(intel®)

Look Inside.™

Enhancing the Retail Customer Experience with Tablets Based on Intel® Atom™ Processors

Nebraska Furniture Mart strives to improve customer service, increase conversion rates, and boost loyalty by using tablets based on Intel® Atom™ processors

In business since 1937, Nebraska Furniture Mart has remained successful over the decades not only by offering quality products at low prices, but also by staying focused on its customers. To help provide an uninterrupted, engaging in-store experience for customers, the IT group recently began providing sales associates with tablets based on Intel® Atom™ processors. Now salespeople can present product information, check inventory, complete transactions, and more without having to leave the customer. The Nebraska Furniture Mart team anticipates the new tablet program will help convert shoppers into buyers and keep those buyers coming back for more.

Challenges

- **Enhance customer service.** Offer an engaging customer experience by enabling sales associates to easily access product information and process purchases from the showroom floor without having to leave the customer's side.
- **Increase conversion rates.** Eliminate the issues that might cause customers to leave the store before finalizing purchases.
- **Boost customer loyalty.** Provide positive sales interactions that keep customers coming back.

Solution

- **HP ElitePad* tablets based on Intel Atom processors.** Across its stores, Nebraska Furniture Mart is providing each sales associate with an HP ElitePad tablet based on an Intel Atom processor. The tablets run a customized mobile app on the Windows* 8.1 Pro operating system.

Technology Results

- **Strong user experience.** Using tablets with Windows 8.1 provides sales associates with a familiar, touch-based experience and helps streamline device management.
- **Energy efficiency.** The tablets have the energy efficiency sales associates need to sustain battery life for the length of their shifts.

Business Value

- **Improved sales productivity.** Sales associates have the tools they need to be more productive throughout the day as they move around the store.
- **Better customer interactions.** Salespeople can better serve customers, from initial inquiries to processing sales, without leaving customers alone in the store or requiring them to stand in line for a cashier.
- **More sales, better loyalty.** By improving the customer experience and eliminating obstacles to finalizing sales, Nebraska Furniture Mart anticipates the new tablet program could help improve conversion rates and ultimately increase sales while also boosting customer loyalty.

"A successful customer experience is critical to completing sales and bringing people back into the store. With the new Intel® Atom™ processor-based tablets, we can provide a positive customer experience that we expect will help increase sales and boost customer loyalty."

– David Bash,
CIO and Director of IT,
Nebraska Furniture Mart

Striving for a Better Customer Experience

Nebraska Furniture Mart was founded in 1937 by Russian immigrant Rose Blumkin, who was dedicated to treating customers with respect and giving them a good deal. "Mrs. B. was successful because she understood how to take care of the customer," says David Bash, CIO and director of IT for Nebraska Furniture Mart. "That commitment to providing an outstanding customer experience remains at the core of our business today."

Offering that strong customer experience was not always easy in the company's large-scale stores. "Our retail showrooms are very large, because we carry a full line of furniture, electronics, appliances, and flooring," says Bash. "Sales associates often had to step away from customers to find computer terminals so they could look up product, pricing, or inventory information. Especially on busy days, it was sometimes difficult for sales associates and customers to find each other again. The customer experience suffered. We wanted to avoid that disconnect by putting information directly into the palms of our sales associates' hands.

"Several years ago, we ran a pilot, giving a few sales associates handheld devices for accessing information. Those first devices we deployed were able to scan product codes and provide pricing and inventory information," says Bash. "But they couldn't help sales associates answer all of their customers' questions, and they couldn't complete the sale—customers still needed to take a reservation ticket to the register. We decided to shelve the pilot until we could provide a more complete experience."

A few years later, the emergence of tablets offered a new opportunity to empower sales associates. "The screen size and touch capabilities of tablets made them an intriguing option," says Bash. "For tablets to work in our situation, we needed devices that could be held for long periods of time, scan barcodes, and process card transactions. They had to be energy efficient because salespeople can't recharge them in the middle of their shifts. In addition, they had to provide an easy-to-use interface and an operating environment that was simple to manage."

