



store  
technology  
solutions



# Tools Your College Store Absolutely Needs to Use



Being the official store is not enough anymore: your store needs to be just as innovative, as diligent in reaching out to your students and as keen at studying the market as your competitors if you want to thrive.

Thankfully, there are plenty of tools available to retailers like you today that make all of that as easy as possible. Here are six, must-use tools to boost for your store's sales efficiency and customer outreach.



1

## Business Intelligence

Your store has a lot of data — Sales by hour or by date, product performance by class, what merchandise is moving and what's taking up shelf space — too much to track accurately and effectively with manual efforts like spreadsheets.

Yet a lot of stores are doing this because they don't realize there's a better option or they feel they can't afford it. With a good Business Intelligence (BI) solution, your store can automatically follow your important sales, merchandise and staffing data, parse it down to exactly the relevant bits of information you need in easy-to-read graphs and share it with the people who need to know, so you can make the best possible business decisions.

BI tools have been in use at major companies for decades, but with advancements in the technology behind them, they're more affordable and accessible than ever. With the right solution, you'll save time managing your data and reporting, you'll be better staffed for busier periods and you'll never have to worry about overstocking or understocking again.

2

## An omni-channel point-of-sale system

You're obviously already using a point-of-sale solution *in* your store, but if your POS ends at your store's walls, you're missing countless sales opportunities. Your POS needs to be omni-channel — fancy marketing talk for a solution that works in-store, out-of-store and online.

When students search for your store online, are they able to buy what they need from your website? If not, that's a missed opportunity. If they're able to click through to a web store while they view merchandise, they are more likely to buy. Some solutions even include a mobile app for your store, so students can keep your store a tap away at all times. This improves your sell-through rate and capture customers as they browse or price shop.

Imagine selling spirit gear and merchandise at major events or games on your campus — how well would it move? With an integrated mobile solution, that's not fantasy. A mobile POS is the perfect tool to help your store establish a presence and reach more students at games, orientation and other events. With mobile POS solutions that integrate with handheld devices there are options that add the ultimate level of convenience for both you and your students.

3

## Enterprise Resource Planning/Information System

Of course, BI and omni-channel are just two parts of a larger solution. Your store can make BI a reality while eliminating workarounds and laying a foundation for omni-channel retailing with Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP).

Through ERP, your store can integrate its data and related processes into a unified Information System (IS). Put simply, your store will be able to use modules such as order entry, sales, finances and inventory management tools which all work together seamlessly to make your job easier.



## 4

### Customer personalization

With loyalty and reward programs becoming more popular than ever with consumers at everything from grocery stores to burger chains, a loyalty program at your store can make all the difference between a one-off transaction and a repeat customer. It's a must-have.

Loyalty has come a long way from punch cards. With an *integrated loyalty module* in your store's system, you can reward customers for purchases and buyback participation, build rewards custom-tailored to your students' buying activity, choose whatever merchandise you want to offer for rewards redemption, offer your customers the convenience of 24/7 point redemption with online integration and even allow points to be converted into monetary value on a gift card.

The right integrated POS system can help track and personalize a shopper's experience based on customer types. And a good customer relationship management module can let you track that shopper's buying habits so you can strategically market the right products to the right customer. This is helpful for reaching alumni and members of the community in addition to students.

It's something your competitors don't offer, and with those kinds of rewards for repeat customers, your students are less likely to shop anywhere else in the first place.



## 5

### Social media

If you're not active on social media, you aren't reaching the largest number of students. Period.

Most stores these days are on Facebook and Twitter, but it can be hard for busy administrators and shift leaders to keep on top of the latest trends and schedule frequent posts.

Tools like Hootsuite, Buffer or TweetDeck make sharing, posting and managing messages easy and simple for busy users. Taking advantage of student staffers to manage your social presence can be a huge help, too.

While you need to understand your students and what they're using (Instagram might be more popular than Twitter on one campus, but not the other, for example) different platforms manage the other aspects of social media; They can help you schedule posts in advance, offer insights about timing and monitor interaction.

Furthermore, add social functionality to your web store. Letting students instantly share their wish lists, purchases or popular items with their friends is free advertising, and helps you expand your audience.



## 6

### Flexible adoption tools

If you're still managing adoptions by physical list or email, you're causing yourself unneeded grief in lost time and possibly even lost adoptions.

Streamline your booklist submissions with a tool designed for course material research and adoption. Faculty enter their adoptions online and they're automatically sent to the store, and with an integrated system, your store can easily and instantly order any adopted titles you don't have in stock.

It's an easy sell. It lets your faculty submit previously adopted texts or choose new ones to adopt using discovery tools that let them research and sample new titles. Plus, they're flexible for any school or system, allowing submissions on a faculty, course, section or administrative level.