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Indigo Books & Music

Case Study: Insights into Mobile Checkout and Line Busting

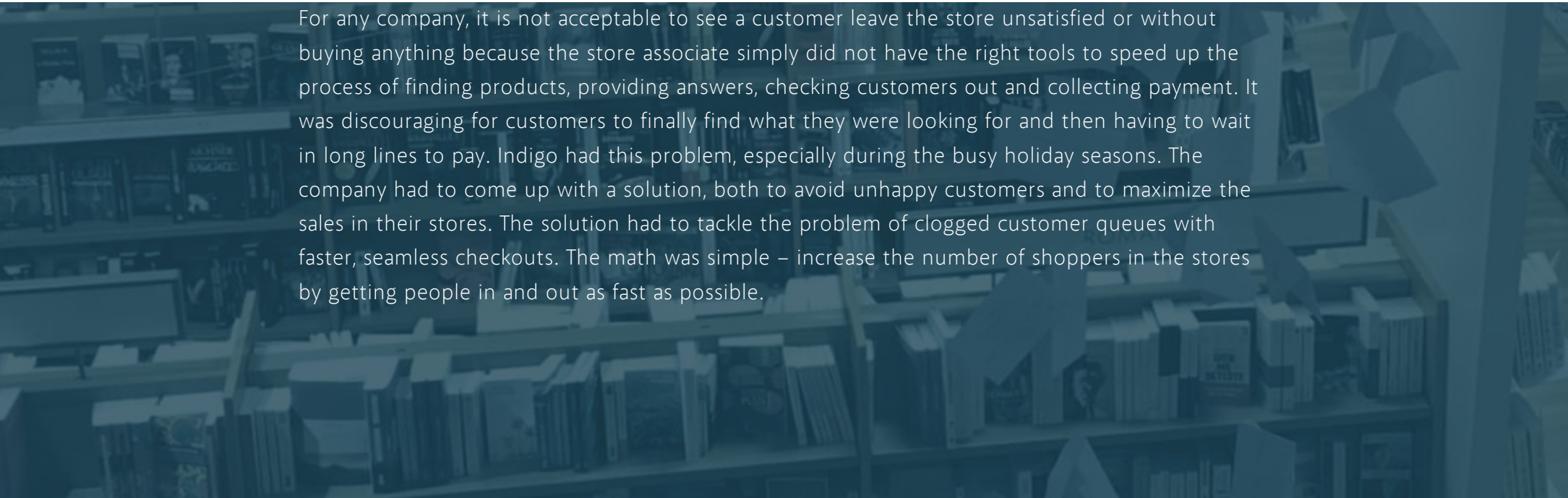
Company Overview

As the largest book, gift and specialty toy retailer in Canada, Indigo Books and Music, commonly known as **Indigo**, operates 89 superstores under the banners of Chapters and Indigo, 122 smaller stores under the banners of Coles, Indigospirit, SmithBooks and The Book Company and an online site, www.indigo.ca. The retailer offers a wide selection of books, toys, home decor, stationery and gifts and is publicly traded on the Toronto Stock Exchange (TSX: IDG). While most retailers struggled in 2017, Indigo's most recent quarter showed record results with 8% sales growth (USD revenue of 433.3 million in the quarter that ended December 30, 2017). The company credits this accomplishment to the success of both its online operations and brick & mortar store performance. A closer look reveals mobile technology innovation in their stores at the heart of this success.

Challenges

Like many other retail stores in Canada and the rest of the world, Indigo too had to face a significant challenge – to match the convenience of shopping online in their stores. In fact, they had to elevate their entire in-store experience to new heights and make it a competitive advantage over online pure plays.

With more than 100,000 SKU's in their stores, helping store visitors find the right product was paramount to Indigo's success. Indigo store associates needed to cater to their customers with precise recommendations and guide them to the right products. Time was at a premium considering shoppers' short attention spans and proclivity towards impatience.



For any company, it is not acceptable to see a customer leave the store unsatisfied or without buying anything because the store associate simply did not have the right tools to speed up the process of finding products, providing answers, checking customers out and collecting payment. It was discouraging for customers to finally find what they were looking for and then having to wait in long lines to pay. Indigo had this problem, especially during the busy holiday seasons. The company had to come up with a solution, both to avoid unhappy customers and to maximize the sales in their stores. The solution had to tackle the problem of clogged customer queues with faster, seamless checkouts. The math was simple – increase the number of shoppers in the stores by getting people in and out as fast as possible.

