



INNOVATION AT THE CHECKOUT:

7-Eleven's strategic use of Microsoft Surface devices for superior customer service



In today's fast-paced, digitally driven world, seamless customer experience is at the heart of successful retail operations. Customers expect more personalised services than ever before and they reward brands that go above and beyond with their loyalty.

In the wake of the global pandemic, leading convenience store 7-Eleven understood this and set out to redefine its customer service in its Australian outlets. The organisation set an ambitious target to provide one billion customer moments across its 800 stores by 2023, a quantum leap from the previous figure of 250 million transactions. Achieving this objective required a technology-enabled approach that would empower its frontline workers to complete tasks quickly and extend its service range to customers.

One of the essential strategies to meet this objective was the introduction of a mobile checkout option. By digitising the checkout process, 7-Eleven sought to provide its customers with a convenient, contactless shopping experience that aligned with consumer expectations in a post-pandemic world. This new initiative would offer customers the flexibility of checking out via their mobile applications, speeding up the checkout process and delivering a superior experience. However, to make this happen, 7-Eleven needed a reliable and purpose-specific device that could support the mobile checkout application effectively and securely. Reaching the one-billion target nationwide also required a partner that understood the business and its specific needs, could operate nationally, in both city-based and regional areas, and was capable of deploying a solution across 800 stores quickly and efficiently.

Deploying the Microsoft Surface Go

Enter Blue Connections IT, a trusted technology partner of 7-Eleven. Tasked with recommending a device that could meet the specific needs of 7-Eleven's mobile checkout initiative, Blue Connections IT suggested the Microsoft Surface Go. Compact and lightweight, the Surface Go is designed to provide the convenience of a tablet with the processing power of a laptop and is ideal for a business's frontline. This device's features, such as robust battery life and a strong Bluetooth signal, made it a suitable solution for the in-store deployment of the mobile checkout application. In addition, Surface provides world-class, chip-to-cloud security across the multiple layers of hardware, firmware, software, application, cloud, and identity involved in end-to-end operations.

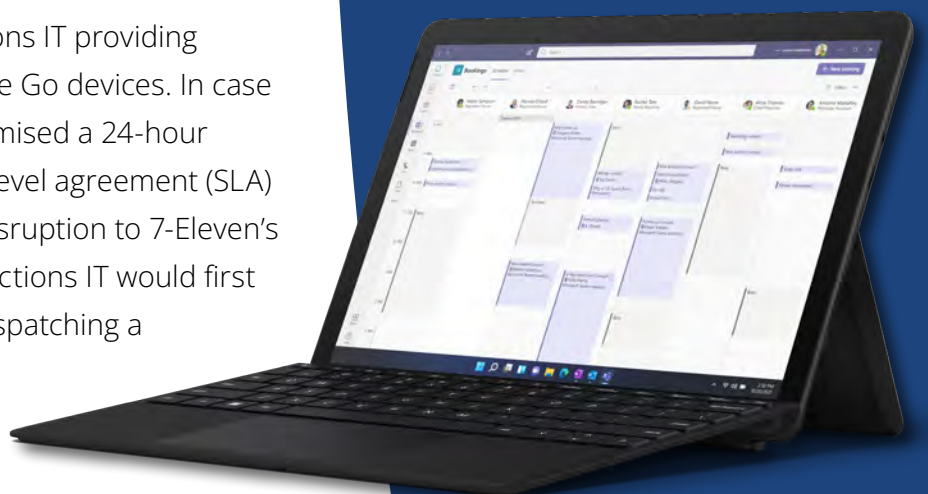
Blue Connections IT, understanding the unique requirements of 7-Eleven's mobile checkout initiative, built a bespoke solution using a complete Autopilot white glove process. This involved pre-provisioning the Surface Go devices with essential configurations such as security settings and device-locking settings before dispatch. By doing so, Blue Connections IT ensured that the devices were ready to use upon arrival, further accelerating the deployment process.

The partnership between Blue Connections IT and 7-Eleven didn't just stop at device recommendation and configuration, with Blue Connections IT providing comprehensive support for the Surface Go devices. In case a device fails, Blue Connections IT promised a 24-hour replacement period under its service level agreement (SLA) with 7-Eleven. This ensured minimal disruption to 7-Eleven's operations, as the team at Blue Connections IT would first attempt a remote resolution before dispatching a pre-provisioned replacement device.



