

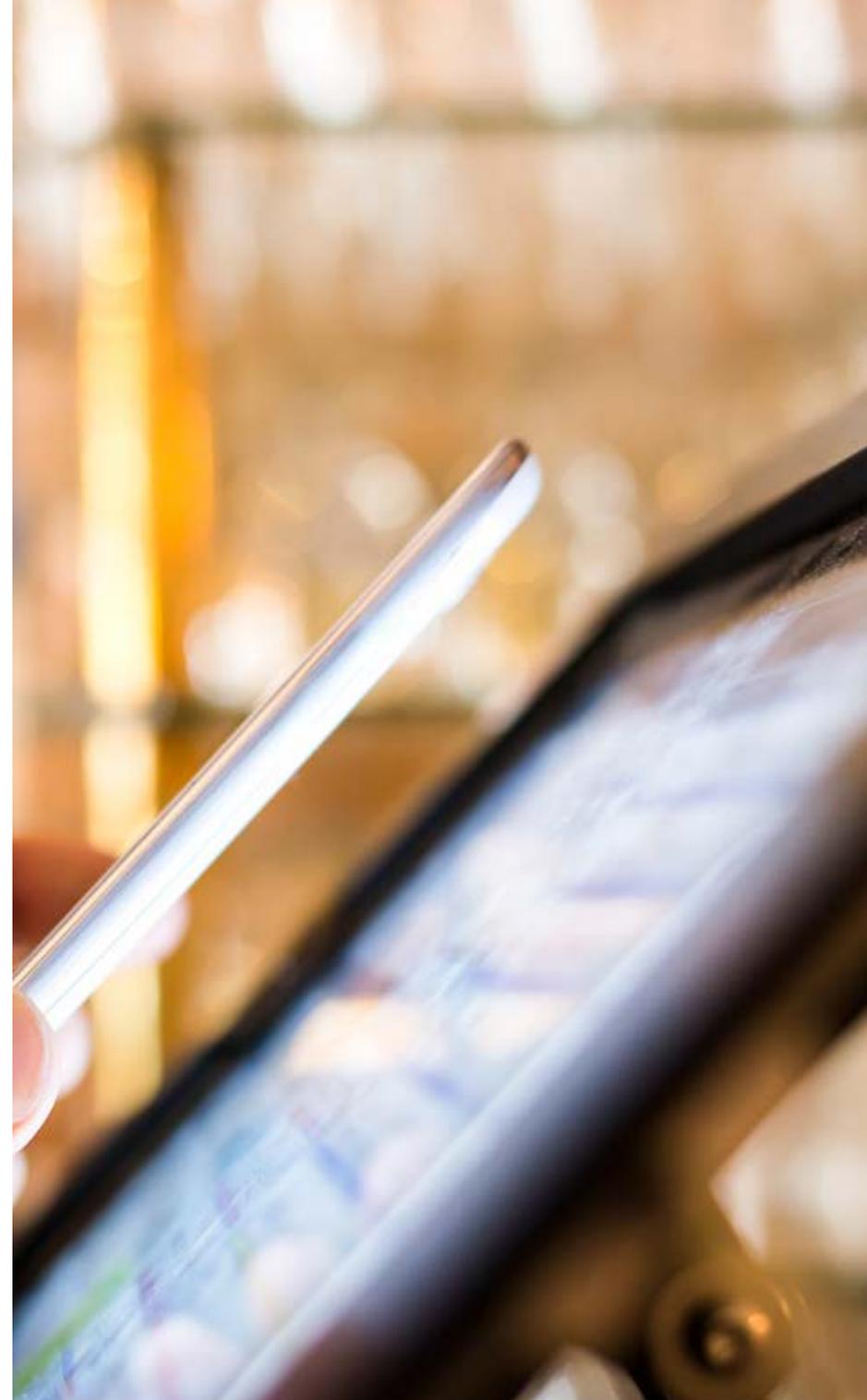
Customer Engagement in Retail

Six Opportunities to Outservice
Your Competition



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Why the Customer Experience Is Important

It may not happen today, but somewhere in your market, in the very near future, a retailer is going to give their customer an unforgettable, standout experience. Then they'll do it again, with another customer—and another.

