

How automation can simplify the job of the merchandiser



By [Andrew Dawson](#)

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For merchandisers, manual processes are inherently problematic. Merchandisers will typically represent a specific product category at a certain store and will have a set flow that they follow based on the brand priority of their organisation.



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This includes checking aisles to make sure that shelves have stock, replenishing stock should it be running low, confirming that pricing is correct and that promotions are deployed and so on.

The challenge for merchandisers is that historically these tasks have been manual and are therefore prone to human error, and there was no way of providing real-time feedback to ensure these errors are corrected. Each process is also time consuming and laborious, reducing efficiency.

Mobility and automation

Innovative new mobile technology solves numerous challenges for brand owners and merchandisers alike. Intelligent software replaces time and attendance tools, using geotagging to confirm location and timestamping automatically.

Biometrics such as facial and voice recognition can also be used to verify that the right merchandiser is in the right location at the right time.

Using Bluetooth sensors and beacons, the path of the merchandiser through the store can easily be tracked, ensuring that they follow the planned route and alerting them to any deviations.

The merchandiser can also be empowered with image recognition tools that can provide an instant reading of shelves and alert to any issues that need to be attended to. This includes stock levels, stock placement, pricing, promotions and optimisation, among others.

Not only does this simplify one of the most onerous merchandiser tasks, it also ensures adherence to requirements for the brand. A single photograph can replace up to 20 minutes of paperwork and execution time, and image recognition is an immutable and failsafe way to ensure perfect execution and verification of SLAs.



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Automation tools vastly improve productivity by simplifying tasks and minimising the window for error. Any deviations are recorded and can be simultaneously sent via SMS and email to the merchandising manager and the store owner to make them aware of potential issues on the ground. This real-time deviation alerting ensures that a response can be generated, and issues solved before they affect sales.

Perfect execution equals maximum profits

With the economy in a prolonged downturn, brand owners are in an economic battle and the amount of product on shelf is of great importance. Merchandisers are a critical element in ensuring that product sets are 100% correctly executed according to the look and feel (i.e. 'the perfect store') that has been scientifically selected to generate maximum profit.

Mobile automation tools help to guarantee the proficiency and accuracy of merchandisers while improving productivity and simplifying day-to-day tasks.

ABOUT ANDREW DAWSON

Andrew Dawson is the Managing Director of MAQmobile.

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