

INTRODUCTION by Eben Steyn, UCS TS Channel Manager: UltiSales

We are proud to bring you the first UltiSales newsletter - our goal is to keep you informed of the happenings in the UltiSales world. We will be sharing some customer insights and retail trends in this edition, and also providing key product information on what is new in UltiSales, and how this can be used to enable your business.

UCS TS relaunched this year on social media - regular updates and information are now posted weekly on our website and through various social links, and we feature customers and channel partners frequently on our pages. While 2016 has been a tough year for most in retail, we hope to bring some added value through our publication

on how to best use UltiSales, as well as information on trends that could assist you in achieving your business goals.

We welcome all feedback, and look forward to being of service to you in 2017. We wish you successful trading over the peak season!

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT IN 2016 AND 2017

One thing that is understood by all people: time is limited. To decide what to spend our development time on is therefore a tricky business. Our guiding principle is to listen to our customers, and to do what they want in the software.

The current release of UltiSales has been developed on the latest development platform in order to provide you, our customer, with a contemporary product that can benefit from where technology is going.

The email functionality in UltiSales was vastly improved, and is now working well for our customers. This includes a batch email feature where a selection of documents can be emailed, all in one go. Various changes in the background were done to improve the stability of the program, and also to secure data integrity in an ever-changing computer environment.

Many independent retailers have more than one store - be it 3 or 30 - and have the need for at least central reporting on the business, as well as the ability to create stock centrally, and to move stock between the branches. UltiSales already caters well for the above requirements. One of our 2017 objectives is to enhance this functionality even further while keeping it as simple as possible (in spite of the obvious increased complexity of a multi-store system!).

The Ulti DataManager is a tool that was developed in the past year to manage the import and export of data to and from UltiSales. The DataManager handles from updates to your stock file from a supplier price list through to sending stock records from a head office to the branches.

Moving from the old DOS version to the Windows version of UltiSales is a relatively easy

process for users of the software because the menu structure and the way you enter or request information in the system has remained the same. We're planning to make our new, contemporary user interface available in 2017. This will be optional for users, and will include a touchscreen option which works excellently in certain environments.

Lastly, mobile: some major groundwork has been done this year to enable using mobile devices more dynamically together with the in-store UltiSales system. Usable mobile devices can range from industrialised, robust units (typically used for stock takes) right up to popular smart phones on the cellular network.

We welcome your feedback and input on what you want in your system going forward.

RETAIL, MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE

Retail has always been defined as the process of selling goods or services to customers. Today this is still true, however the channels that a retailer can use for sales have multiplied. The traditional store is still the destination of choice for most shoppers, with digital channels emerging as the core growth areas with Generation X (who grew up on the internet) and the tech-savvy of Generation Y.

Independent retailers are proving to be noteworthy traders in using digital channels: they are tapping into the returns that the online

shopping world can bring them. Retail Systems are remaining at the forefront of any retail operation, managing stock and transactions. Both channels need to be accurate as all the rules remain, regardless of which channel your customer chooses.

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1. Stock Management:

It is very important to have real-time Stock On Hand number per stock item; this helps the retailer manage sales, promotions and ordering processes. Retailers need the ability to set a min/max level, to have the system provide suggested ordering, or to automatically manage the ordering to ensure stock levels are maintained.

2. Reporting GP and Revenue:

Know what your top sellers are; which products are the cash cows and which are dead or slow-moving stock. This information is vital for the retailer to properly plan, merchandise, and manage promotions.

3. Accurate Financials:

The point of sale needs to be a reliable transaction engine with all the necessary controls and features embedded. It is key that the PoS is open for easy integration to a 3rd party financial system. Financial Management that has full transactional integration is essential for any retail operation.

4. Security:

Today security is a key issue with consumers, both online and transacting in a store. Customers rely on the retailer to ensure their systems are able to protect their privacy and financial information. From the retailer's perspective, security is required to ensure staff have access to only what their job function requires. The system requires audit trails, password protection, role security, and encryption.

5. Digital channels and Loyalty:

Digital channels and Loyalty: retail today is all about convenience for the customer, and retailers are offering a choice of methods of transacting and are rewarding their customers for returning. Retail systems that offer integration to these systems give the retailer the advantage of providing more goods and services to more customers.