Enabling Retail Mobility with Tablets Based on Intel Atom Processors

"We evaluated a number of other device types and models," says Bash. "The HP ElitePad tablet offers not only the right form factor, but also a variety of retail-specific products we need, including a strap for holding the tablet, an additional battery, an integrated scanner, and a card reader."

The tablets are equipped with Intel Atom processors. "The Intel Atom processors give us sufficient performance to support even graphics-intensive functions, and they provide the energy efficiency to help extend battery life for the full length of sales associates' shifts," says Bash.

The IT group selected the Windows 8.1 Pro operating system for the new tablets. "Using Windows 8.1 Pro combines touch capabilities and a familiar user environment with a platform that is easy for IT to manage," Bash says. "Our IT administrators can push security and software updates to the tablets while they charge overnight."

Sales associates use a mobile app that the company developed to streamline access to information. "Our salespeople start by selecting the type of product customers are looking for," explains Bash. "They can then display pictures of additional options for customers and even show educational videos from the tablet. In addition, salespeople can scan barcodes from products on the floor and find detailed information and inventory. If necessary, they can jump to the manufacturer's website to answer other customer questions."

Over the course of a year, the company deployed approximately 1,700 tablets across its three stores. "We provide a tablet to each sales associate," says Bash. "Doing so gives our sales associates greater responsibility and control over their device."

Retail tablets running Windows* 8.1 on Intel® Atom™ processors deliver a strong user experience

Delivering Continuous Customer Engagement

With tablets in hand, the sales associates can find additional product information, show options, play informational videos, check inventory, and even set up delivery—all while standing with the customer. "Now the salesperson never needs to disengage from the customer," says Bash. "That has been the biggest win."

The Nebraska Furniture Mart team anticipates that providing continuous customer engagement will deliver important benefits for customers and the company. "A successful customer experience is critical to completing sales and bringing people back into the store," notes Bash. "With the new Intel Atom processor–based tablets, we can provide a positive customer experience that we expect will help increase sales and boost customer loyalty."

Improving Conversion Rates

The company is now training sales associates to take payments from credit cards and customer accounts using the tablet. "Our goal is to offer a complete, end-to-end customer experience on the sales floor," says Bash. "If we can get more transactions tendered by the sales associates without requiring customers to go to a cashier, it will be a big win for customers."

Providing tendering services should also help the company. "In the past, some customers failed to complete the transaction after receiving the reservation ticket from the salesperson," remembers Bash. "Some wanted to ask additional product questions but couldn't find the salesperson again. Others didn't want to stand in line for a cashier. And some mistakenly believed that they had already paid. By enabling sales associates to process credit card and customer account payments with the tablets, we won't lose those sales."

Increasing Productivity of Sales Associates

With a wealth of information at their fingertips, sales associates are more productive. "They have the productivity tools to better serve each customer—and possibly serve more customers over the course of a shift," Bash says. "Many of the sales associates would tell you they can't do their job without their tablet."

"The Intel® Atom™ processors give us sufficient performance to support even graphics-intensive functions, and they provide the energy efficiency to help extend battery life for the full length of sales associates' shifts."
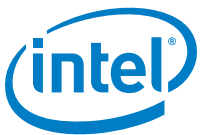
*– David Bash,
CIO and Director of IT,
Nebraska Furniture Mart*

Continuing a Tradition of Innovation

By deploying the new tablets, Nebraska Furniture Mart is continuing a long tradition of innovation. "From selling some of the first consumer electronics items in the 1940s to automatically adjusting pricing today based on the competition, the company has always been willing to try new approaches and technologies," says Bash. "The new Intel Atom processor-based tablets are the latest example of how we continue to implement new ideas for improving the customer experience."

Find the solution that's right for your organization. Learn more about tablets and 2 in 1 devices for business by exploring **IT Center**, Intel's resource for the IT industry. View success stories from your peers: **Business Success Stories for IT Managers**.