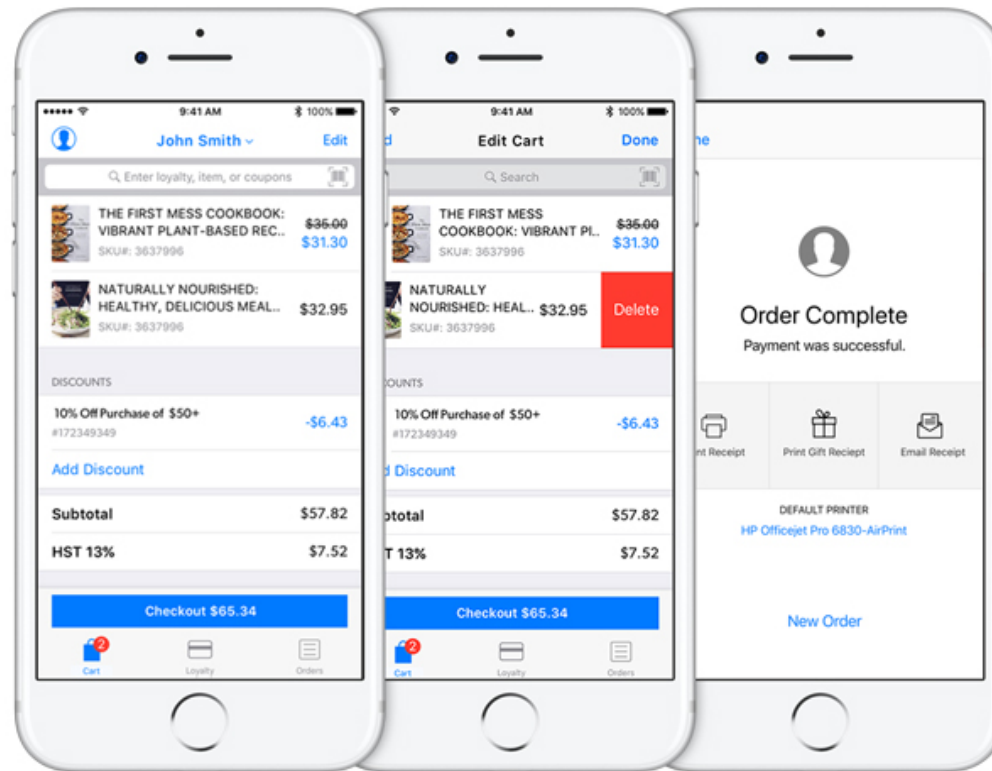
Solution

Indigo believed in leveraging mobile technology to create “stores of the future”. Their goal was to reduce the real estate of front desks and bulky POS machines as well as make payment stations and devices available across the store for convenient checkout. Indigo selected Tulip’s **mobile associate platform** and **checkout app** for their mobile checkout solution. Tulip’s intuitive design provided the ease-of-use for associates that Indigo required. The platform’s integration capabilities made it easy to integrate with Indigo’s legacy systems.

Working with Tulip, Indigo empowered their store workers with the new app and implemented a true omnichannel experience that saved customers time, drove more sales, and increased loyalty.

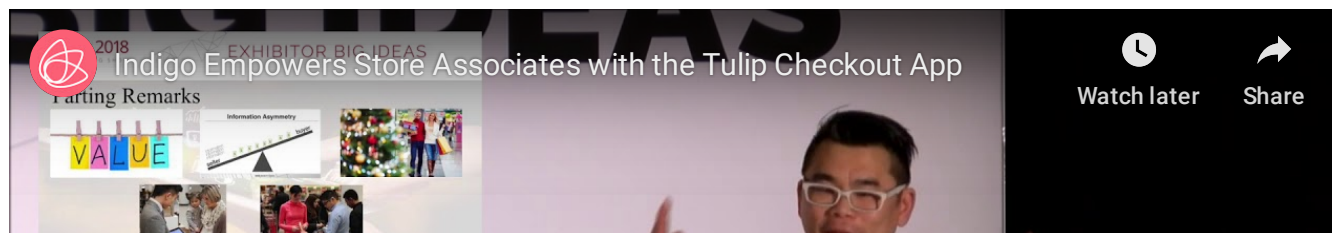
From the very outset of the partnership, Indigo and Tulip identified “Line Busting” (avoiding long waits at the checkout counter) as a critical business tactic. Indigo offered amazing product selection and promotions, but was known for having the largest lines in malls across Canada. While this popularity was positive, it was also a pain point.

