

Retail Sales Continued to Rise in April

Retail sales continued their upward climb in April, showing evidence of a much more confident consumer compared to this time last year.

According to the National Retail Federation, retail sales, which do not include autos, gas stations and restaurants, increased half a percent over March and 4.6 percent over April of last year. Combined sales for March and April rose 5.6 percent over last year.

With a constantly-shifting Easter holiday, retailers typically look at March and April sales combined to gauge consumer spending. Sales for the two months increased 5.6 percent unadjusted over last year.

April retail sales released today by the U.S. Commerce

Department show total retail sales (which include non-general merchandise categories such as autos, gasoline stations and restaurants) increased 0.4 percent seasonally adjusted over March and 9.3 percent unadjusted year-over-year.

"The slow road to recovery is turning into a sprint as retailers experienced a nice bounce in April," said NRF President and CEO Matt Shay.

"But maintaining this sales momentum will be challenging. Until our economy begins to create jobs and reduce unemployment, the breadth and sustainability of this recovery remains uncertain."



"Spring shopping and seasonal weather helped boost sales last month," said Rosalind Wells, Chief Economist for NRF. "Spending on discretionary items had fallen by the wayside these last few years and we are encouraged to see consumers dipping into that pot once again."

Clothing and clothing accessory store sales decreased 1.0 percent seasonally adjusted from March but increased 5.4 percent unadjusted year-over-year.

Building material and garden equipment stores saw the biggest improvement with sales increasing 6.9 percent seasonally adjusted month-to-month and 14.1 percent unadjusted year-over-year. Health and personal care stores sales increased 0.9

percent seasonally adjusted from last month and 3.3 percent unadjusted year-over-year.

Electronics and appliance store sales decreased 0.4 percent seasonally adjusted month-to-month and increased 4.4 percent unadjusted from last year.

U.S. retail sales have recovered two-thirds of the decline they experienced in 2008. They now stand less than 5% below their pre-recession peak achieved in November 2007. The rise in retail sales has been quite steady since spring 2009.

U.S. consumers are clearly back in the game. The fact that the Federal Reserve has kept

3 Easy Steps to Accelerate Your Credit Card Processing



By: Jeff Haefner

Step 1: Update your terminal.

There is a wide variety of terminals offered to merchants. To determine which terminal will best fit your needs, speak with your Point of Sale Solutions Provider. They should be able to guide you to finding the fastest terminal to meet your needs.

Step 2: Update your data line.

Many credit card terminals operate over a telephone line. This can be a slow process with transaction processing times ranging from seconds to minutes. Consider updating your system to operate over a high speed internet line, on a PC, or via a wireless system.

Step 3: Integrate the approval process into your POS.

Many Point of Sale systems offer integrated credit card processing. This is the best option if you're looking to save valuable time for your customers and yourself. Many point of sale software products provide internet connection capabilities, which means faster reporting times. They also support a variety of hardware or terminal options which means that you can choose the fastest and most cost effective option for your needs. AND, they incorporate the information directly into your reports.

For more information on integrated credit card processing, please contact Mollie at 800-513-5917.



Retail Sales Continued to Rise in April

Page 1



3 Easy Steps to Accelerate Your Credit Card Processing

Page 1



Product Spotlights Page 2



Employee Spotlight Get to Know Jess Page 2

Add-On Feature of the Month

Page 3

Retail Sales Continued to Rise in April Continued...

kept interest rates at record lows for an extended period of time has been a big contributing factor.

"It's quite clear that consumers at least are not wondering whether the economy is still in recession and spending as if they are in recovery mode," said Craig Thomas, senior economist at PNC Financial Services. However, retailers are warning that May could be slower. With Memorial Day falling on May 31 this year, compared to May 25 in 2009, those Memorial Day sales numbers will land in the June till rather than May's, just like the earlier Easter this year shifted sales from April to March.

Retailers reporting first-quarter results this week said they expect the shift to cost them around three percentage points off their May comparable sales growth rates -- in stores open at least a year -- but it won't necessarily boost June as much. June is a five-week month this year, so it's already expected to show stronger sales than last year, thanks to that extra week. That will mask the true strength of Memorial Day sales.

Meet the Staff at Retail Technology Experts

Jess McClaughry Senior Retail Systems Consultant



Jess McClaughry joined the team at Retail Technology Experts in January of this year as a Senior Retail Systems Consultant. Jess brings with him over 15 years of Retail Pro experience assisting in implementations for various types of retailers. He also has extensive experience

working in the retail industry in many different roles including Director of Franchising for a specialty sporting goods retailer. Jess likes being a part of the growth of the retailers that he works with. He enjoys learning about each business and helping them meet their goals through the best technology for their operations.

