



# *i*PAL *at a Glance*

Merchandise Information & Locator System

## “I know what I want... *I just can't find it!*”

These days, consumers expect a pleasant yet efficient shopping experience complete with a wide product selection, competitive prices, and employees that are both helpful and knowledgeable.

So in an industry with a traditionally high rate of turnover, a growing use of part-time help, and thousands of products in a superstore environment, it's little wonder that a large number of shoppers - often as high as 20-to-30% or more - get irritated when they can't find what they're looking for, or can't get adequate help from a sales associate.

*At the very least, they have a poor shopping experience; at worst, they not only leave without buying, but head directly to the competition.*

At TreoSystems, we're continually applying innovative, customer-centric approaches with the latest technologies to help our clients provide the highest levels of personalized service, with an eye towards converting *every* shopper into a satisfied and *buying* customer.

## What is *i*PAL?

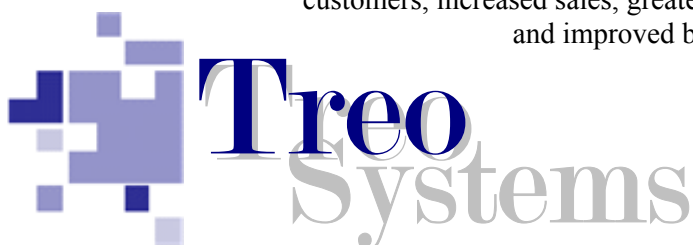
TreoSystems' iPAL - for **immediate Price, Availability & Location** - is an innovative software tool which seamlessly blends key elements of *merchandising, operations, and technology* to dramatically improve customer service, enhance overall employee performance, and increase sales and bottom-line profitability.

iPAL offers two primary functions:

- Provide immediately accessible, real-time product data and location information for employees and customers; and
- Provide the ability to easily capture and update product moves and location changes instantaneously.

By combining the latest wireless technologies with TreoSystems' unique iPAL software, now any employee - whether they're new on the floor or a seasoned veteran - can immediately help a customer identify the *exact location* of any item the store carries from anywhere in the store, as well as provide other important information to help them with their purchase.

The Result: a higher level of satisfied and buying customers, increased sales, greater employee productivity and improved bottom-line performance.



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## Merchandising Support

In today's competitive and customer-driven market, retailers are doing all they can to attract shoppers to their stores. But even the best selection, lowest prices or great promotions can't replace *superior service*.

The iPAL system was designed to put immediate information in the hands of the store's direct face to the customer, the *on-the-floor associate*, in order to maximize the levels of personalized customer service.

### Providing the Right Information at the Right Time

Equipped with a lightweight yet rugged handheld device, or by accessing any iPAL-enabled terminal or kiosk, an associate can *phonetically* enter any product or brand name of any item and iPAL will immediately respond with:

- Confirmation that the store does carry the product
- The *exact* location of the item (primary and alternatives)
- The price of the product
- How many the store has in stock
- Prompts to suggest additional related items the customer may need

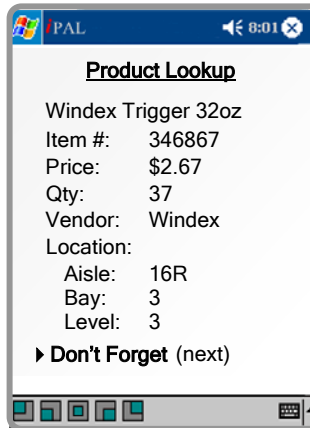
Armed with even this basic information, store associates can have an immediate impact on a customer's store experience, enhancing the perception of the employee – and the store itself – as both *competent and professional*. The result: Increased store sales, higher buyer conversion rates, greater cross-product sales and improved employee productivity.

### Stock Moves for Better Merchandise Placement

Retailers focus on providing consumers with the right product at the right place and time. But every store is different, and what works in one market may not work in another. For many retailers it's a constant struggle between managing consistency in product placement with vendor compliance and performance versus local store constraints such as tight space or market conditions. But because iPAL provides the capability to track *all* stock moves and relocations for every store, control and compliance with planograms can be better managed for each individual store.

## Benefits

- Increase Sales
- Enhance consumer shopping efficiency and customer satisfaction
- Higher buyer conversion rate
- Increase cross-product sales & inventory turns
- Higher transaction rates
- Distinct competitive advantage
- Optimize employee selling time



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## iPAL in the Store

The underlying foundation and vision of the iPAL system is to empower frontline employees with technology tools to help them deliver superior service to their customers, resulting in increased sales and bottom-line profitability. Beyond that, the benefits and by-products of such a system for store operations are numerous, including:

- **Improved employee productivity** – Since they will know immediately where every product is at all times, associates no longer need to search throughout the store or constantly try to find, call or page someone, leaving more time to spend with more customers or to perform other store tasks. Time is saved, and time is money.
- **Increased employee confidence** – Most retailers want their associates to engage customers; unfortunately, that doesn't always happen, due in part to a fear of not knowing the answers. Equipped with the iPAL, however, every employee – whether new, seasoned, or temporary – will have the answers to most questions at their fingertips.
- **Providing a Competitive Edge** – Superior service differentiates a store from its competitors. The iPAL can add a "wow" factor to a customer service initiative by providing immediate and useful information, eliminating the irritants that cause shoppers to leave frustrated and empty-handed, and enhancing the perception of the store and its employees as helpful, knowledgeable and professional.
- **Higher cross-product sales** – The iPAL prompts the associates with the suggestions for related items that a customer may need, resulting in higher sales and increased transaction rates.
- **Improved product tracking** - By capturing all product moves in real-time, everyone in the store has immediate access to the *exact* location of every item - not only primary but also alternatives such as top stock, displays, or receiving. Out-of-stock misquotes can be eliminated, substantially reducing re-order errors and excess inventory.
- **Easier stocking and replenishment** – Every product has a "home", and the iPAL keeps track of exactly where that latest home is. In *SKU-Scan* mode, iPAL can show store associates exactly where products need to go, making the process simpler and more productive.
- **Enhanced employee training** – After only an hour of training on the iPAL system, both new and part-time associates are immediately productive and able to help customers find what they're searching for, from anywhere in the store in seconds.

