



THE OMNI-CHANNEL EXPERIENCE

Panola College Store Improves Service in Store and Online with MBS Systems



Panola College, located in Carthage, Texas, derives its name from Panola County, Texas, of which Carthage is the county seat



ABOUT PANOLA COLLEGE STORE

- FTE: 2,322
- Located in Carthage, Texas
- Transitioned from paper records to omni-channel system
- Uses MBS iTouch POS to check out students during peak periods



MBS SYSTEMS

- Mobility Suite offers MBS iTouch POS as an efficient line-busting checkout method
- Ability to sell merchandise to customers who live far from the bookstore with MBS Systems inSite
- MBS Systems inSite allows for transparency with price comparison for textbooks

Consumer demands are evolving and, in today's fast-paced world, one of their most basic expectations is quick and efficient service. The only way your store can provide that, however, is with an equally efficient system. Panola College Store discovered the difference that technology truly makes after converting to the MBS system in the summer of 2012.

The store had previously been using paper records for everything from adoptions to student financial aid. In an effort to streamline their service, they decided it was time to invest in a system that handled those aspects seamlessly.

"We needed an online storefront, integrated student financial aid and online adoptions," explained **Jessica Pace, manager**. "We looked at three or four different systems and did quite a bit of research before making a decision."

In the end, it came down to functionality. They ultimately selected the MBS system because it offered everything they needed to provide superior service to their customers, while simplifying the work for their staff.

"MBS was also very quick to respond throughout the RFP process. I think that a provider's response time is a true reflection of how they'll be as a partner," Pace said. "Their support is great and our client representative always gets back to us right away. I don't think I've had a single issue that hasn't been solved since we implemented the system."

Since the transition, the store has also noticed a complete transformation in their ability to meet customer needs.

"There have been so many benefits, but the biggest is the fact that we've decreased wait times," she described. "Before, students would wait in a long line and, many times, get to the front only to realize they needed a student financial aid voucher from an office across campus. So, they'd leave and come back only to wait all over again. Now, our lines are significantly shorter, and all students have to do is hand us their ID. It's all integrated, so we just swipe it and complete the transaction."

If there's ever an influx of extra traffic, the store simply uses their MBS iTouch Mobile POS for additional support. Because it runs on an iPod Touch, staff can grab it at a moment's notice and get started right away.

"It's a perfect line buster during rush," Pace added. "Even on our busiest days, most students never wait longer than ten minutes."

Students don't always shop in-store, however, so Panola College Store is just as focused on providing an exemplary online experience to their customer base.

Using MBS Systems inSite, they're able to easily update their merchandise to ensure customers near and far can view an accurate representation of their inventory.

"We have two satellite locations and a lot of parents who live far away, so there are customers who can't always come into the store," she said. "They want to show their support for the college, and need a way to purchase merchandise long distance. In the past, I've spent



an entire afternoon taking photos of branded merchandise to send to those who wanted to see what we had. Now, all of that is available in a few clicks!"

In fact, in just one year, their e-commerce orders increased by 167 percent. "It's been great!" Pace said.

It isn't just merchandise that they sell, however. Textbooks are also available for purchase online, which has been an integral part of their success.

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~ Jessica Pace

"Students really appreciate the fact that they can log in to their inSite account and see what course materials they need at a glance. It's easy to understand and navigate, which is a big benefit," she described. "We also sell study aids and ancillary content on the site, which helps increase our sales and enhance students' learning experience in the long run."

The most popular inSite feature from a student perspective however, is price comparison. According to Pace, it's been vital to changing student perceptions of the store.



Want to reach your students online?

"It's a way for us to prove that we're not trying to pull the wool over their eyes when it comes to textbooks," she emphasized. "We're actively trying to give them the best price and value, and they love that we're so open about how our prices compare. It's been very well received and inSite makes the feature easy to offer."

By offering online and in-store service through a system that provides a single shopping experience, Pace believes that her store is able to stay competitive and current with the latest retail trends.

MBS has helped us offer an omni-channel experience," she described. "We're able to offer better serve our customers,

whether they're here on campus, at our satellite locations, or across the state.

To other stores who are exploring system options, Pace has one key suggestion:

"Look at what you need and what you want, because those aspects aren't always the same, and narrow your focus to the specific areas you want to improve," she said. "MBS has options available for pretty much every need, so choose the ones that are right for your store."