These unforgettable experiences won't be by accident. In fact, that retailer (a.k.a. your competition) is going to be very strategic about it. Why? Because they want their customers to:

1. Come back (often)
2. Buy more at each visit
3. Tell others about the exceptional service they received

That smart retailer knows that there are just three ways to attract and keep customers—price, product, and, most importantly, the customer's experience. That's why they're not going to ignore the customer experience.

Forward-thinking retailers integrate personalization strategies as a component of their marketing and communication efforts. In doing so, these retailers have discovered that maintaining repeat, brand-loyal customers is linked with a tangible in-store experiences. In order to retain loyal customers, retailers must offer an experience unique to the store, and to the customer themselves.

Engaging your customers at every point of the customer journey, in their preferred manner, will create loyal customers who will continue to give their business to you and you'll be able to outservice the competition. Let's explore a few areas where you have an opportunity to provide an exceptional customer experience.





Opportunity #1—Know Your Customers

The more you know, the better positioned you are to give customers a great experience. Of course, you want to know all you can about your customers—what they've bought, how often they shop, even the route they take through your store or website. Armed with that knowledge, it's easier for you to create targeted offers to customers, and to help them find (and purchase) more items related to what they're already buying.

When you can gather the data you need you can plan, buy, and merchandise more effectively. Then, when customers enter your store or visits your website, they find what they need (and more)—in the quantities they need and at a price they're willing to pay.

Modern analytics and reporting tools can give you these insights. Some tools stay in the back room, helping you forecast demand or optimize margins. Others support everyday tasks, enhancing decision making throughout your business. In every case, with every use, they're helping you outservice your competition.

"Since we can use the Epicor® Compass™ application to filter purchases by product, quantity, and date, we can work with vendors to send vendor-specific coupons. We can launch targeted promotions for a specific brand or even product. That's a three-way 'win' for our customers, vendors, and us. With a few clicks, I can generate individual letters containing a nice note and a reward coupon for all customers that have attained a specified point level over a certain time. With so many customers enrolled in our program, we can track frequency and size of loyalty customer purchases and really understand their buying behavior. We know who redeems coupons and can assess how long it takes customers to reach our current reward thresholds."

Nick Kachadoorian, IT, Inventory and Purchasing Manager | Klem's



Real-world examples

Epicor® Eagle® Performance Manager—This solution offers Market Basket affinity reporting that lets you quickly and easily see what items are selling together, and what items a given customer or customer type are buying. Armed with this information, you'll know what to promote tomorrow and whom to upsell right now.

Epicor Compass™—With Compass, you can analyze who your most loyal customers are, see who's buying what, and uncover other patterns that can guide your merchandising, product mix, and other activities. You can also see who signed up for your loyalty program but hasn't been in the store for 100 days. The Compass analytics feature lets you run queries so you can reach out with special offers to lure them back.

The Epicor® Eagle® system—Need to know more about your customers—but not too much? Epicor Eagle Point of Sale solution can be set to prompt for just what's needed, when it's needed. The Eagle system constantly collects precise data and gives instant access to visual, real-time, and in-context analytics by letting you define and use your own unique customer information for better insight to your customers to serve them better.



“The Planner Series enables us to ensure we’re in stock with the products that customers want and at a price that they’re willing to pay, which generates enough margin to cover our operating expenses, make a profit, and invest in future enhancements.”

John Fix III, President | Cornell's Hardware True Value

Opportunity #2—Make Loyalty Truly Rewarding

It's well established that repeat customers are more profitable than new ones. That's why so many businesses have loyalty programs, formal or informal. Better customer service and a loyalty program work better together. When you outservice the competition on service, you're on the right track. Rewarding customers with a loyalty program will keep them coming back.

When you set up your loyalty program, remember to reward your customers with discount coupons or reward dollars to encourage them to return and make more purchases. Once you have things running, the most important thing you can do is use the information your rewards program gives you and analyze how you can continue to make the program better.

Don't forget gift cards, which can elevate your brand with your own design on the cards, can be reused/recycled, and used for returns in lieu of cash refunds. They can even be used as holiday gifts to those who don't normally shop in your store, providing an opportunity to increase store traffic and earn more customers.