INDEPENDENT RETAIL IN SOUTH AFRICA

Over 300 000 of SA's Workforce own a SME business in South Africa.

South Africa has hundreds of thousands of Independent retailers, many of whom are found in traditional brick and mortar stores.

According to the Small Enterprise Development Agency's (Seda) 2016 research, SMMEs employ 14% of South Africa's workforce. Of the 2.2 million SMMEs in South Africa, there are about 350 000 owners by occupation in the service, shop and market retail sectors of the economy. Just over 50 000 are found in the formal sector and approximately 300 000 in the informal sector.

Corporate retailers' buying power and geographical reach affects independent retailers, resulting in fierce competition between these two entities. Independent retailers frequently position themselves close to com-

munities and represent a convenient alternative, often offering longer trading hours and a personalised service, to retain their customer base.

Moving with global and retail trends can be difficult and costly for the independent retailer. In South Africa, the move to digital point of sale has not seen a significant uptake in the informal sector; however, payment solutions have started surfacing in this sector. In the formal retail sector, the move from cash register to digital PoS has been steady, spurred on by the increased financial and information advantages that are presented to the retailer.

Data is critical regardless of a retailer's size: knowing what to buy, when and what stock is on hand is essential - shrinkage through stock losses can make or break a retailer. Knowing trading patterns and GP easily de-

termines pricing, promotions and profitable lines. Moving to digital point of sale enables the independent retailer to make business decisions that improve turnover and profitability.

About UltiSales

UltiSales' proven track record of 30 years throughout Southern Africa is supplemented by ongoing development configured to retailers' needs. UltiSales is an industry leading retail management and point of sale solution that supports retailers, from single-user stations through to large multi-lane installations. UltiSales is developed by UCS Technology Services and sold and supported through their Channel Partners. For more information please send an email to:

sales@ucsts.com

MOVING FROM OLD TO NEW

Currently, UCS TS is selling three versions of UltiSales.

1. DOS Version – for customers who still have old computer hardware and/or other stores running the DOS version.
2. The old Windows version (the last update of which is V3.5.1.14, released in September 2015) for customers who still have older computers running Windows XP (or older operating systems).
3. The new Windows version – Build 15 / Build 16 / and next year, Build 17 – which is the version of the software to which we add new features and do bug fixes. This version runs on Windows 7, 8 or 10.

To migrate from an older version of UltiSales to a new version is an easy process, but does require preparation. The two areas that normally need most attention are

- a. Your data.
- b. Your computers, printers and peripherals.

Your value-added reseller (VAR) will be able to provide you with more information and assistance in this regard. I like to use the comparison of UltiSales = the paint and the VAR = the painter. The painter will inspect the condition and location of your house in order to give you the best advice on what preparation is required for the paint job to be successful.

Get Social

with UCS TS

We invite all our customers to participate on social media. Send us the history of your business and information about your operation - we would love to share this with our followers on our various social media pages!

There are new posts every day relating to the Independent Retail Industry or a UCS TS product.

Click on the below links to view UCS TS on social media:

Click here to keep up-to-date with the latest UCS TS news



To view our Tweets about UCS TS taking on the world of Retail, click here



Keep up-to-date with the latest UltiSales and Retail news on our Facebook page



UltiSales

WHAT OUR CUSTOMERS THINK OF ULTISALES

Buya Bamba

Buya Bamba Limited is Zambia's leading year-round distributor of potatoes for the formal and informal sectors and has depots across the country. Owners Anthony Barker and Juri Van Zyl were seeking a solution that would simplify keeping track of stock-buying and high-volume selling, and replace the outmoded DOS-based point of sale system. Zambia, like much of Africa, does not have the reliable internet connectivity infrastructure required by most software solutions, which posed a challenge to Buya Bamba.

