



■ *U-Scan Best Practices*



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BEST PRACTICES FOR IMPLEMENTING U-SCAN

This document describes store operational “Best Practices” that should be implemented when installing a U-Scan system. These Best Practices are recommendations and should always be considered and reviewed during the installation process. The items listed are not in any specific order of importance, nor are they listed sequentially in the order in which they should be performed.

Lane Lights

Any U-Scan installation should include lane lights for all of the U-Scan shopper stations — and, of course, all these lights should *always* be turned on. First, this identifies the U-Scan lanes system as always-open for shoppers, second it increase shopper awareness and usage and third it underlines the shopper service improvements when shoppers will always see several more new lane-open lights on, day or night.

Bag Stuffers

The grocer should make heavy use of the bag stuffer brochures provided by StoreNext that advertise the upcoming installation. These flyers should be placed at each register in the weeks leading up to the installation of U-Scan. This will make the shopper aware that U-Scan is going to be installed and the advantages to the shopper. Many shoppers will expect it, look for it, and ask about it.

After-installation versions of these flyers can also be used to alert shoppers that the store has installed new equipment for their convenience and how it can make their shopping easier — and even reduces wait-time for cashiers.

Training, Training, Training

The more time that is spent training cashiers on the proper usage of U-Scan, the faster the store will see a return on their investment. It is important that all U-Scan cashiers understand the basic philosophy that the store needs to have as many shoppers as possible use U-Scan. This starts on the first day. Each cashier needs to be proactive in bringing shoppers into the U-Scan area, and showing them how easy it is to use. Part of the training should therefore include “lines” for the cashier to use to solicit shoppers to try self-checkout.

Greeters

Grocers will get a high payoff by assigning “greeters” during the first two or three weeks of operation. First, this draws shoppers to the U-Scan system, maximizing the return and getting self-checkout off to a strong start.

But it also has the effect of underlining the critical improvements in shopper service, since (1) the greeter can help with other shopper questions and problems and (2) the very existence of a greeter will elevate the service image of the store with the shoppers.

Keeping a Consistent Position with the Shoppers

It is far too easy for shoppers to misunderstand the purpose of self-checkout in the store. It's therefore very important that the shoppers know that self-checkout is there to improve service — not to fire their favorite checkers. With the difficulty of getting good store staff, stores seldom if ever lay off staff with the advent of self-checkout.

This makes it critical that *all* store employees — not just the front end — know a few simple answers to shoppers who question why the store has installed U-Scan. Typical shopper comments, like “Why did you install that system? I hate it costing jobs in the store...” need to be consistently answered with “No, not at all! We put in this system to give you options for faster and better service for every shopper. No one will be losing their jobs because of U-Scan. In fact, lots of us like our jobs a lot more now that we get to help out the shoppers instead of just running cash registers.”

Store Signage

It's very important that the grocer prints and installs the large signs provided by StoreNext. These signs are designed to be hung from the ceiling for maximum readability. The signs point to the U-Scan system and should be placed in a location that shoppers can see when walking towards the front end of the store.

We Never Close

The U-Scan system should always be open if the store is open — there is simply no reason to close the stations.

If the store is open 24-hours, then between the hours of about 1:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m. stores should consider it being be the *only* lane open, with a single trained attendant performing various front-end tasks such as tending magazine racks and other point-of-sale merchandising, cleaning checkstands, loading bags and so forth.

This also ensures quick service when the inevitable small “rushes” come through and there are several simultaneous shoppers needing checkout. Waiting in line on a Saturday afternoon is problem enough — but when a shopper has to wait in line at 2:15 a.m. and there is a single cashier, the store takes a major service and credibility hit.

Cashier Selection and Specialization

Not every cashier should be trained to operate U-Scan. There are some cashiers — just like there are some shoppers — that are not apt at the combination of operating the system and helping shoppers with their process, or managing multiple shopper stations simultaneously.