"Before we had Epicor Eagle Loyalty Manager solution, we didn't do any loyalty tracking. Now, through utilizing the Epicor solution, we have approximately 20,000 customers participating in our loyalty program. One of the great things for customer service is that with the Epicor Eagle Loyalty Manager solution, if a customer comes in and doesn't remember exactly which product they purchased during their last visit, we are able to look up what they purchased and say, 'Here's what you got.' They can make sure they get the right product, which really helps boost our customer service ranking."

Michelle Gronck, General Manager and CFO | Olsen's Grain

Real-world solutions

Eagle Loyalty Manager—This loyalty program provides the same features and flexibility of rewards programs used by large retail chains. It's fully integrated with the Eagle system, so there are no monthly or transaction-based fees. It provides the query and analytics capabilities you need to identify purchase patterns you want to encourage, so you can set up your perfectly tiered program accordingly. You can also monitor loyalty customer behavior. You'll know if a customer stops coming around, so you can set up relevant offers to bring them back.

Dynamic Promotions—Sell more by offering your customers the same enticements used by big-box retailers. Build a list of items you want to promote together, designate the rules, schedule when it begins and ends, and watch your store traffic and revenues increase.

Eagle In-Store Gift Card—Gift cards are another valuable business strategy that allows you to gain and retain a higher level of customers who will purchase more—more often. Gift cards mean more purchases, more revenue, more customers, and limitless opportunities to market to your customers. On average, customers who use gift cards spend 20 percent more than the card value.



“With so many customers in our loyalty card program, we have a better understanding of their buying patterns and can implement highly targeted promotions.”

Joshua Logan, Operations Manager | Logan Trading Company

“Processing gift cards is much quicker, smoother, and less expensive than it was before. We now do a lot more with gift cards and dynamic promotions such as ‘buy these together and receive a \$20 gift card.’ The Gift Card Viewer allows us to track our promotions, which is something we couldn’t do in the past. Adding the Eagle gift card solution was a smart move as there are a lot of advertising possibilities that we intend to use.”

Ann Jury, System Administrator | McLendon Hardware





Opportunity #3—Take Your Business Online

The mobile-centric customer expects businesses to have an online presence to conduct research on product availability and make purchases. Providing a mobile-friendly website allows shoppers to view inventory before shopping in a brick and mortar store or providing the convenience of purchasing online. Consider the current shopper patterns:

- ▶ 90 percent of consumers use some form of online means to shop and sometimes to complete purchases.
- ▶ Nearly every consumer now looks up products or services online before heading to a brick and mortar store.
- ▶ Consumers have less and less patience—consumers want information immediately, and they want products or services quickly, too.
- ▶ Shoppers rely on smartphones and tablets to access websites, so it's important to utilize a mobile-responsive design and incorporate search engine optimization (SEO).

Create an engaging experience for your customers by continually evaluating and updating your website to deliver a great customer engagement experience and earn more business.

Real-world solutions

Epicor iNet™—Designed as a comprehensive suite of electronic commerce products, it enables you to serve your customers over the Internet. With iNet, your customers can manage their accounts, look up product pricing and availability, and place orders online from their own computers or smartphones.



“We launched the Epicor iNet application to extend our customer reach in the online world. Our current customers like the fact that they can get a real-time glimpse into product availability and our wholesale contractors are able to easily view their accounts and make purchases through the portal. We have also been able to extend our business to new customers by tying online sales to real-time inventory, which has helped improve customer service. We are excited to see this portion of our business grow over the next few years.”

Richard Christakes, Chief Executive Officer | Alsip Home & Nursery

“We designed our new website using Epicor iNet because we wanted to enable our customers to buy products online. This solution allows our customers to buy their landscaping supplies 24 hours a day, seven days a week online and have their order delivered the next day. Site monitoring tells us that people using the site are always looking for more information and how to calculate the needed materials, so we’re constantly optimizing it to meet our customer’s needs.”

