

Retail Operations Strategies to Win Repeat Customers

How Grocers Exceed the Top 3 Customer Expectations
with Real-Time Store Operations Solutions

What Customers Expect from Grocery Stores

“With real-time store operations solutions, grocery stores consistently deliver the top three customer demands—convenience, health, and experience.”

Grocery stores occupy a unique position in the retail market. Regardless of age, location, income, or any other demographic category, everyone needs to eat. With the average consumer in 2018 shopping for groceries 1.6 times per week¹, the challenge for grocers isn't generating demand for their products. It's **ensuring that shoppers choose their store week after week.**

Reliably meeting customer expectations is key to building repeat business; 54% of shoppers report that they are more likely to shop at a grocer that offers a consistent experience².

So what do customers expect? Grocery shoppers want options that work with their nutritional needs, dietary restrictions, the preferences of picky children, the time they have to prepare meals, and their cooking skills, to name a few. With the right operational strategy, grocers can help **streamline the shopping experience** for shoppers juggling all these factors.

Customers' goals when shopping for groceries largely fall into three categories—frictionless shopping, healthy purchases, and an overall pleasant experience. Stores that meet and exceed these three key expectations will keep customers coming back and adding to their carts. With **real-time store operations solutions**, grocery stores consistently deliver the **top three customer demands—convenience, health, and experience.**

1. Ease & Convenience

Like any shopper, **grocery customers want to easily find what they're looking for.** However, shoppers also want grocers to anticipate their needs and take the guess work out of meal planning. In order to create a frictionless experience, grocers are adapting omnichannel approaches, offering more prepared and made-to-order foods, and introducing meal kits in stores. These strategies help customers streamline their shopping and find healthy, easy alternatives to eating out or ordering in.

Create Ease for Customers without Complicating In-Store Work

Online orders for both pick-up and delivery have been on the rise, especially among millennials³. Grocers are experimenting with other models like in-store eateries in order to add value for customers. Despite the potential rewards, these models introduce more work in stores and add to training, staffing, and execution challenges.

To address these challenges, managers need to ensure there are enough associates scheduled to **execute tasks efficiently** and **provide excellent customer service**. A **data-driven workforce management solution** takes the guess work out of labor scheduling. The solution **automatically generates schedules** that account for historic and real-time trends, associate expertise and availability, current store workload, and labor budget. Managers only need to tweak schedules for last minute changes.

Optimizing scheduling gives managers **more time to spend coaching associates**. Schedules are received earlier and without errors. This boosts morale, increasing productivity and decreasing turnover⁴. Managers can staff to meet customer needs, stay under budget, and have better trained, more engaged associates driving sales.

Omnichannel by the Numbers



13%

of consumers are ordering more groceries for delivery²



12%

of consumers are ordering more groceries for pick-up²



64%

of consumers want same-day delivery for grocery orders⁵

2. Health & Wellness

Health & Wellness in Grocery



82%

of consumers said that health & wellness were most important when choosing where to shop for groceries



50%

of consumers cited health & wellness as primary factors to choose fresh food⁶

According to research from IRI Worldwide and FMI, 82% of consumers reported that health & wellness were the most important factors they considered when grocery shopping. 50% cited health & wellness as primary reasons to choose fresh food, and fresh foods accounted for 30.5% of food and beverage sales in 2017⁶.

The customer focus on health underscores a **fundamental requirement for grocers—food safety**. While customers may not actively consider food safety when thinking about health & wellness, botched recalls or contamination concerns will rattle their confidence in a store's ability to provide healthy food.

Know What's Happening In-Store

Without visibility into what's happening in stores, grocers struggle to guarantee food safety. Conducting store audits may identify issues, but without continued visibility, they may not know if or when the issue is resolved. A **unified, mobile platform for store auditing and task management** provides field managers with this visibility, making it **easier to identify and address issues in real time**. Store, field, and district managers can monitor the outcome of audits and confirm that issues have been corrected.

Real-time task management also enables stores to **execute recalls in a matter of hours**. When a recall is entered in the system, every store manager is notified immediately, with subsequent steps broken down into clear, prioritized tasks. Associates confirm task completion in the same platform, creating immediate visibility into compliance at every level. A unified task management solution allows grocers to **react in real time and track compliance**—meaning customers can shop with confidence.

3. A Consistent, Engaging Experience

It's hard to overstate the **impact of customer experience on grocery sales**. Grocery customers want to be able to see, touch, smell, and even taste before they buy, especially when purchasing fresh foods. Shoppers often have a strong loyalty to and affection for their preferred store⁷. Grocers that deliver a consistent, engaging customer experience create customers for life.

Simplify Work to Support a Unique Customer Experience

Delivering on customer experience means **optimizing every point of contact with the customer**. It's essential both to nail the basics, like keeping the store clean and well-stocked, and to ensure promotions, product displays, and demonstrations work together for a seamless experience.

Grocers can address all of these points of contact—driving sales and improving the customer experience—by using a **centralized task management solution**. Store associates can see all of their work prioritized with supporting documentation, so they execute tasks more efficiently. Associates ultimately have **more time to engage customers and curate an excellent customer experience**.

The deli section offers a great example of how this works in practice, as the top drivers of deli sales are product demos and engaged associates⁸. When a demo is planned corporate creates tasks for each step of the demo and any related promotions with all the information associates need. The associates at each store execute consistently and they have the resources to promote the product knowledgably.

“Grocers that deliver a consistent, engaging customer experience create customers for life.”

Winning Customers with Retail Solutions

“A single platform of real-time store operations solutions enables grocery stores to unleash the power of store associates.”

By scheduling the right people who are focused on executing essential work, grocers can meet and exceed customer demands for convenient shopping, healthy options, and an engaging customer experience. With a comprehensive workforce and task management solution, managers **spend less time scheduling and assigning work**. Instead they devote time to training associates to address emerging challenges and ensuring that nothing falls through the cracks.

In turn, store associates are **empowered to work more effectively** and focus on curating a positive customer experience. By streamlining workflow, grocers remove barriers to associates doing their best work; communication, visibility, and employee morale are all improved.

A single platform of real-time store operations solutions **enables grocery stores to unleash the power of store associates**. Knowledgeable, engaged, enthusiastic store associates translate to knowledgeable, engaged, enthusiastic customers.

About Reflexis Systems, Inc.

The Reflexis cloud-based Real-Time Store Operations Platform helps retailers simplify store operations, provide improved line of sight for field managers, and streamline corporate processes. Reflexis store execution, labor operations, mobility, and analytics solutions enable retailers to unleash the power of store associates, giving them more opportunities for customer engagement, providing customers with a more consistent brand experience.

Since 2001, Reflexis has helped more than 250 of the world's best retailers improve store-level execution and drive quantifiable business value and significant ROI.

Reflexis Systems, Inc. is privately held and headquartered in Dedham, Massachusetts and has offices in Atlanta, London, Düsseldorf, and Pune (India), with additional sales presence across Europe and Latin America.

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Sources

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