Surface Go

Convenience of a tablet with the processing power of a laptop



An additional 800 Surface Go devices were deployed to facilitate a store management project



The successful deployment of the Surface Go devices in facilitating the mobile checkout initiative had a ripple effect across 7-Eleven's operations. Several business units expressed interest in using the same services and devices, leading to a broader rollout of the Surface Go devices. An additional 800 Surface Go devices were deployed to facilitate a store management project, enabling store leaders to execute their tasks efficiently on the go, keeping their eyes and ears in the field and being available to customers and employees alike.

Additionally, to cater to the diverse needs of its employees, 7-Eleven expanded its portfolio of devices to include other offerings from Microsoft's Surface line. Surface Pro devices and Surface laptops were introduced into the organisation's IT ecosystem. The Surface Pro devices, known for their ultra-portable design, proved particularly suitable for regional business managers who required lightweight devices to carry out their operations.

Streamlined digital transformation

Beyond the hardware implementations, Blue Connections IT supported 7-Eleven by providing essential IT support and infrastructure. Utilising Azure and Microsoft 365, Blue Connections IT facilitated operational efficiency, ensuring a seamless integration of the new devices with 7-Eleven's operations. This robust IT infrastructure played a crucial role in the successful deployment and management of the devices, helping maintain the momentum of 7-Eleven's digital transformation journey.

In retrospect, the introduction of the Surface Go devices, backed by the expertise of Blue Connections IT, has proven to be a game-changer for 7-Eleven. The mobile checkout application, once a part of 7-Eleven's digital strategy, has now become a cornerstone of the organisation's service delivery. The devices, thanks to the rigorous provisioning and device management by Blue Connections IT, have consistently remained secure and up to date, providing an uncompromised service experience.

Strategic partnerships achieve results

Taking a closer look at the partnership, the selection of the Surface Go was more than just a technology preference; it was an enabler of 7-Eleven's broader digital transformation. The successful integration of these devices validated Blue Connections IT's comprehensive understanding of 7-Eleven's unique business requirements, and its ability to provide a solution that not only met but exceeded expectations, underscoring the profound value of strategic, technology-enabled retail approaches. By leveraging Microsoft's Surface devices and the expertise of Blue Connections IT, 7-Eleven has been able to reinvent its service delivery and significantly enhance its customer experience. This transformation has put 7-Eleven on a promising trajectory towards achieving its ambitious 2023 goal, providing an inspiring model for other retailers to emulate.



Results and benefits

Since the introduction of the Surface Go devices, 7-Eleven has experienced a significant boost in operational efficiency. One of the key advantages of using modern provisioning and device management with Surface Go is that the devices are always secure and up to date. These devices, with their robust build and advanced features, support the mobile checkout application impeccably, ensuring smooth in-store operations and making transactions quick, easy, and contactless for customers. This accomplishment underscores the importance of choosing a device that is not only technologically advanced but also capable of withstanding the rigours of retail operations.

Moreover, the partnership between 7-Eleven and Blue Connections IT has set a precedent for future technology initiatives at 7-Eleven. The successful rollout and management of the Surface Go devices have stimulated interest from other business units within the company. Now, they too are looking to leverage the same services and devices in their operations. As a trusted partner, Blue Connections IT is ideally placed to cater to these needs, demonstrating the scalability of the solution and its readiness to support 7-Eleven's continued growth.

The successful implementation of this digital strategy has done more than just transform 7-Eleven's service delivery; it has positively impacted its brand image, positioning it as a forward-thinking and customer-centric organisation. The Surface Go devices, in conjunction with the mobile checkout initiative, have revolutionised the way 7-Eleven interacts with its customers, embodying the retailer's commitment to innovation and customer service excellence.

As 7-Eleven continues its ambitious path to digitalise a significant portion of its transactions, the role of effective technology and strategic partnerships can't be overstated. The fruitful partnership with Blue Connections IT serves as a case study for other retailers, demonstrating how well-chosen technology solutions and partnerships can transform operations and enhance customer experiences.



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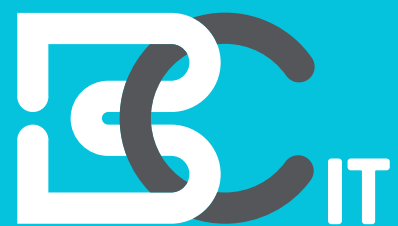
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Microsoft Surface