After shopping around, Buya Bamba chose UltiSales as their software solution answer in September 2015. According to Debbie Barker (Finance Manager), the solution has proven a perfect fit for the business. "UltiSales was an affordable solution that met the issue around connectivity. This is what really set it apart from the rest. We have created a management report system which is near real-time, but without having to be constantly online." UltiSales runs as a standalone point of sale at each of the 8 depots located throughout Zambia. The depots all send data to a common Dropbox account; the data is collected and used to populate a database located at their Lusaka Head Office, providing a central management reports view of sales, suppliers and stock per depot.

A significant part of Buya Bamba's customers are from the informal sector, whom are quality-driven and quite rightly insistent on selecting only the best produce. UltiSales has simplified this process at the depots by providing a "picking slip" and invoice for buyers, allowing an easy way of controlling the physical selling process. "UltiSales is perfect for the high volume of sale transactions," says Debbie.

Rolling out the new software solution over multiple sites was easy, as UltiSales operations proved to be similar to their old DOS system – "Handover was very speedy, literally a couple of day at the depots, with the Lusaka head office taking a bit longer" says Debbie. "The system is simple to use and as we grow more confident with using it, we see potential to use UltiSales to its full functionality." "The systems at the depots are supported remotely," Says Debbie, "The support from Donald (the UltiSales VAR) has been really hands-on, he has offered us great help and assistance." Donald Dykman travelled to Zambia to oversee the implementation of UltiSales, and has been most instrumental in adapting the system to meet Buya Bamba's needs.

Debbie notes that the difference UltiSales has made is really visible because we are able to centrally manage depots from Head Office. "UltiSales has certainly enabled us to feel comfortable and secure in growing the retail side, and trusting the reports. It's a system that adapts to your needs."

"We have no plans on moving away from UltiSales – in fact, we are planning to add more depots to the business as we expand our footprint in Zambia."

WELCOME TO THE NEW ULTISALES SITES WHO HAVE JOINED US IN RECENT MONTHS

- 2G Investment Holdings (Pty) Ltd
- Activate Beverages (Pty) Ltd
- Alpico (Pty) Ltd
- Alzu Depots (Pty) Ltd
- ATS Zambia Ltd
- Bethlehem Bowling Club
- Big Sky Building Supplies CC
- Blue Penny Museum
- Borrowdale Country Club
- Broadline Outfitters (Pty) Ltd
- Buya Bamba Limited
- Calypso (Pty) Ltd
- Care and Cure (Pty) Ltd
- Centurion Voere
- CJ Rose
- Decolite (Pty) Ltd
- Erwil Beleggings (Pty) Ltd
- Festive Distributors (Pty) Ltd
- First Works 141 CC
- Gauteng Uniforms (Pty) Ltd
- Getchus Minimart
- Golden Horizons
- Hogwicks Trading CC
- Holdright Investments (PVT) LT
- Hortative Investments
- Itech Mobile (Pty) Ltd
- Jackrite Building Supplies CC
- Kali Motors (Pty) Ltd
- Keagiletiro General Trading
- Mabutsane Trading Store
- Main Road Motors
- Mbima Investments (Pty) Ltd
- Modpul Holdings (Pty) Ltd
- Motor Max (Pty) Ltd
- Multilayer Paint & Hardware
- Naledi
- Netto Investments (Pty) Ltd
- Northern Electrical Services
- OM Books
- Pine Valley Investments
- Polokwane Bowls Club
- Pop Motors
- Princieton (Pty) Ltd
- Ratho Transport
- Rebaeti Trading Enterprise
- Red Lotus (Pty) Ltd
- Right Hand Trading (PVT) Ltd
- Rooibokkraal Farm Store
- Seaboard Holding (Pty) Ltd
- Security Depot Central
- Serowe BW Pty Ltd
- Shoefix
- Support Unit Supermarket
- Tahwina Investments
- The Hardware Team
- The Learning Centre School
- The Screw Man
- The Security Team
- Third Millennium Investments
- Tiny Man Paints Three CC
- Toadstool Pty Ltd
- Torrazzo General Dealer
- Treger Products (PVT) Ltd
- Walkers Garage
- Winsome Investments (Pty) Ltd
- Zambe Provisions WT2
- ZCX Investments (Pty) Ltd
- ZRP Morris Depot Supermarket
- Zumane Motor Spares

