Barcode Scanning: Unlocking In-Store Innovation

The easiest, fastest, most efficient way for
brick-and-mortar to sync physical and digital experiences

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Bridging the Physical and Digital Divide . . . One Scan at a Time

Across industries, standard processes, including core customer interactions, are increasingly dependent on digital tools and ecosystems. By utilizing tools that blend physical and digital, enterprises can streamline workflows, increase efficiency, increase productivity, and make things simpler and more engaging for associates and consumers.

Scanning provides the most efficient and least expensive solution that enterprises can deploy to unlock a range of opportunities and experiences. High-value use cases enabled by scanning include barcoding for inventory management, product discovery, payments and clienteling, and ID scanning for customer check-in, registration, verification, and authentication. Scanning technology is improving—rapidly. This advancement is driven by the ubiquity of HD cameras on smartphones and the broad adoption of data-rich barcodes like the QR code. With these rapid innovations comes the opportunity to use barcode scanners to reduce friction and deploy experiences that increase engagement, customer retention, and profits.
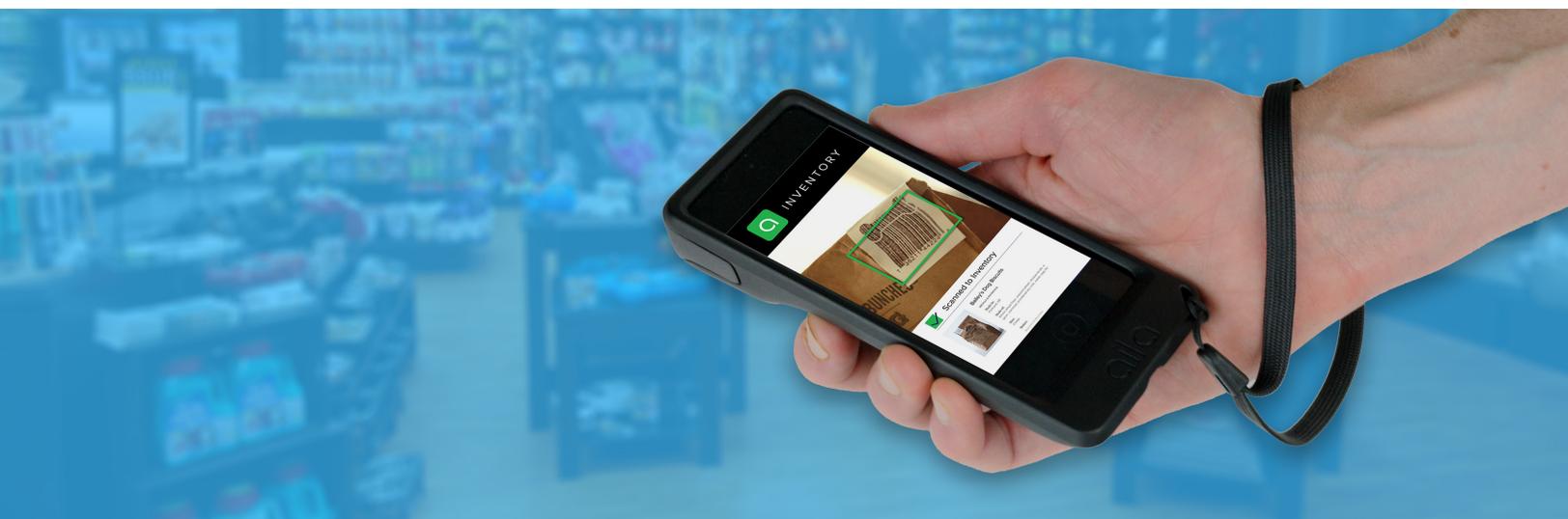
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VALUABLE INTERACTIONS, EXCITING EXPERIENCES

Exceptional Customer Experience, Measurable Results

In an age when smartphone-connected consumers are using technologies to look up product information in-store, check in to their hotel rooms, and buy groceries online and then pick them up at the store, seamlessly connecting enterprises' digital and physical ecosystems by providing successful omnichannel interactions is vital to providing exceptional customer experiences.

A 2017 study of 46,000 shoppers by the Harvard Business Review found that cross-channel experiences accounted for 73% of customers, as opposed to those who shopped only online (7%) or only in-store (20%). Those **omnichannel shoppers spent 13% more in store than their single-channel counterparts,** and logged 23% more repeat shopping trips.

Scanning-enabled solutions can speed up innovation cycles by giving businesses the tools to build, test, deploy, and scale new solutions quickly. With a versatile, digital touchpoint, enterprises scan experiment with their customer-facing workflows to determine the best user experience to drive traffic, conversions, and loyalty.

