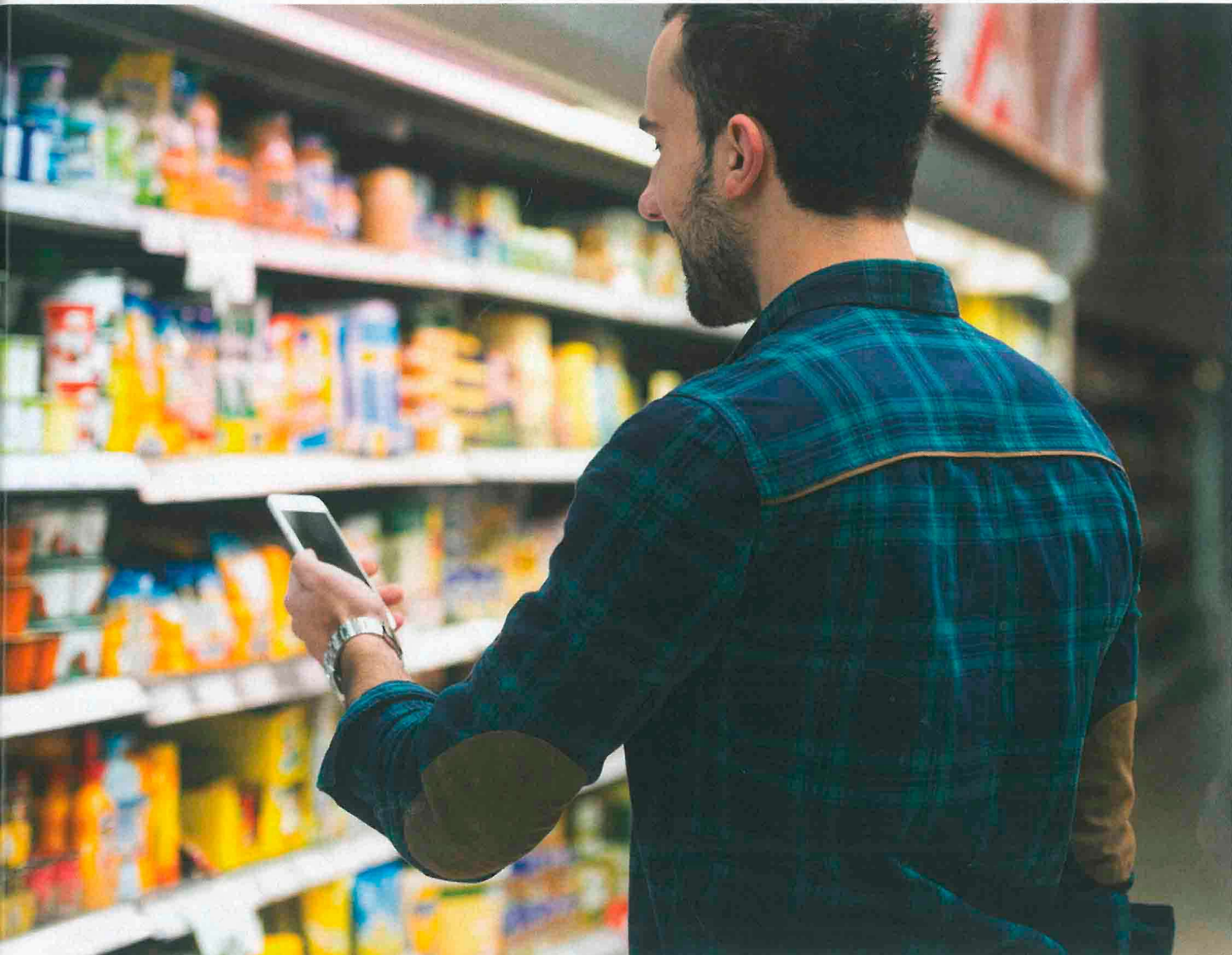


# Investing in Visibility

## How Grocers are Gaining Deeper Insights and Driving Operational Success



**W**ith the proliferation of emerging technologies and ever-growing competition from new channels, grocers are seeking increased visibility into store operations to help them optimally fulfill demand and enhance profitability.

