

EuroCIS from 31. May to 02. June 2022 in Düsseldorf

Store Management: Smarter with Smartphone!

More and more retail companies are equipping their store personnel with mobile devices. The trend towards smartphones or smart mobile devices that function almost like smartphones will also be impressively reflected at EuroCIS, The Leading Trade Fair for Retail Technology, from 31 May to 02 June 2022 in Düsseldorf. Equipped with professional apps from the cloud, the new mobile multifunction devices ensure efficient processes, better customer service and, last but not least, satisfied employees.

Mobile data acquisition (MDE) has established itself in retail: 85 percent of all companies use mobile devices for numerous processes related to sales, logistics and organisation, according to the results of a study by the EHI Retail Institute. Smartphones in particular are currently on the advance: "Tablets and smartphones are now used by the majority of companies in addition to the classic MDE device," says Ulrich Spaan, Senior Vice President of the EHI. According to the survey, more than every tenth company does without classic MDE devices altogether.

Christian Brand, Head of Marketing at Bütema AG can confirm this development: "The trend is clearly towards smartphones," he says. Bütema offers mobile ERP solutions for the fashion and lifestyle trade as well as for wholesalers. In terms of hardware, customers have a free choice between conventional smartphones or professional MDE devices, for example from Datalogic, Denso, Honeywell or Zebra. "In principle, our software supports all common formats, including tablets," explains Brand.

An important advantage of a mobile ERP solution is that sales staff can remain present for the customer, for example, by carrying out stock enquiries or reorders via smartphone. Conventional smartphones often offer advantages over classic MDE devices, especially in the field, because they weigh less and are often easier to stow in the pocket, says Christian Brand. But also "rugged" devices for use in rough working environments



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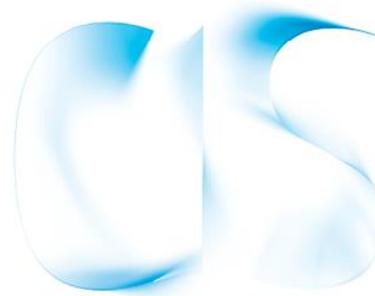
such as warehouses or logistics are today often equipped with current mobile operating systems and can be used almost like smartphones.

Equipped with a mobile operating system, large colour displays, data connections and a camera, the new smart generation of mobile devices can be used in a wider range of applications. Bütema, for example, recently expanded its mobile ERP solution "Instore Assistant" to include a telephone, chat and video function, similar to what employees are used to from private messenger apps on their smartphones. Pending work orders, such as relocating items, preparing click & reserve orders or clearing away cancelled items, no longer have to be called up in the task overview. Instead, employees can now optionally coordinate open and completed tasks even faster and more conveniently via Messenger.

"We see a clear trend towards networked employees," confirms Christoph Saalman from the software manufacturer Reflexis. The provider of real-time solutions for operations and personnel management has been part of Zebra Technologies, one of the leading manufacturers of MDE hardware, since 2020. In contrast to emails or intranets, mobile apps enable efficient, transparent two-way communication. Employees can quickly and specifically inform themselves about upcoming tasks, managers can immediately see who has already done what and can learn from this and readjust: "The potential for improvement becomes immediately visible at all levels," says Saalman.

The exchange via smartphone also meets the needs of the young, digital-savvy generation, says Saalman. With mobile apps that make everyday work easier, employers can score points with younger employees in particular. Apps for staff scheduling, for example, allow branch staff to take over or fill shifts independently, view duty rosters and time accounts in real time or submit holiday applications digitally. Many employees find the quick overview of duty times and important changes via push notifications to be an added value. Training can also be provided quickly and in line with requirements via the workforce app. Store or branch managers also save valuable planning time.

Last but not least, mobile apps offer the opportunity to integrate digital technologies such as machine learning, AI, voice control or augmented



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reality (AR) and to use them for more efficient processes and better service. Self-learning algorithms, for example, support planners with increasingly accurate demand forecasts and optimise shift planning by automatically taking into account processing times, permissible time windows and the respective skills required for all upcoming tasks. Augmented reality solutions support employees by providing additional visual information when they scan shelves or products and make many tasks easier. Companies such as dm-drogerie markt or Coop DK, for example, already use smartphone scanning applications from the Swiss specialist Scandit.

The upcoming EuroCIS offers an opportunity to find out about the latest hardware and software trends especially for the retail sector. It will take place live in Halls 9 and 10 from 31 May to 02 June 2022. In addition, numerous digital services will complement EuroCIS 2022. For more information, go to <https://www.eurocis-tradefair.com/>.

News, stories, interviews and reports from the sector and especially on the subject of retail technology can be found in the online magazine of EuroCIS and EuroShop: <https://mag.euroshop.de/en/>

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