and have the ability to up-sell related products and services.

Retail-IT gives you full control over all aspects of product management, information, pricing and up-selling. You can easily manage all of your supplier information and purchase orders, and create detailed product profiles with all the relevant information including product images. You can create and modify product relationships such as bundles, add-ons, and accessories. You can fully control and specify the pricing levels you need such as regular and sales prices, as well as setting different prices for different regions, stores, etc. Finally, you can use Retail-IT's up-sell / cross-sell features to help improve your overall sales.

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## Run Your Marketing and Sales Events Smartly

Creating and managing marketing events like sales, promotions, and discounts are now everyday practices in today's competitive struggle to get consumers in the door and to reward their loyalty.

Retail-IT can help you create, manage and track your marketing events such as sales, promotions and discounts. You can create sales events by product, supplier or by location. You can easily manage various types of promotions such as "Two For Ones", "Buy This Phone, Get This Accessory Free", "We Pay The GST Until This Date", etc. You can specify many types of discounts by product, location, customer type, loyalty program, etc. and also specify whether the discount applies at the line item or transaction level.

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## Manage Your Workforce Better

It's not enough for your POS system to work as a punch clock to track attendance; you also need to be able to manage employee availability and work schedules. And in today's world where employee turnover is often high, you need a system that requires little or no training time.

Retail-IT provides you with the ability to create employee profiles, work schedules, and attendance records. Employees can use the system to check their work schedules, record their future availability, and also use the "punch clock" system for recording their attendance. Managers can review and approve employee attendance records for payroll processing.

And, Retail-IT is designed to be an intuitive, easy-to-learn and easy-to-use system. Our experience backs that up; our customers have been able to dramatically reduce the need for formal training and have therefore reduced training expenses overall.

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## Stay Informed with Reporting and Analytics

Everyone knows the old business adage, "You can't manage what you can't measure." To stay competitive, you *must* know what's going on in your business – right now. You need to know which products are selling (or not), and where they are selling best; how your staff is performing and who is selling the most; the current state of your inventory and all related activities; and be able to track and monitor suspicious activity.

With these truths in mind, Retail-IT has been designed to give you a powerful suite of real-time reporting and management tools. You can track real-time sales from the enterprise level down to the individual transaction level (including viewing the sales receipt if you wish). You have full awareness of all inventory levels and related activities like allocations, requests for inventory, internal and customer shipments, etc.

You can analyze sales by product, region, store or terminal, and utilize handy reports such as “Top 10 Sellers” and “Worst 10 Sellers” to know what sales patterns exist, and where to move inventory to (or from).

Also, you can take comfort in knowing Retail-IT has your business interests in mind with built-in monitoring of suspicious transactions like excessive sales voiding activity, prolonged order open times, etc. Product losses are less likely to occur when everyone knows that the system is tracking transactions and paying attention to their activity.

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## Control Your System

Modern systems must be able to provide standard access, security, and administration controls. As well, they must be able to track and record all system related activity to provide complete logs and audit trails. In other words, the system must allow you to control and monitor who has access to your system, and

from where; and what they can do (by themselves or with manager approval) and have done.

Retail-IT offers you complete control over your system. Firstly, since Retail-IT is a modern, web-based system, you can access the management and administration tools in RIS from anywhere, at anytime. This gives you the power to run your business, your way.

Secondly, Retail-IT allows full security and administrative control. You can create and modify user profiles and passwords, and can even integrate with biometric security devices such as fingerprint scanners. You can create and modify user roles, and control permissions and activities by assigning only needed functions to a given role. And you can specify which activities require manager approval, such as returns.

Finally, you can also take comfort in knowing that Retail-IT tracks and records each and every system event and transaction, providing you the audit trails you need when you need them.

# *Key Technology Capabilities*

Retail-IT is robust with a modern IT architecture, utilizing a flexible, scalable and reliable web-based technological framework. The sections below outline some of the technological capabilities and features of Retail-IT.

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## **System Architecture**

Retail-IT's architecture is designed with flexibility and adaptability in mind. You can operate Retail-IT on its standard platform, or on any open systems platform you choose (IBM Websphere, Oracle DB, etc.).

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## **System Components**

Retail-IT has three main components – the Point of Sale (POS) terminals, the Store Server (SS), and the Enterprise Server / Retail Information Server (ES or RIS). Most of the transactions in the store are managed between the POS terminal and the store server. The enterprise server is primarily used for management and reporting activities.

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## **Scalability**

Whether you operate one store and one POS terminal, or a national retail chain or franchise with many locations and many terminals, Retail-IT can scale up gracefully as your needs evolve and your business grows. You can easily and seamlessly add terminals within a store, and / or add stores to your existing retail network.

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## **Reliability**

Retail-IT's architecture offers the advantage of being able to operate in online and offline modes. This is especially advantageous in conditions of intermittent or severed network connectivity. In other words, your stores are not subject to issues like power outages or service interruptions that may be affecting your ISP. Your stores will continue to operate and sell, and all needed data communication and synchronization between the stores and head office is simply cached until the network connection is restored.

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## **Security**

Since it is based on modern platforms, Retail-IT has built-in security to protect your data and prevent unwarranted access. As well all data communication is encrypted using SSL. Where required, data is encrypted using TripleDES encryption techniques.

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## **Customization**

Every business, large or small, can offer specific services or have unique processes they wish to follow that can't be met by any "off the shelf" retail management solution. Owing to its flexible and modular design, Retail-IT can be easily customized to meet your needs.

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## Integration

It is likely that you have already invested in other leading technologies and applications to manage your business. Perhaps you currently use SAP as your ERP tool, Peoplesoft as your workforce management tool, etc. Or, you may have proprietary applications that you need your RMS to integrate with such as a mobile phone activation system or account billing and payment system. Since Retail-IT has been constructed utilizing open standards and web-services capabilities, it can be integrated with other systems utilizing web-services based APIs in a straightforward manner – and it can be done quickly.