



## IR proves right hardware for DIY store

While providing good customer service often comes naturally for rational retailers, such businesses can sometimes be slower to take advantage of technology, which would help them manage their operation more efficiently. The good news is that traditional companies, with the foresight to invest in Epos and back office systems, can further enhance customer service and give their business a strong platform for the future.

Take Stephen Murtagh & Sons for example, the family business first established itself as a Dublin corn merchant in 1887, before launching as a DIY and agricultural hardware supplier in 1969. Summing up the company's appeal, new managing director, Colin Murtagh (the great, great, grandson of the original owner) reflected: "What is most important is our ability to keep our customers satisfied, and the in-depth knowledge of our trained and experienced staff. In fact, when combined, our directors and staff have over 100 years company service."

However by 2003, Murtaghs was still using time-consuming, paper-based business administration systems, which led to inaccurate data, delays in obtaining information and duplication of effort; as well as distracting attention from actually managing the business.

Following a thorough review of the business after taking over the reins, Colin Murtagh decided to sell the company's Dublin store and build a new state-of-the-art premises in the fast-growing town of Ashbourne, where the emphasis would be on selling hardware items. A key part of this strategy – which would inevitably lead to an increase in cash sale transactions at the PoS – would be a significant investment in retail technology.



After consultation with IT solution provider, Advent Processing Solutions Ltd., Murtaghs decided on Sage PayPoint software, running on Epson's touchscreen Intelligent Registers (IR's) with their built in thermal printer and Magnetic Strip Reader (MSR) from PC Cubed. Their chosen hardware fully integrated with the Sage Commercial Suite Financial and Business Management Software so that Murtaghs has full access to live information, enabling it to make informed business decisions.

The new system has already improved the level of stock control within the company. A code and description for each stock item is now held on the system so that staff can simply scan items quickly at the point of sale. The IR's intuitive touchscreen interface can be easily configured so that non-barcoded items such as gates of garden furniture are allocated a product button. If there is a range of different options for a particular product, the user can drill down through the menus to find the one they want. This means that sales can be processed efficiently and accurately – good for customer service and essential for effective stock management.

While Murtaghs had previously been obliged to create manual records for all sales transactions, the new Epos system has been set up to print invoices for credit customers, while those paying cash receive a till receipt. If an account customer is on hold or over credit

terms, this will be flagged at the till. Payments on account can also be processed through the till for greater efficiency.

Overall, the new system has enabled this most traditional of companies to reap real business benefits from technology, without abandoning its customer-oriented approach: "No matter what new area we go into, we pride ourselves on upholding the same traditional principles of best customer service. This was the motivation behind our computerisation project and has been a real success," concluded Colin Murtagh.