Jess is originally from Chicago and holds a degree in Business Administration from DePaul University. In his spare time, Jess is an avid sports fan and follows the Cubs and Tigers. He also likes spending time with his wife and their two dogs.



Product Spotlight

Defining Criteria in the Filtered View

The following tips will teach you how to define criteria within the filtered view.

- Spaces: A space made by pressing <Space> is a keyboard character — the same as any other entered character.
- When a space is included in a criterion, a matching space is required in the data record for the record to be a match during filtering.
- Blank Fields: A blank field acts as a wildcard; it matches every entry. No matter what is contained in that field in each record, the record is included during filtering. If all filter criteria are blank, all data records are included in the filter results.
- Descriptive Field: (Examples: Desc 1, Attr) Records that have a string of characters anywhere in the field that exactly match the criterion entry are included. For example, the filter criterion of buckle would include such records as ladies buckle shoe, buckle girls dress shoe, boys casual shoe buckle, and so on, in the filter results.
- For an exact match, enclose the string of characters within quotes; e.g., "buckle" will return only those records that match buckle exactly.
- Note: Retail Pro does not distinguish between uppercase letters and lowercase letters. During filtering, entries such as navy, Navy, and NAVY would all match the criterion of navy.
- Blank Entries: To filter for descriptive fields with blank entries, use empty quotes as your filter criterion. For example, entering "" as your size criterion would locate records that have no value recorded in their Size field.
- Excluding Matches: Descriptive fields typically do not make use of the Included field described above that allows you to choose to exclude matches.
- However, you can exclude matches in a descriptive field by using the tilde (~). For example, entering ~blue as your attribute criterion would exclude records that contain blue in their Attribute field.



Product Spotlight

Gift Cards in RMS - Part 1

RMS allows you to track, sell, and redeem gift cards within your single store location. When using gift cards in Store Operations, you must first create a Gift Card tender type.:

1. Launch Store Operations Manager.
2. From the Database menu choose Tender Types. In the Tender Types window click New.
3. In the Description field type the name of the tender type (Example: Gift Card).
4. In the Tender Type field select Voucher and click OK. Note - Each POS station must Z out in order for this change to go into effect.

How to Create the Voucher :

1. In Store Operations Manager, create a new item for the gift card (Database | Items | New | Standard Item).
2. Enter the desired Item Lookup Code and Description (Example: Voucher).
3. On the Item Type field, select Voucher from the drop-down list.
4. Click the Serial tab and choose the Add button to insert Voucher ID (serial) numbers for your gift cards.
5. Select the Serial Number Count you wish to use (1, 2, or 3 serial numbers).
6. You can add the serial numbers individually in the Serial Number field(s) by typing the number and clicking OK. Or you can add multiple instances of the same serial number by utilizing the Automatically Generate Serial Numbers option in the Options section. Insert quantity in the Number to Create field.
7. In the Inventory tab, enter the quantity of gift cards you have in stock into the On Hand field.
8. In the Pricing tab, to enter the pre-defined amount (Example: \$25) in the Price field. If you are not selling gift cards with pre-defined amounts, leave the Price field at \$0.00. Then mark the Must Enter Price at POS option in the Options tab. The cashier will then be required to enter a price for each gift card in Store Operations POS. Click OK.

In next month's Retail Optimizer, learn how to sell and redeem gift cards in RMS.

The Retail Legal Advisor

by: Michael Berger, Esq.



Employers' Use of Lie Detector Tests

Congress passed the Employee Polygraph Protect Act ("EPPA") in December of 2007. The EPPA severely limits the use of polygraph tests by private employers against their employees (or potential employees) and provides significant sanctions for employers who violate the law. The EPPA applies to most private employers—local, state and federal government employers are exempt. Private employers in the security business as well as employers that are authorized to produce, sell or dispense controlled substances may also be exempt.

Generally speaking, employers cannot require or even suggest that an employee or potential employee take a polygraph test. The EPPA provides one exception—for investigations involving "economic loss or injury" to the employer's business, such as "such as theft, embezzlement, misappropriation, or an act of unlawful industrial espionage or sabotage". The employer must also have a "reasonable suspicion that the employee was involved in the incident or activity under investigation" and that "the employee had access to the property that is the subject of the investigation".

