



CTC brings tobacco retailing into the 21st Century

When someone mentions the word “Tobacconist”, the typical image that comes to mind is of a small booth operated in a high traffic site, manned by a sole trader selling a limited number of products. The CTC Group turns that image on its head.

“Some years back, myself and my colleagues could see that tobacco retailing was about to undergo a revolution”, says George Hajjar, Principal Solutions Consultant for CTC Group. “This revolution could have devastated many businesses, but for us, it has given us new opportunities to grow.”

This revolution has been driven by dramatic legislative changes to tobacco retailing, coupled with an aggressive push by the big supermarket chains into this retailing space. All this has led to a large rationalization in the way a traditional tobacconist operates, and many businesses have not survived the process.

“There are quite a number of industry operators who are no longer around”, says George. “Quite a few were unable to

adapt, and others just took the opportunity to move on”.

So, what are the key factors that have allowed the CTC Group to not just survive, but to achieve significant growth in recent years? In discussions with George, it became clear that there are a number of reasons.

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George Hajjar
Principal Solutions Consultant
CTC Group

“We have worked very hard on our store presentation. Our stores are bright and modern, and we have an attractive range of non-tobacco products. This draws in new customers, and encourages repeat business.”

“Another key factor is the quality of our group members. All our members are serious about the business, and are prepared to go the extra mile in customer service and business planning. This gives us a consistent image

across the 140 stores, and further enhances the value of the CTC Group branding.”

“Finally, we have taken the time to implement a leading edge computer system across our store network. This is an upfront expense for our members, and is mandatory for group membership, but I think there is universal agreement that it is a very worthwhile investment.”

This system is based on a software package called Microsoft Retail Management System. This software is installed at every POS terminal in CTC, and is connected online to a central database managed by head office. From this database, a number of useful business functions can be initiated.

“Part of staying ahead in our market, is to have quick and accurate access to product promotions from our suppliers. Using our system, we can download the latest promotional pricing from the vendor, and instantly transmit that information to all our points of sale. We even have a “banner” on the sales screen, prompting the cashier to offer that promotion to the customer.”

“Another benefit of our system is the sales reporting. We have detailed access to sales data across our network of stores. We can monitor sales on an hourly basis, if necessary. This gives us an extraordinary ability to adapt quickly to market conditions, and to provide timely advice to our members.”

“We also use this data management system to report back sales data to our suppliers. This reporting enables us to access all the promotional incentives that our suppliers put in place. These incentives are a key component to maintaining our competitive edge, and are a major component in our group success. We even provide data to the main market research companies, and are able to benefit from their independent overview of our market space. All this reporting is provided under strict non-disclosure agreements, to ensure that the commercial rights of our members are protected.”

CTC also reports that they have been able to measure a clear increase in profitability in their member’s businesses, as a direct result of implementing the system. This increase has come about as a result of better margins from promotions, more accurate stock management, and timely access to business management data.

Crucial to the reliability of the system is the POS terminal, an Obvios touch

screen unit. “For our business planning to work properly, we need a reliable hardware platform at the counter. The Obvios system provides this, and the touch screen functionality makes it all very user friendly.”

When asked about future plans for CTC, George was quite excited. “We are primarily a NSW-based group, but we have a small presence in other states. These stores are trading well, and our plan is to expand the group into these markets. We believe we have the right ingredients for success, and are looking to double the size of our member base in the next two years, through managed growth outside of NSW.”

So, whenever shoppers see a CTC store, they can reap the benefits from many years of hard work by the CTC principals and franchisees, taking tobacco retailing into the new century.

Customer:
CTC Group

Hardware Featured:
Obvios Gladius POS System
Obvios C430 Cash Drawer
Epson TM-T88IV Receipt Printer
Epson DM-D Customer Display

Hardware Distributor:
DH Technology
39 Leighton Place
Hornsby NSW 2077
PH: 1300 34 8324
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For more information on DH Technology and our Point of Sale solutions, contact us:

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