

In-Person Ecommerce

FutureProof Retail brings online convenience to in-store shopping

by JULIE KNUDSON

Di Di Chan shares the lament of consumers everywhere. “I really like to shop,” she says, “and I hate waiting in line.” Retailers have long looked for ways to improve the checkout process, but their disdain for long lines pales in comparison with how customers feel about standing around waiting to pay for their products. FutureProof Retail was launched to do something about it.

Chan, FutureProof’s president, met CEO William Hogben in a philosophy club where they bonded over the value of time. Sharing a background in technology and app development, the two brought FutureProof into being in late 2013. “We

decided to combine our philosophy, passion and ambition to change how people shop,” Chan says.

At its core, FutureProof is designed to bring the best of online shopping offline. Retailers can use the platform to offer shoppers a simple way to scan, pay and go. “It’s in-person ecommerce,” Chan says, “built on the foundation of convenience.”

Consumers today see convenience as the norm, not as a nicety: Everything from cars to prescriptions to concert tickets can be purchased online. But though ecommerce is a

natural — and ubiquitous — extension of that shift toward convenience, it doesn’t necessarily have a death grip on consumers.

Shoppers aren’t the only ones dealing with a new reality. The team behind FutureProof also recognizes that retailers are no longer just competing with each other. Online giants such as Amazon and Alibaba are moving offline as well. “We want to give brands an affordable, tested, trusted and easy solution to digitally connect with their customers in the physical space,” Chan says.

Though Amazon implemented its cashless stores to a lot of fanfare, it isn’t the only one working to eliminate traditional checkout lines. Mobile scanning applications are being developed in-house by other brands, too. It takes significant time and internal horsepower, though — obstacles that have prevented many retailers from moving toward mobile checkout themselves.

“We’re a fraction of the cost because we’ve already developed it, and can offer customized solutions,” Chan says of FutureProof’s ability to provide a pathway around some of those barriers to entry.

Rather than building a platform that’s rigid in its feature set, numerous customization options are available in FutureProof, making it a good choice for brands across a variety of store footprints, product selections and customer demographics. Loss prevention is just one issue that’s high on many retailers’ list of concerns, and FutureProof can include components such as RFID tags and security beacons. Another option is targeted at grocery and similar stores, where there’s a move toward removing friction at internal counters.

“I like to picnic,” Chan says. “I order salami and cheese slices at the counter, but everyone wants that in the summertime, and I don’t want to be waiting in line twice.” If a retailer



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uses FutureProof’s order-ahead feature, customers can use the mobile application to order items and simply scan, pay and checkout, skipping every line entirely.

Grocery has seen a big push toward cashless checkout, but FutureProof is setting itself apart through a reach into multiple retail categories. “We’re in grocery and fashion, and we’re also coming to the cosmetic space,” Chan says, listing off just a few of the sectors where the platform is active.

An advantage of the FutureProof Retail platform is that it isn’t locked into any one point-of-sale system, but instead can work with many different architectures. “We want to make sure the experience is seamless not just for customers but also for the retailers,” Chan says. “We see technology as a tool that can customize and adjust and adapt to them.” **STORES**

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