If all of the above conditions apply, the employer may lawfully request (but not require) the employee submit to a polygraph. If the employer requests an employee to take a polygraph, the employer must also provide the employee (in advance) with a statement: 1) providing the basis for requesting the examination; 2) that is signed by an authorized representative of the employer; 3) is retained by the employer for at least 3 years; and 4) contains "at a minimum", the identification of a specific economic loss or injury to the employer, a statement that the employee had access to the pertinent property, and a statement describing the basis for the employer's "reasonable suspicion" of the employee's involvement in the activity under investigation.

If the employee agrees to the polygraph, additional conditions apply to the manner in which the test is administered. The employee may terminate the test at any time. The employer may not ask the employee questions that are "degrading" or that inquire about the employee's political or religious views, sexual behavior, or legal activities involving labor unions. Disclosure of the results of the polygraph is also very limited by the EPPA.

As you can see from the summary above, private employers may only use polygraphs under very limited circumstances and must follow strict guidelines throughout the process, that are designed to protect the rights of employees. Failure to strictly adhere to the EPPA can be very costly. An employer who violates the act can face a civil penalty of up to \$10,000. In addition, an employee or potential employee who is affected by an employer's violation of the EPPA, may bring a private civil lawsuit for employment, reinstatement, promotion and the payment of wages. If you are considering the use of a polygraph in your business, please make sure to consult your attorney before doing so.

Contact Michael Berger

Michael Berger, Esq.
 Carpenter & Berger, PL
 954-772-0127
 mberger@carpenterberger.com
 www.carpenterberger.com

Disclaimer: The information provided in the Retail Legal Advisor column should not be considered legal advice. This column is intended only to provide general educational information. You must never rely on the information provided here as legal advice. Only your attorney can evaluate your specific situation and provide you with legal advice. Except as provided below, you may feel free to forward, distribute and copy the Retail Legal Advisor column, as long as you forward, distribute and copy it without any changes and include all headers and other identifying information. You may not copy it to a website without the author's prior written consent.



Add-On Feature of the Month

A look at add-ons that customize your system to meet your unique needs.

Driver's License Capture Module

Do you want your customers to return more often?

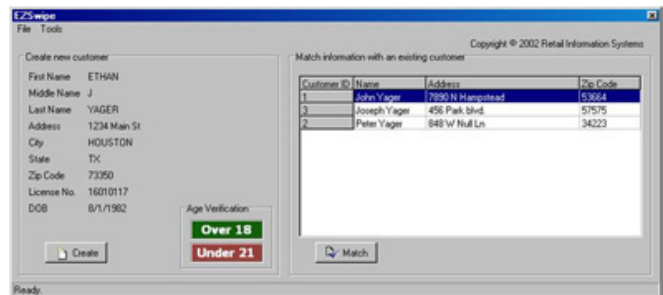
Do you need to check their age for certain purchases?

If you answered yes to either of the above questions, you will be interested in our **Drivers License Data Capture modules**.

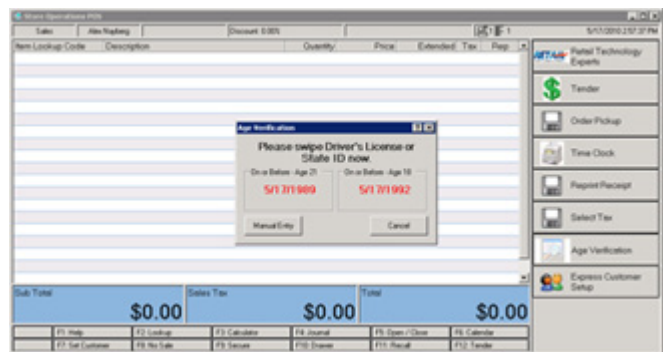
With these Add-on modules you can use a Magnetic Stripe Reader (MSR), the same integrated one you may be using now for credit cards, to enter your customers using their Drivers license.

In some states, the information is contained in a 2D barcode on your license. Pull out your license; take a look, does it have a Magnetic Stripe? Does it have a 2D barcode? (not a 1D, picket-fence, barcode) If you have both as many new licenses do, the 2D will typically have more data about your customer.

It is possible to use a 1D/2D scanner at your Point of Sale station to read your customer's drivers license and also read the barcodes from your inventory items.



Retail Pro Driver's License Capture Module



RMS Driver's License Capture Module

Contact your Account Manager at 800.513.5917 to add this fantastic module to your POS System!

RETAIL OPTIMIZER

Editor/Design: Laura Gonzalez
 800.513.5917 ext.124