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The Gondolas of the Future

Uniting the virtual and physical worlds, the highly acclaimed concept of omnichannel retailing is transforming retail operations as a whole. Among the many processes impacted by the concept's adoption are product-display gondolas—a way to present goods to play a fundamental part in companies' marketing and operations strategies—which are among the components that have received the most improvements.

According to Nielsen research, 70 percent of purchase decisions are currently made in front of gondolas, which shows their importance to a store's results. More than integrating physical and virtual sales channels, the various technologies utilized in retail gondolas bring consumers closer to shopkeepers, allowing managers to direct clients using technology as a communication channel.



Radio frequency identification tags, Near Field Communication (NFC) technology, beacons and electronic price tags are some of the technological options already available on the market. These establish a connection with consumers, whether by means of messages sent to smartphones, or by visual appeal—one of the attractions of electronic tags, for example.

In addition to store-front operations, newly available solutions provide a technological arsenal to store management. Electronic labels have revolutionized pricing by allowing retailers to change prices in real time, regardless of store location or the number of labels used, with bright colors and alerts to highlight strategic products and promotions.

RFID sensors can be attached to products in order to track their locations within stores, thereby providing real-time inventory counts. The same can be accomplished with beacons, which provide a customer's real-time location, creating a "golden way" in physical retailing—a strategy previously only possible with e-commerce. Another important point is the use of data collectors with augmented reality, which allows stores to analyze and manage products' exposure.

With so many options available, what can we expect for the

near future? Certainly, existing technologies are evolving. Electronic displays that feature videos can illustrate a product's use, bring technical information to a consumer or catch his or her attention, while electronic tags check gondolas and notify a store to any operational disruptions. What we can say for sure is that the relationship between retailer and consumer is becoming refined, allowing for an increasingly efficient and personalized shopping experience.

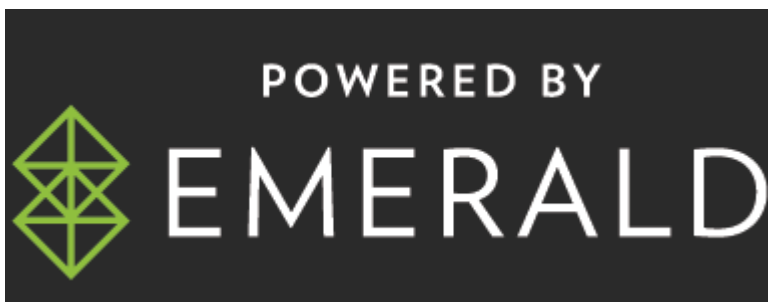
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