Full visibility is essential for ensuring that business processes are carried out in line with a company's objectives. It can also help control costs—something that is of critical importance for grocers. Time and resources wasted by associates can represent a significant cost, and it's one that retailers simply cannot afford.



### **Making Strides toward eCommerce Excellence**

For best results, store operations must be as efficient, customer-focused, consistent and secure as possible. To achieve this, retailers need to find the right mix of tools—both in-store and at the corporate level—to provide real-time visibility into operations that can automate routine tasks and assist in effective decision-making.

In the past, visibility within grocery has been limited to point-of-sale data, inventory updates and staff schedules. In recent years, however, retailers have become increasingly interested in store visibility, which allows them to gain a clearer picture of their business and leverage those insights for operational advantage.

### **The eCommerce Edge**

A benefit commonly cited by eCommerce retailers is the level of visibility they have into the sales process compared with their brick-and-mortar counterparts. Because interactions with customers take place online, data can be recorded and subsequently mined for information. What's more, because the customer experience is removed from in-store operations, closer monitoring of inventory and service levels is possible.

A significant challenge for brick-and-mortar retailers in the digital age is learning how best to compete with, complement and learn from the eCommerce channel. Part of the solution is gaining better visibility into and control over the in-store environment. This is being made possible through the emergence of modern technologies that promise to revolutionize retail operations by offering visibility at a more granular level.

# **Visibility from a Retailer's Perspective**

**What does visibility look like from a retailer's perspective? Here are some examples:**

### **Efficient Use of In-Store Resources**

Ensuring you have the right amount of food preparation staff based on demand, while meeting budget targets and complying with labor laws, is a difficult job if done manually or with old-fashioned tools. Modern technologies help address these challenges by ensuring that in-store resources are allocated in the most efficient way possible and in accordance with current task requirements.

### **Open Communication between Head Office and Stores**

This is an important factor when it comes to corporate initiatives for promotions, pricing and brand experience. However, in this day and age, traditional modes of communication like phone calls, emails and faxes simply aren't enough. Store managers and head office personnel require a structured and automated approach that prioritizes tasks and provides detailed instructions, as well as a means of verifying completion and transmitting feedback.

### **A "Single Version of the Truth"**

When it comes to grocery eCommerce, the ability to analyze site performance at aggregate levels is critical to improving service and reducing costs. It requires integration with multiple data sources to acquire timely,

meaningful information that can be presented on dashboards and graphical displays tailored to each individual user. Visibility provides an effective solution by offering a "single version of the truth" to aid in effective decision-making. With greater visibility into all systems, data can be easily synchronized and transformed into actionable business intelligence that can be leveraged to improve operations and customer experience.

### **Intervention Made Easy**

Visibility also allows intervention at the store level when required. For example, if a particular order is delayed, visibility into store operations allows managers to intervene by allocating more resources to that order. Alternatively, if an associate has a low success rate for substituting products, visibility enables a retailer to intervene by providing more training in that area. Lastly, visibility allows an assessment of the efficiency of a store's pick strategy. Instead of doing single-order picks, for instance, a store could use multi-order (or wave) picks for greater efficiency.

When a grocery business is viewed as a single unified system, its underlying core processes become clear. By managing and improving these processes as components of an integrated system, a retailer can make significant improvements to critical success factors, such as lead-time requirements and the exact availability of stock when required throughout the supply chain.

### Benefits Extend to Customers

Greater visibility benefits customers in myriad ways. For example, visibility into inventory levels means that if a product is out of stock, both employees and customers are able to obtain information about the estimated time of arrival. Better yet, thanks to product availability and movement information that is up to date, out-of-stocks

will be reduced significantly, assuring that customers get what they came for.

Visibility can also refer to the customer's ability to track an order through the operations process. A shopper can follow the progress of a delivery online, for example, or retail store orders can be purchased over the counter after they are picked, packed and ready for collection.