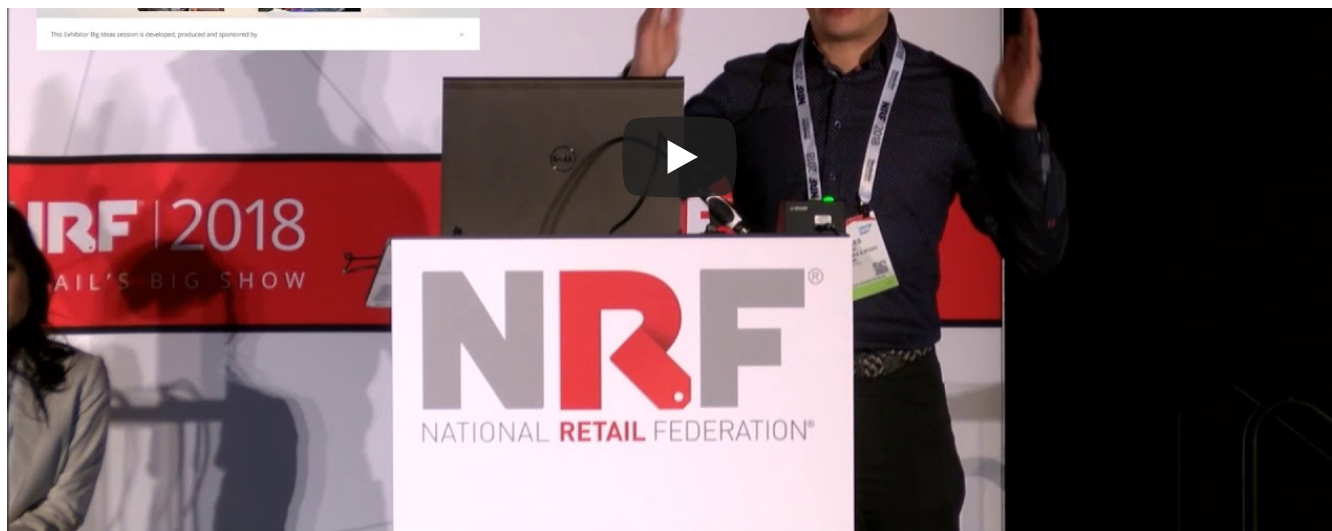
To solve this problem, Indigo rolled out the Tulip Checkout App at ten of their largest stores. The app ran on iPod touch devices and allowed the store associate to complete a seamless payment transaction for the customer anywhere in the store. The Checkout App was implemented and adopted by Indigo in Oct ‘17, before the holiday season started. It immediately resulted in a notable drop in queues at checkout counters as customers could complete their shopping transactions in the aisles, thereby ensuring a quick turnaround time and a better customer experience. Along with the benefit of “line busting”, the Tulip App allowed store workers to handle other activities including the activation, management and redemption of coupons, bonus cards and loyalty points. This empowered the store associate to complete all checkout transactions through the app and also assist the customer with information on discounted prices and loyalty point redemptions, again leading to an elevated customer experience.



Results

According to Indigo's December 2017 quarterly results, sales increased by approximately 8.2%. In-store performance significantly improved, and the Tulip Retail Checkout App was a major factor. The empowered store associates not only made customers happy with the speedy checkout process, they also enabled higher throughput in each store. Customers engaged with an associate in the aisle could checkout in less than two minutes. This rapid checkout was a great customer experience, but just as important, it also reduced the lines at the checkout counters. These shorter lines encouraged more customers to shop in their stores. In fact, Indigo's Eaton center store grossed the highest sales ever for the last financial year. The retailer accomplished this without having to invest in additional POS terminals, instead relying on mobile devices in the hands of their workers. Since its implementation in 2017, Tulip Checkout has processed millions of dollars in sales. Lines are shorter, customers are happier, and sales are growing. Indigo is meeting their primary goal – delivering a great retail store experience.





Executives from Tulip and Indigo took the stage at NRF's 2018 Big Show to discuss how retailers can leverage the benefits of empowering their front-line workers with mobile devices in order to provide customers a simple and seamless shopping experience. Ambles Kwok, VP of Technology and Digital at Indigo, described how mobile technology can help alleviate the day-to-day challenges retail associates face.

Schedule a Demo

Book a demo with Tulip expert and determine how to get started in empowering your store associates.

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