IBM enhances popular IBM SUREPOS™ Application Client/Server Environment for 4690 OS (SUREPOS ACE)

Advanced features make SUREPOS ACE even more convenient for supermarket retailers

Raleigh, N.C., 23rd February, 1999 ... IBM today introduced the powerfully enhanced Release 2 of its popular SUREPOS ACE Version 1 for supermarket retailers.

The new software includes a long list of features designed to improve convenience at the point-of-sale (POS), and address specific needs related to system automation, customer loyalty programs and reporting. Like the original SUREPOS ACE, Release 2 runs on IBM's 4690 Operating System. It supports IBM 4683, 4693 and 4694 terminals to help retailers protect their hardware investment while improving total function.

Proven, in-store performance

The new release of SUREPOS ACE has already proven its effectiveness for The Kroger Co., which worked with IBM as a development partner for the software.

"We're very happy with SUREPOS ACE Release 2," Kroger project officials said. "It's flexible and it does everything we want it to do. We implemented SUREPOS ACE as a strategic move to increase overall efficiency and make back office applications easier - and so far it is helping us attain these goals. Plus, developing this software with IBM Retail Store Solutions worked very well. It was a solid joint effort."

Run store close without operator intervention

SUREPOS ACE Release 2 allows retailers to run a complete store close automatically - without operator initiation or intervention. Users simply designate a date and time for the store close to run.

With no accountant or store manager supervision necessary, retailers can attain a remarkable new level of flexibility. Store close may be performed at the most convenient available time, including off-peak hours. Closings are no longer tied to employee schedules, freeing managers from the task of coordinating closings with supervisor availability. Total automation can also eliminate the risk of human error.

Unattended store close allows retailers to configure the same options as with a manual close. Users designate which files to close, which reports to run, the type of close (long or short) and how to handle certain errors.

Gain control of customer loyalty programs

As more and more retailers put customer loyalty programs in place, reinforcing the program at the point-of-sale and tracking results are two major concerns. Release 2 of SUREPOS ACE speaks to both issues.

New print controls allow retailers to use variable print lines on receipts, which do not print if variables are blank or zero. In other words, if a shopper's point value for a loyalty program totals zero points - or zero dollars in savings - the software automatically substitutes a blank line. So, shoppers only receive positive reinforcement of loyalty program results.

Release 2 also includes a new "Period Points Close Summary Report," which shows retailers just how well a given loyalty program is working. For example, it provides details on total points earned, the number of shoppers in various point ranges, and how many points were not carried into the latest period. With this information at their fingertips, retailers can quickly identify successful or struggling programs - and take appropriate action.

Improve accuracy of financial tracking

SUREPOS ACE Release 2 offers several new features to improve tracking and accounting. Now, retailers can track line item and department discounts by the individual department, offering a more accurate picture of departmental sales figures. The software also displays tender varieties in the "Manager's Audit Trail Report," for easy tracking of pickups and register loans. Plus, the tax plan selection feature - which currently allows retailers to perform test, edit and erase functions - now supports printing, for easier comparisons with tax code updates.

Make software modifications more easily

Two programming changes make it easier for application engineers to customize SUREPOS ACE to fit retailer-specific needs. First, a large block of common code was moved to the Shared Runtime Library (SRL) file, reducing the size of the 286 file and giving programmers more room to create applications without exceeding the 1MB boundary. Release 2 also includes new storage heap enhancements for debugging, such as an easier way to detect memory leakage and corruption in programs.

Increase customer privacy for EPS

Electronic Payment Support (EPS) receives a boost with SUREPOS ACE Release 2 as well. A single tender key accommodates all credit, debit, electronic check (ACH) and Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) tenders. Which means POS clerks no longer have to ask shoppers the tender type. This not only gives retail customers an important new degree of privacy, it simplifies transactions and reduces the risk of error. SUREPOS ACE now also supports TCP/IP communications, so a single network handles all traffic from individual PIN pads to POS terminals to store-wide systems to outside networks. This makes credit authorization faster and more convenient.

IBM Distribution Industry

IBM's Distribution Industry provides retailers, wholesalers and consumer goods manufacturers with consulting, focused on business transformation, IT strategy and planning, store operations improvement, and supply chain optimization; with services, such as outsourcing, managed operations, systems integration, and application development and design; with solutions; and with technology.

IBM SUREPOS is a trademark of International Business Machines

# # #