



NACS Show 2022: New consumer and staff journeys drive transformation of F+C environments

Fuel and convenience retailers prepare for more self-service-driven consumer journeys that free up staff and make operations more efficient. The current EV charging boom further reshapes the industry. By Diebold Nixdorf.

NACS Show 2022 was a highlight this year and the third-highest attendance in the show's history demonstrates the strong desire for exchange, guidance, and inspirations in an evolving industry. We also look back at great conversations on the current consumer and market trends like the demand for more self-service-driven in-store processes, new mobile lifestyles or the advent of electric vehicle charging. And, how our retail technology concepts and EV charging services portfolio help F+C retailers to meet these trends. Here are a few insights on what we expect to see in F+C retail soon.

Store automation meeting individual needs

It was great to see how F+C retailers focus on the "how" instead of the "what," putting more emphasis on creating flexible customer and staff journeys to boost shopping or food ordering experiences and operate efficiently. It starts with integrated [self-checkout solutions](#) for C-Stores, allowing customers to quickly pay for fueling their car and the items in their C-Store basket without waiting line. Hybrid concepts like one staff member overseeing several self-checkouts or new AI-based applications like automated [age verification](#) technology to make buying of age-restricted items more convenient will help simplify complexities. The same for [self-service solutions at Quick Service Restaurants](#) that allow efficient self-ordering processes instead of heading for separate touchpoints to order, pick up food and pay for it.

(e)Mobility on the rise

Self-ordering will become even more convenient when F+C retailers meet the mobile lifestyles of their customers, allowing them to start the food-ordering process at home using their mobile devices. And what's more — C-Stores enabling BOPIS or to book the time slots for car wash and electric vehicle charging in advance are only three examples of why F+C retailers will count on mobility solutions in the future. EV charging journeys especially will become a key differentiator soon, as customers want to spend their charging time usefully. Last but not least, we expect to see more cloud software

applications that provide flexibility based on open APIs and modular architectures, allowing F+C retailers to quickly react to changing consumer and market demands and scale their IT infrastructure whenever needed.



Tackling the current challenges of F+C retail

Another reason why F+C retailers embrace new retail tech innovations is the simple fact that they support them to solve some of the main challenges they currently face. For example, self-service technology can not only improve consumer journeys as it reduces various friction points during the shopping process, but it can also help to overcome labor shortages that many retailers face at the moment. By freeing up staff members from traditional checkout tasks to take over other tasks in a C-Store that are more customer-facing, retailers are able to bring more value to the organization. And, of course, the job profiles become more attractive – a key benefit to strengthen loyalty of existing labor and when trying to hire new employees. Food ordering is another great example — process efficiency rises when the staff members can focus on preparing the meals by removing the responsibility of taking in orders and proceeding payments. This means higher food production with the same staff team and happier customers as they don't have to wait long. On the other side, F+C retailers are also looking for ways to extend consumer dwell time — with the exception for waiting times. Just one more reason for retailers to consider an EV charging concept.



Exciting time ahead of us


It was great to experience how the F+C industry counts on store automation to take “convenience” to another level. Self-service solutions and EV charging surely will fuel the evolution of integrated F+C environments. We are always happy to provide guidance and the right solutions our customers and the industry need to transform business models towards the changing expectations and growing demands of today’s consumers.

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