

VPlus Supermarkets: Building with Epson business technologies

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CASE STUDY



"The partnership with BudPOS and the equipment, such as the Epson receipt printers and projectors we're implementing are providing us with the performance and flexibility we need to continue growing at a rate that our competitors can only dream of."

Richard Yong - VPlus Supermarkets, Managing Director

Founded by entrepreneur Richard Yong, the VPlus Supermarkets chain is widely regarded as Australia's finest and most comprehensive Chinese grocery retail chain. The chain's continuing success is evidenced by a massive expansion through 2005 and 2006, during which time it grew from its single store origins to encompass 20 service lanes across four stores; and with each lane averaging \$2.5 million per year, VPlus is set to be a major force in the Australian grocery retail market.

Challenge

- ◆ Improve checkout lane efficiency by reducing receipt printing time
- ◆ Incorporate Chinese character sets with printed receipts
- ◆ Attract a greater number of passing trade customers

Solution

- ◆ 20+ Epson TM-T88IV receipt printers
- ◆ Epson EMP-8300 Installation Multimedia Projector

Benefits

- ◆ Average lane turnover in excess of \$2.5 million per year
- ◆ Zero latency in uploading Chinese character sets to printers
- ◆ Improved customer experience resulting from more efficient lane operations
- ◆ Ability to incorporate dynamically generated docket-based advertising
- ◆ On-screen advertising to attract passing trade

Challenge: A "second-to-none" POS solution

With strong growth throughout 2005 and 2006 setting the stage for even greater success in the future, Yong recognised the need for a retail point-of-sale (POS) solution that was, in his own words, "second-to-none". Importantly, it needed to be a solution incorporating receipt printers with full and native support for Chinese characters, incorporate receipt-based advertising and deliver absolute reliability at every level.

Solution: Epson advanced technology receipt printers

By nature, Yong is a person who demands nothing less than optimum performance from his business, staff and equipment. It therefore came as no surprise to Steven Armstrong, the managing director of Epson Business Systems partner BudPOS, that Yong was meticulous in his evaluation of the BudPOS-proposed POS solution.

"Richard is a person who pays close attention to every detail," Armstrong says, "and he quickly saw that the Epson TM-T88 series receipt printers we put forward were perfect for the high volume transaction environment that typifies all of the VPlus stores. They have the reliability, ease of use and flexibility that meet every single one of Richard's requirements - now and well into the future."

Managing the high volume transaction environment

One of the most critical factors in the success of the VPlus POS solution is its ability to operate faultlessly in a high volume transaction point environment. Armstrong explains: "Almost as soon as the supermarkets open in the morning, there are virtually no idle lanes at all right through until closing time. With that high volume level of transactions, a slow or troublesome receipt printer represents real problems, which is precisely one of the reasons the Epson TM-T88IVs are now operating right across the VPlus business."

EPSON AUSTRALIA
Tel: 1300 304 POS (767)

VISIT OUR WEBSITE:
www.epson.com.au

HEAD OFFICE
SYDNEY
3 Talavera Road
North Ryde NSW 2113
Tel: (02) 8899 3666

ABN 91 002 625 783

"These are printers that you can install then almost ignore, simply because you know they're going to continue operating regardless of the demand that's placed on them."

According to Yong, a distinct benefit arising from the use of the TM-T88IV printers is an improvement in the customer experience. "Customers see that our lane operations are quick and efficient," he says.

"Aside from the quality and range of our products, that's one of the key factors in ensuring they have a positive experience when they shop at VPlus; and a positive customer experience is something that every retailer should be aiming for."

Much more than a standard receipt

Aside from the reliability and print speed of the TM-T88IVs, Armstrong's decision to advocate the printers was based also on their ability to print Chinese character sets - an important feature in light of the large number of VPlus customers whose first language is Chinese.

"While various other vendors offer some form of Chinese language support for their receipt printers, in most cases they rely on graphic images for each character rather than character sets," Armstrong says.

"With the TM-T88IV having full Chinese character support, the speed advantage is really quite dramatic. And in a busy retail environment, that speed advantage plays a key role in improved customer service and greater turnover."

Adding even further to the benefits being gained by VPlus with the TM-T88IV printers is the ability to incorporate additional graphic and text elements to

receipts without impacting on receipt print speed performance.

"With over 400 gazetted days, such as Mothers' Day, Good Friday and, of course, Chinese New Year, the ability to incorporate advertising on receipts is increasingly important," Armstrong explains.

"What we're able to do with the TM-T88IVs is generate receipt-based advertisements with text and graphics and still achieve the 200mm per second print times that keep the lanes moving."

Projecting a strong retail image

Paying testament to Yong's standing as a "sharp operator", his retail business system strategy features one of today's most effective marketing tools - a high performance Epson EMP-8300 multimedia projector.

In commenting on his client's use of the projector, Armstrong says: "The whole idea will be to attract as much passing trade as possible. If we were to use a plasma screen - even a 60-inch plasma screen - it would pale into insignificance in contrast to a five metre projection that we'll be able to achieve with the EMP-8300."

For Yong, success in the retail environment takes more than a good range of quality products. It's also a matter of having the best possible infrastructure to support the business at every level.

"The partnership with BudPOS and the equipment we're implementing, such as the Epson receipt printers and projectors, are providing us with the performance and flexibility we need to continue growing at a rate that our competitors can only dream of," Yong says.