Steven Sample, Administration Manager | BURNCO



Opportunity #4—Mobilize

The possibilities with mobile technology in retail are real. According to IDC's June 2018 Global IT and Communications Survey, nearly 60 percent of retail sales are influenced by mobile. So, it's worth incorporating mobile technology in your business. Mobile technology can create:

- ▶ **The self-starting customer**—Deploy tablet-based customer self-service solutions in the aisles, for those customers who want to engage this way.
- ▶ **The go-to associate**—Tablet-based apps can give associates in-the-aisles or offsite access to product, pricing, and inventory information so they can better assist customers wherever they may be. Associates can also guide customers toward complementary items that boost basket size.
- ▶ **The fast customer checkout experience**—Provide POS checkout in the aisles, sign them up for loyalty programs, look up product availability, and more to drive up sales. You can also provide line-buster product scanning to save time at the checkout counter.
- ▶ **The visible manager**—Managers on the floor, greeting and assisting customers, can significantly enhance the customer experience—if they have the right information, at the right moment using mobile apps.



“With Eagle Mobile™ POS we can pre-scan items such as plumbing elbows and fittings directly from the shelf and drop them into the customer’s basket. This simple process change reaps benefits for everyone. Now the plumbing customer, and everyone behind him, is no longer delayed by unloading his basket at the checkout counter to be counted again. And if a line suddenly forms at checkout, we can pre-scan customers’ baskets or carts, so only payment is handled at the counter, thus reducing wait times. Mobile POS is a simple and elegant tool that enhances our customer experience.”

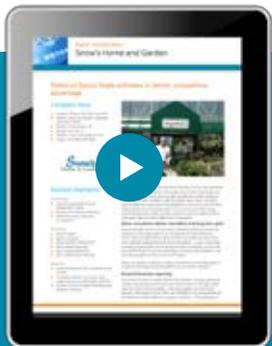
—John Beaudean, Sales and IT Manager | Southeast Missouri Builder’s Supply

Real-world examples

Eagle Mobile+—Service customers and manage product data inside or outside the four walls of your business. This means more associates can provide on-the-spot information to customers on specific items without a trip to the checkout counter or workstation. With the freedom Eagle Mobile+ brings to you and your employees, your business can focus on what's important—serving your customers and improving operational efficiencies.

Eagle Mobile™ POS—This solution is a full-featured, easy-to-use point of sale system using a Windows-based tablet. It does everything your employees need it to do while being fully mobile in your store. Employees can easily use this intuitive tool to service your customers wherever they may be in your store. Enhance your customers' experience by helping them find and purchase items in the aisles and you'll capture more sales and drive up loyalty.

Eagle Mobile Lookup—Employees who run the Eagle Mobile Lookup app on a smartphone or tablet can scan a bar code and instantly call up information to answer customer questions on an item in real time. That information includes quantities on-hand, products that are on order, pricing information, and more.



“Customers frequently call to check the price and availability of items, and iPads® with Mobile Lookup make it easy to see what we have on hand.”

Sharise Nunnally, IT Manager | Snow's Home & Garden



Opportunity #5—Faster Is Better at the POS

Checkout speed may not be the most important aspect of shopping at your business to most consumers, but it's close. No matter how long a customer may enjoy browsing the aisles or your website, when it's time to go, it's time to go. Even if you provide a stellar customer experience at every other point in the customer's journey, a lengthy delay at checkout will be the last thing they remember happening.

Fortunately, speeding up checkout is one of the things you can accomplish easily. Here's how:

- ▶ Make sure your associates at the counter have easy-to-use tools at the POS that include quick and easy access to customer and product information that will help shoppers when they need it.
- ▶ Let customers ditch their credit cards and make their purchases with tap-to-pay services. It's faster and more secure, too.
- ▶ Lines still too long at times? Employ line-busting techniques with mobile apps that can capture a customer order and have everything set for payment.
- ▶ Get proactive and take checkout to your customers—in the aisles or next to a busy promotional location. Mobile checkout devices and apps are the key here.

“To be truly successful, we need to give our contractor customers the tools to make their businesses thrive. Eagle helps us give our customers those tools. I would absolutely recommend the Eagle system.”

