

# RTG Newsletter

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Published quarterly by The Retail Technology Group January, 2009

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## **FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE**

We're trying to stay optimistic notwithstanding the doom hanging over our collective heads. I have been saying to anyone that will listen that the country was over-stored. The times are proving that what was at the time (3-4 years ago) an unscientific feeling, was a fact. The phrase that causes me the most ironic smirk is 'underperforming stores.' You know, the thousands that will have been closed when the debacle is over, most of which should not have opened in the first place...

We'll recap a bit of the NRF Annual conference, soon to move to Washington D.C., and also tell you about what we are doing.

Finally, we are expanding our scope of clients.

Keep your chin up and a smile on your face!

Bob Amster - Principal, RTG

## ***The NRF Annual Conference***

By Bob Amster

The NRF Annual Conference was under attended this year. If you were to look around on Tuesday by midday, you would have thought that the conference should have been 1 and half days long. And that is sad because I believe that the trade needs trade shows.

There were three new merchandise allocation packages being shown. There was also significant emphasis on business intelligence software (B.I.), which apparently many retailers have not embraced or they might have eschewed the disasters that has befallen them. The quality of the traffic - I am told by a number of exhibitors - was better in that there were more true buyers looking seriously for solutions than there were window shoppers looking for an excuse to escape the gloomy environment of their corporate headquarters.

There was a rise in Expo Hall passes sold, which *may* hint that unless the speakers have something revealing and exciting to share, most people would rather look at the toy-like software and hardware solutions. At least with those you can push buttons, see colorful demos and be momentarily bewildered buy some glitzy 'stuff.' The size of the single-company delegations to the conference was smaller due to retrenching.

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I am also told that, conversely, 40 out of 50 member CIOs attended the CIO Council meeting at the conference which to me, means that CIOs are in search of ideas on how to cope and of solutions from each other, or that misery loves company. The saddest thing is that, for many of these individuals, budgets are frozen, and new projects are on hold. This is a very boring existence for people who predominantly like to create, like a challenge, and like to contribute to the wellbeing of the business. But, it's better than being unemployed. Most retail CIOs to whom we spoke are in a holding pattern.

The show is moving to Washington D.C. in 2010. Some speculate that the NRF is becoming more of a lobby for the industry than a fraternity within the industry and, therefore, it is important to show in D.C. If that is true, I suspect that attendance will drop further until there is no Annual Conference but just a political lobby. Shame...

## **WHAT' S NEW**

### ***Visit our Web site!***

Obtain more information about us at  
[www.RetailTechnologyGroup.com](http://www.RetailTechnologyGroup.com).

### ***In the News***

#### ***We Are Diversifying***

We find that we are particularly well suited to serve the private equity community and consequently are endeavoring to develop more relationships with funds that invest in the consumer products segment.

In addition, we are also expanding to provide services to wholesale distributors of consumer goods (some of which are also manufacturers), exemplified by the Como-Fred David engagement, below.

#### ***Town Fair Tire Centers***

We have been engaged to evaluate, help to select, and implement a paperless, wireless, mobile Proof of Delivery solution for this privately held, successful regional retailer of tires and wheels. Town Fair Tire Centers have been our loyal client for about ten years.

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## [Kal-Tire](#)

Robert Lawson continues to manage the implementation of new POS software and new POS hardware over a 200-store chain for this large Canadian tire retailer.

## [Things Remembered](#)

We just completed the initial phase of a Web site project for this mall and eCommerce retailer of engraved gifts.

## [Como-Fred David](#)

Como-Fred David is a manufacturer/distributor of apparel based in Montréal, Canada, and a portfolio company of Gordon Brothers Merchant Partners. We will be helping this company with process re-design and the implementation of an already-selected ERP software package.

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