

Hospital Gift Shop Automation with ECRS

Interview with Ochsner™ Healthcare Gift Shops



ECRS' point-of-sale (POS) solution, CATAPULT™, has successfully served the retail automation needs of hospital/health system gift shops for many years. Managers at one of ECRS' first gift shop sites, Ochsner Healthcare, recently spent some time explaining the importance of CATAPULT point-of-sale to their successful, multi-site gift shop operation. ECRS interviewed Gift Shop Manager, Sherry Miller, and Assistant Manager, Nicole Ockmond, to discuss the unique challenges of managing health system gift shops, how they use CATAPULT to streamline processes, and why POS systems are important for hospital/health system gift shops.

Ochsner, a leading U.S. healthcare system, serves 64 parishes in the southern region of Louisiana. Ochsner currently has 3 gift shops running on the ECRS CATAPULT Multi-Store system and are preparing to expand to a 4th location.

ECRS: How are health system gift shops different from typical, mainstream retail businesses? What unique challenges do you face?

Ochsner: Instead of carrying specialized items, we have to carry a broad range of items in a limited retail space. It's important that we carry everything someone might forget from home, plus a wide assortment of gift items. The gift shops carry everything from nightgowns to candy and everything in-between. Our customers are all walk-in traffic from the hospital, and it's our job to have what they need and want.

ECRS: How do you decide what inventory items to stock? Does CATAPULT help in this decision making process?

Ochsner: We constantly have to think outside the box when deciding on our inventory. We order the basics and also follow trends to make sure we have what customers want. CATAPULT Sales reports are run every morning for all locations. These reports help us to determine which items are selling better; thereby helping us effectively replenish inventory. We can also use the reports to detect certain product trends or high runs on a certain item. It is a very effective system for managing our diverse inventory.

ECRS: Do you have a high number of volunteers working in your gift shops? How do you find the system to be with ease-of-training?

Ochsner: We're different than a lot of health systems or hospitals in that we do not have many volunteers on staff. We do find that most people learn CATAPULT in less than a day. The POS touch screens make it very user-friendly. Cashier training is very easy; back office training takes a little longer just because there is so much functionality available.

ECRS: Were you using a POS system or standard cash registers before CATAPULT? Do you notice a difference since implementing CATAPULT?

Ochsner: We were using another POS system before CATAPULT, but I don't remember what it was because we've been using the ECRS system for so long. I can definitely say that CATAPULT provides more information than our previous system and that the information is more accurate. Cashier training is also easier.

ECRS: You have been using CATAPULT for quite a while now. Have you seen definite enhancements through the years that have allowed you to more efficiently manage the gift shops?

Ochsner: Yes, definitely. The system continues to grow and provide additional functionality.

ECRS: What do you feel are the top benefits CATAPULT provides for Oschner gift shops and for your roles as managers?

Ochsner: Health systems are very corporate in nature and require lots of data and reporting. The system allows us to provide accurate data that the Accounting Department needs to make their lives easier, therefore, making our lives easier. CATAPULT creates reports that Accounting approves of and can easily work with. It also is a very good inventory management tool; providing extremely fast transaction speed and easy credit/debit processing. It's easy to use and reliable.

ECRS: Would you recommend CATAPULT POS to other hospital/health system gift shops?

Ochsner: Absolutely, the system works well for us and makes managing multiple locations very efficient. POS systems can be expensive, but they are worth the investment if you get the right system for your stores. This is especially true in our market because of the strict need for accurate reporting data. It makes everyone's life easier.



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