Bill Corbett, Owner | Parry Sound RONA

[Read Parry Sound RONA Success Story](#)

Real-world solutions

Eagle Mobile POS—From tablets and mobile devices, this solution allows you to serve customers in the aisles, at outdoor locations, almost anywhere—and you’ll have an extra line-busting tool when things get crowded. With more satisfied customers and fewer abandoned baskets, you’ll enjoy greater revenues and loyalty.

Epicor Payment Exchange—Making payment card transactions faster and more convenient for customers, Epicor Payment Exchange handles all the key steps in accepting card payments and allows you to better serve your customers, attract new ones, and streamline processes in your back office.

Epicor Eagle POS—Screens are designed to simplify the experience for associates at checkout. Customizable “favorites” can be added for instant access to frequently needed information. The Eagle system helps you collect the right customer information to provide better customer service.



“We have saved over \$17,000 in the first seven months of using Epicor Payment Exchange. The processing rate is very competitive and we are completing our credit card transactions much faster now, which allows us to better serve our customers.”

Stephanie Harms, Accounting Manager | Alsip Home & Nursery

“Operating with the Eagle N Series® solution gives our employees readily available information—specifically inventory levels and pricing—which adds to that customer experience and is a great benefit to the store.”

Chris Jacobson, Assistant Sporting Goods Manager | Smith and Edwards



Opportunity #6—Sell From All Your Inventory

No matter how carefully you predict demand and manage replenishment, it's going to happen—a customer will come into your store to make a purchase and you'll be out of stock. That's not going to win you any customer loyalty.

Before your customer starts searching on their smartphone for another source, find the item for your customer at one of your other store locations. You can offer to have the item transferred to your store, or the customer might want to pick the item up at your other location. You might even offer to deliver or ship the item directly to your customer.

Real-world solution

Multistore Inventory Management—Automatically maintain optimum inventory levels at all your stores to meet customer needs. At the same time, eliminate excessive stock levels and costly stockouts.

Epicor Mobile Manager—Access critical customer, item, sales, and inventory information right where you are, accessible any time through your smartphone or tablet. Provide real-time instant answers to customer inquiries, thus creating a better customer engagement experience.



Keep Your Eyes on the Prize

Your whole business is a moving target, constantly evolving to address customer engagement and loyalty. Customer expectations will do anything but stand still, and—with the advent of technology and the Internet—those expectations will continue to evolve. To outservice the competition, keep your eyes open and watch for opportunities to make memorable customer experiences each and every time they interact with your business. You might see something your competitors miss.

Epicor can help. At Epicor, we don't just sell software. We partner with our customers because we want them to succeed. We've designed the Epicor Eagle solutions to be the optimal technology for retail's constantly changing landscape.

There's no overestimating the value of loyal, repeat customers. Loyal customers are engaged throughout the customer journey. With the Epicor Eagle system tools, you'll be able to manage communications and track key metrics that tie into your engagement strategy. With the right strategy, you'll enjoy increased store traffic, higher sales, and greater profits—and outservice the competition.

"The Mobile Manager application is awesome at helping us serve customers while we are walking around the store. We can find stock quantities and quickly look up inventory at another store and arrange a transfer for that customer. Instead of losing a sale, we make it happen. It's a layer of convenience and performance for our customers."

AJ Petitti, President | Petitti Garden Centers

"We thrive by using the Eagle multi-store functionality. Our buyers constantly evaluate inventory shortages and move inventory between locations instead of buying more. It saves time, money, and eliminates customer frustrations."

Mark Anderson, Comptroller | McDonald Garden Center

Watch this short video on how lawn and garden retailers improve customer engagement, revenues, and profits.





About Epicor

Epicor Software Corporation drives business growth. We provide flexible, industry-specific software designed to fit the precise needs of our manufacturing, distribution, retail, and service industry customers. More than 45 years of experience with our customers' unique business processes and operational requirements are built into every solution—in the cloud or on premises. With this deep understanding of your industry, Epicor solutions dramatically improve performance and profitability while easing complexity so you can focus on growth. For more information, [connect with Epicor](#) or visit www.epicor.com.

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Contact us today



eagle@epicor.com



www.epicor.com

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