

Retail Innovation Shout Out: Reducing the Wait at the Grocery Check-outs

by Hala Hassoun

One of the most frustrating things about grocery shopping is the wait at the checkout lines. Grocery stores are beginning to tackle this problem by leveraging technology to speed up their customers' time at checkout. [Meijer recently piloted a new checkout system](#) (built by NCR) at one of its Michigan stores, which hopes to save customers' time at checkout by automatically scanning merchandise on the conveyor belt. Once shoppers place their purchases on the belt, the scanner's 17 cameras search for the barcode and scan it automatically. The products are then sent to one of three bagging areas, where the customer bags his/her merchandise. By eliminating the need to scan each item's barcode, and allowing multiple shoppers to bag their groceries at the same checkout location, checkout time should be reduced for most shoppers. The program is still in its infancy, but Meijer believes this new checkout system could significantly improve customer experience.

[Another grocer piloting new technology to reduce checkout time is Kroger.](#) By leveraging QueVision technology to track customer shopping patterns in-store, predictive analytics, and real-time POS data feeds, Kroger can determine the current wait at the checkout line and predict the wait time in 15 or 30 minutes. This allows store managers to open additional registers in anticipation of a sudden rush at the checkout line. Since installing QueVision in more than 2,300 Kroger stores, the company has cut average wait time from 4 minutes to just 30 seconds.

In an industry with razor-thin margins, customer loyalty is essential to remain competitive. By reducing waiting times at checkouts, companies can improve the shopping experience for their customers and drive increased loyalty.

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