### **Self-Contained**

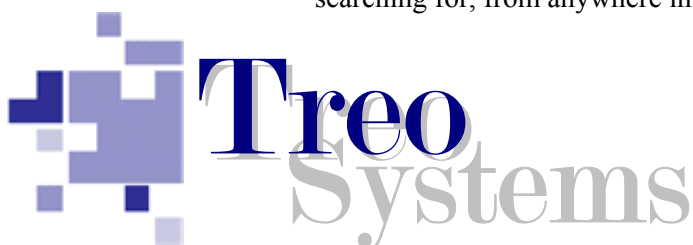
iPAL is designed as a stand-alone system that interfaces with a retailer's store system only as necessary. All product locations are maintained strictly within the iPAL's own database. The iPAL provides the utmost flexibility by adapting to the merchant's existing store layout and product placement scheme

### **Self-Correcting**

Stock location changes are made available to all other iPAL users instantly. iPAL operates in three distinct modes: *Product Lookup* for searching by item description or keywords; *SKU-Scan* to confirm or update the location of a specific item by SKU; and *Shelf-Scan* for batch location update to all products with the same physical location.

### **Self-Perpetuating**

iPAL tracks all stock moves and changes itself and can provide periodic updates to the store's database with all product locations as needed or required. This allows iPAL to be used for seasonal resets and large-scale merchandise shifts *without* the need to constantly update two disparate systems.



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## iPAL Architecture & Technology

TreoSystems is a strong believer in the benefits of developing tools that enable retailers to transform the way they do business unencumbered by technological limitations. That's why we built the iPAL System from the ground up using an open architecture that leverages popular industry standards. Easy to use and easy to install, iPAL supports a variety of devices, interfaces to most store servers as needed, and employs all standard networks currently in place.

### Standalone and Secure

Developed to be non-intrusive to mission-critical store systems, iPAL resides on its own Windows®-based server, receiving only selected non-confidential data from the store's database such as item description, price updates, inventory levels, and other basic information as needed via an ODBC, OLEDB or flat file interface. iPAL itself contains all SKU location data, and all remote devices access only the iPAL server to receive the product information. iPAL also seamlessly utilizes wireless networks used by most major retailers.

### Configuration Flexibility

Designed to be as "device independent" as possible, stores can select vendor-of-choice hardware devices, including interfacing with current in-store scanning guns, if desired.

The iPAL data is available to a variety of remote devices in both wired and wireless environments, including:

- Windows® personal computers
- Handheld devices running Windows CE®
- Handheld devices with TCP/IP capability
- RF devices that use VT5220 emulation
- Clients connected to a Windows® terminal server, such as in-store terminals or a wide variety of customer kiosks.

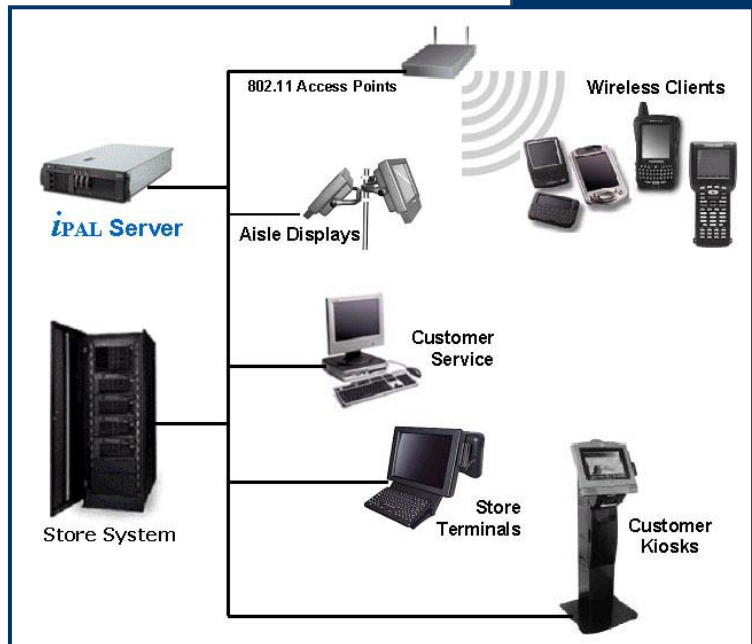
### iPAL is Future-Ready

The iPAL System is a state-of-the-art software tool designed and developed using the latest methodologies available. The result is an easily supportable, expandable and scalable technology solution today for tomorrow's successful customer-centric retailers.



## Benefits

- Standalone and self-supporting
- Non-intrusive to mission critical store systems
- Leverages investments in current systems
- Open design to support multiple devices
- Easily configurable
- Industry standard software platform



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