Experience has told grocers to train the very best cashiers in the store on U-Scan: “open” and friendly personalities, patience with customers and “up” attitudes make a major difference in customer comfort with self-checkout. It is also recommended that the store management treat the operation of U-Scan as a type of reward for being an above-average checker and shopper ambassador. Such cashiers will consistently draw and keep shoppers to the U-Scan stations and maximize the grocer’s return on the self-checkout investment.

Cashier Rotation

During the opening week, the store should rotate cashiers through the U-Scan system on 2-3 hour shifts. This is the time when there will be external support available from either the dealer, StoreNext or Fujitsu. The cashiers will then be more comfortable with the system when the support personnel are removed.

No Hiding in the Station!

Effective self-checkout cashiers don’t stand behind the attendant station. Cashiers should be trained to position themselves out in the middle of the U-Scan configuration, making themselves obviously available to help shoppers with their purchases. Experience has proved that the closer the cashiers are to the shoppers, interventions and hiccups are reduced. Weight overrides will be also reduced as mentioned above.

No Stools

Don’t ever let a stool appear at the cashier attendant station. These invariably reduce productivity since it invites cashiers to “live” at the station instead of being out in the U-Scan area closer to the shoppers.

Manager On-Board!

Store management must be completely “on-board” with the concept of self-checkout. If the store manager and head cashier do not support the usage of the system, it will be almost impossible to succeed.

It is natural for store managers to be skeptical — changes of this importance can be threatening. Benefits to these managers, however, are great, and the same reasons the owners are installing U-Scan are going to help the store managers. The hassle and stress of store staffing and keeping happy shoppers are made tremendously easier because of U-Scan, and dealers should spend some “campaign” time to make sure the store management understand the problems that U-Scan will solve for them.

Management incentives can also be very effective...

Management Incentives

If there are multiple stores in the group, chains have found it effective to offer incentives to store managers for the store with the highest percentage of usage of U-Scan. Naturally, the higher the percentage of usage, the faster the grocer’s return on investment will be, and the greater the subsequent improvement in shopper service.

There must be definite measurement criteria for success established prior to implementation so the actual usage percentage can be measured. Besides the incentives, the data can be used to highlight problems for follow-up as required.

Preventing Shrink

Part of the grocer’s major return on investment is the reduction of shrink that occurs due to U-Scan compared to standard cashier-based operations. However, shoppers may easily forget large under-cart items just as cashiers often miss such items in standard lanes.

Cashiers must therefore be trained to be on the constant lookout for cart-bottom items to make sure any large items are rung up. This is a very simple process, and a proactive cashier will notice these items and be prepared for them in advance.

Check the Weight Overrides

Cashiers must be trained to *not* automatically do weight overrides as soon as they appear on the cashier screen. For the grocer to achieve the ROI from shrink-reduction, cashiers must check that the override is valid by checking each of these prior to approving it.

Productivity Reports

There are productivity reports available on the cashier attendant station that will show the number of shoppers that have used U-Scan. These reports show the shopper count and dollar sales per hour for each of the shopper stations in the configuration.

If the cashiers are working two-hour shifts each during the first week of opening, grocers have found it very effective to create a friendly competition among the cashiers to see who can get the most shoppers to use U-Scan during their shifts. A small reward can be given each day during opening week — that is, a gift certificate or a free dinner at a local restaurant — work very well. This concept could also be implemented on an on-going basis as a method of rewarding the best cashiers.

Act on the Intervention Data

Store managers should monitor the U-Scan intervention report to see when and why most interventions occur. Trends and issues will be obvious, and training can be used to attack the highest incidences. Brainstorming with the special self-checkout attendants is also effective, especially since it makes them part of the process. This report can be used in a similar fashion as the productivity report to create friendly competition among cashiers to see who can have the fewest interventions per day.

No Overnight Cash at the Stations

Managers should empty the cash from U-Scan stations each night when closed. The objective is to not leave cash and coins in the U-Scan systems — these systems could otherwise become targets for theft. Some grocers actually leave the doors to the U-Scan system open, with a sign on them stating that no money is left inside overnight.

Buy it Here

All purchases from store personnel need to be executed through U-Scan. Period. End of story. Very shortly, everyone in the store will realize how easy it is, and will automatically reply "It's great!" when asked by shoppers.

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