

MOBILE

## Barneys revamps in-store checkout via iPad POS technology

November 15, 2012



By TRICIA CARR

Department store Barneys New York is giving in-store shoppers a more personalized checkout experience through a partnership with Infinite Peripherals that will equip sales associates with mobile point-of-sale devices at its flagship location.

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**Luxury Daily**

Barneys is one of the first retailers in the United States to use the Infinea Tab modular system that turns an iPad into a one- or two-dimensional bar code scanner and magnetic stripe reader so that sales associates can checkout customers at any location on the sales floor. At a pivotal time for gaining transactions, Barneys is likely looking to strengthen the in-store experience during the holiday season.

“Mobile point-of-sale improves customer services,” said Andy Graham, president of [Infinite Peripherals](#), Chicago. “It brings the cash register to the customers, and the associate is able to look up items and basically service the customer at any way possible right where the customer is shopping.

“It is about immediately and getting a customer in and out of the store quickly if that is the desired outcome,” he said. “It is going to increase Barneys’ conversion rate, which is the rate at which customers turn a shopping trip into an actual purchase.

“Think Christmas Eve – it will be packed, and rather than having a cash register in each department with a line, Barneys will have sales associates with mobile point of sale devices around the store.”

**Barneys** did not respond before press deadline.

Getting the sale

The **Infinea Tab** attaches to in-store iPads. It is compatible with the iPad 2.

Sales associates at Barneys’ Madison Avenue location can conduct a customer checkout from anywhere in the store through the point-of-sale hardware and software application.

This technology adds a personal touch to the shopping experience, per Barneys.

Rather than a counter separating the sales associate from the customer, the checkout via the Infinea Tab allows for more interaction during a purchase.



*Infinea Tab*

Sales associates will also work to offer other items or services that fit with the customer’s needs during each transaction.

Barneys is removing some cash wraps from the sales floor to make more space for merchandise as a result of the mobile point-of-sale program.

The Infinea Tab can accept signatures, wirelessly print or email receipts and conduct inventory operations and corporate communications.

"Apple has proven that mobile check out for high-end items makes sense," said Greg Sokolowski, vice president at **Boston Retail Partners**, Boston. "Consumers shopping with a luxury brand expect a technologically-advanced checkout process, considering the retail market as a whole moving in that direction."

"It provides instant assistance from the staff at the time when they are selling the product without having to wait in another line," he said.

"At luxury retailers like Barneys and Nordstrom, the mobile device can bring up information about the customer, such as purchase history and personal information such as birthdays, to assist the salesperson in personalizing the experience. This is referred to as clienteling."

### Mobile checkout

Last year, Barneys enacted a similar program at its New York flagship store.

The retailer first started using point-of-sale technology called miStore for the holiday 2011 rush. More than 15 Apple devices – mainly the iPod touch – were in sales associates' hands so that they could more efficiently help consumers in all areas of the store.

Sales associates can look up order numbers, check inventory, deliver products from other stores and check-out customers via the miStore technology ([see story](#)).

Other luxury marketers use mobile point-of-sale devices to enhance the in-store shopping experience.

For instance, Italian label Gucci turned to mobile to enhance its in-store shopping experience with an app that aims to provide a higher level of service for luxury consumers via employee-handled wireless devices.

The fashion house is equipping its store associates at select locations with Apple iPhone 4S devices that contain a mobile point-of-sale program that lets employees process sales, email receipts to customers, access the Gucci Style app and use a translator and currency convertor on the spot.

The brand is gradually implementing the app in select branded stores in the United States, Europe and Asia ([see story](#)).

"What makes the checkout process personalized is actual interaction with the salesperson," said Paula Rosenblum, managing partner at [RSR](#), Miami. "Technology is a tool, but not a substitute for attention and care."

"In some ways, because there are still things that have to be done at a workstation, mobile point-of-sale is not a whole lot more convenient for most items, but it certainly helps the retailer to work with the customer right in the aisle," she said. "I do not think affluent consumers care about more than that – attention, service and a quality experience."

"Mobile point-of-sale works to facilitate cross-sells and up-sells right in the aisle, but something still has to happen at a fixed location – specifically, security tags removed, items bagged, and, potentially, someone has to take cash, so I do not see workstations going away any time soon."

### Final Take

*Tricia Carr, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York*

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