



## WHICH COMES FIRST – THE CHICKEN OR THE EGG?

In any business situation, investment in new technology is a dilemma. On the one hand, the benefits of technology upgrading in the retail environment are well known. Cost reductions flow through quickly through better stock level management, more efficient ordering, better balance of stock, and tighter cash control. However, these benefits come at a price, and it is often a difficult call from the proprietor.

This “chicken and egg” dilemma was recently experienced by chicken products retailer Cordina Chickens located in the west of Sydney. Fortunately, the business owner, Daniel Cordina, was able to take the hard decision and make the investment. The benefits were very quickly evident.

Previously the business was run using a number of cash registers in stand-alone mode, not connected to any network. The sales reporting was limited to the daily report issued from each register. This gave turnover and cash receipting information, as well as some limited sales department data. However, with the growing complexities of their business, the owners decided that they needed to do a significant upgrade to their front-of-store operations.

After making their investigations, they decided to implement Microsoft’s Retail Management System (RMS) running on Obvios touch screen terminals. They put in a four-terminal system, with one of the terminals functioning as a data server.

The change in their business was dramatic. For the first time, they had full PLU implementation for every item they sell. This gave them a level of reporting, and hence knowledge of sales, that they never had before. They are now able to make buying decisions based on hard information, not just on soft impressions.

“I am really impressed with the quality of the reports that the system gives me”, said Daniel. “It has given me a new level of understanding of my business.”

In this type of business, most of the items they sell are GST-free. With the strict stock item controls that the system allows them to follow, they can ensure that they are only collecting GST on eligible items. The savings in this area alone have more than covered the cost of the system in the first year.



Now they are able to accurately track sales by cashier; even the workers are happy, because they are able to use the “suspend and retrieve” function. This means they can open a sale on one terminal, and continue and tender the sale on another.

This greatly relieves the pressure during the busy periods. The system also seamlessly manages different categories of sales, such as wholesale, pensioner discounts, and staff discounts. All categories of sales can be accurately recorded, and wholesale customers can pay their accounts at any time at any terminal.

“This is a big improvement for us”, said Daniel. “We have a diverse mix of wholesale and retail customers, and many of these buy at different discount levels. RMS has replaced our manual process with a system that accurately keeps track of all these variations. This saves my staff a great deal of time.”



The Obvios hardware platform is “retail-hardened” for the harsh environment of this store. Greasy fingers, boiling water during clean-up time, even chicken fat in the atmosphere, doesn’t slow down these machines. Their diecast aluminium casing and environmental protection features, coupled with the latest processor and memory configurations, makes these terminals the ideal solution for this type of retail outlet. If they can cope here, they can cope and thrive anywhere.

So – which DOES come first, the chicken or the egg? The team at Cordina Chickens may not be able to answer that question, but if you ask them about investing in technology to improve store operations, the answer is a resounding – Yes.

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