Further, the use of digital tools in physical environments unlocks access to richer data—highlighting opportunities to better understand customers and their needs and interests. **Enterprises can collect and analyze metrics that were previously out of reach** (or only available to ecommerce merchants) such as: time interacting with touchpoints, frequently searched or requested items, which locations throughout the store encourage interactions, and more. Improving data collection gives businesses the insights they need to pivot quickly and decisively toward opportunity or away from low-value processes, products, or experiences.

Finally, since scanning touchpoints can draw from customer databases, enterprises are able to create personalized and high-value experiences to every customer that interacts with their touchpoint.

Barcodes Proliferate in Many Diverse Industries

From check-in and registration in hospitality, to payments and product discovery in retail, scanning offers a simple and effective way to create and deploy new innovations. Take Starbucks' QR code-enabled mobile payment app, which has more users than Google Pay or even Apple Pay.

QR code scanning is also taking hold in the grocery industry to enable cashierless payments, namely for Amazon Go and a number of startups that are experimenting with QR codes as a way for shoppers to seamlessly check in and out of the store without having to scan items individually.

Retailers aren't relying exclusively on BYOD (bring your own device). Walmart, Stop & Shop, and other retailers have begun providing dedicated mobile scanning devices for consumers to use in-store, or implemented scanning kiosks for deli ordering and self-checkout.

85% of shoppers prefer self-service scanning touchpoints over finding an associate."

— HRC RETAIL ADVISORY
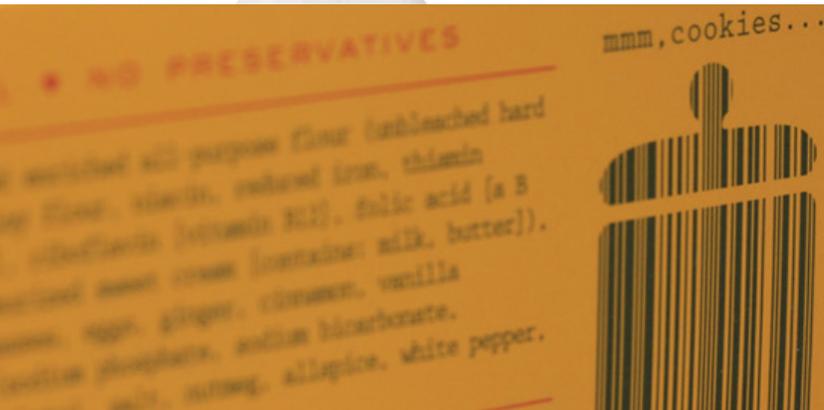
The Barcode Advantage

There are a number of other ways to connect digital and physical information—RFID, NFC, BlueTooth, and others can all be useful in various settings. However, barcode scanning has both wider adoption and lower costs—and will for the foreseeable future.

Barcodes also have the advantage of being able to be used on almost any surface or material. RFID, which uses radio waves, don't rely on line-of-sight, but are susceptible to interference from metal objects.

Barcode scanning has one other major advantage over other technologies: customer-initiated interaction. While RFID and other proximity technologies are great for reducing theft, scanning is ideal for engaging with customers who want to achieve a task.

TYPE	COST	ACCURACY	SPEED
BARCODE	Created for free and printed for a few cents each; scanners range in cost but are anywhere from $25 to $1,000, depending on the use case.	Accurate and reliable across surfaces and materials.	Quickly scans individual items.
RFID	Can range from $0.10 to $50.00 or more depending on the type of tag; scanners can be up to 10x more expensive than barcode readers.	Signals are impacted by materials like metal or liquid.	Can scan multiple items at once.

Scanning in Action

Enterprises from hospitality and healthcare to transportation and banking are finding new ways to speed up interactions, both client and employee-facing, via scanning.

Recent years have seen increased adoption of scanning as a way create powerful omnichannel experiences. In China and Japan, QR code scanning facilitated $1.6 trillion in mobile sales in 2016. In 2017, Apple, the leading provider of smartphones in the United States, implemented native QR scanning on the iPhone camera.

Similarly, we've seen an explosion of innovation in retail, with scan-enabled smart fitting rooms, product discover stations, and a number of experimentations in AR and VR that are initiated via scanning a QR code.

The power and simplicity, along with the low cost of deployment, of scan-enabled solutions make them an excellent way for enterprises to enable new innovations that bridge the gap between their physical and digital locations.

Check-in	Registration	Payment/Loyalty
Customers or associates can scan IDs or loyalty cards to quickly check in to hotels, stores, and more.	New guests or members can scan licenses to easily register for enterprises in fitness, hospitality and more.	Scanning single-use QR codes is a fast and secure way to pay via an app.
Product Discovery	**Inventory Management**	**Clienteling**
In-aisle touchpoints allow customers to scan items to see reviews, materials, product pairings, and more.	Associates equipped with mobile scanners can process inventory in the front or back of house.	Associates with mobile scanners can also provide product information, pricing, and provide personalized recommendations.

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