IBM

Redefine self-service through innovative kiosk solutions.

ON DEMAND BUSINESS™

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Executive summary

Kiosks have changed. What used to be bulky, awkward units taking up valuable floor space are now self-service solutions available in sleek forms in a range of sizes and configurations that can be customized to better meet business needs. "… [D]ue to increasing competition, customer demands, and an advanced, in-store environment, retailers are pursuing the kiosk dream again."[1] No longer just for the retail environment, self-service solutions are popping up in industries including travel and transportation, communications, financial, government and healthcare. For example, travelers use kiosks to check in at airports, and human resources departments are deploying kiosks to screen potential employees and provide existing personnel with access to forms and information.

Some businesses choose to deploy a PC-in-an-enclosure kiosk offering—which houses a business PC inside an enclosure with a touch screen liquid crystal display (LCD). This white paper will discuss the benefits of true, integrated self-service solutions over PC-in-an-enclosure offerings, describe best-in-class kiosk solutions, highlight IBM's kiosk practice as an example of a best-in-class approach and show how the IBM Anyplace Kiosk is designed to be the optimal self-service technology for cross-industry environments.

Today's self-service solutions, available in a variety of form factors, offer increased opportunities but can add complexity.

Some organizations are using kiosks as consumer touch points that are available 24x7.

Businesses in multiple vertical segments are deploying self-service solutions to enable a wide variety of consumer activities.

Marketplace considerations for self-service solutions

Changing industry dynamics have created a unique competitive situation for businesses, starting with a fragmented marketplace. Today's self-service solutions are available in a variety of form factors, which offers increased opportunity, but can add complexity. High levels of customization among kiosk solutions may result in limited applicability of standard solutions across segments. Different applications, such as bridal registries, deli ordering, hotel check-in, bill payment and gaming, use a wide range of form factors (including floor, counter or wall mounts, or custom enclosures) for self-service solution deployment.[2]

Multichannel expectations are another element morphing the business setting—consumers use the Internet to research products and services before they go into stores. Kiosks help give consumers control over browsing and comparing information in the store, without perceived pressure from store associates. And some organizations are using kiosks as one of many consumer touch points that are available 24x7. Virgin Life Care selected ultra-compact IBM Anyplace Kiosks for its HealthZone health rewards program. Customers that use the HealthZone kiosks to set health goals and track key biometric data—such as blood pressure and weight—can earn points applicable toward rewards such as health club discounts and gift cards.

Customer service is the new front line. Competing on price or product selection alone can be difficult, so many companies are turning to customer service as a critical differentiator. Salespeople are using self-service solutions to view the same (or more) information about products and services that consumers may have already found online. Organizations in multiple vertical segments are deploying kiosks to enable consumers to enroll in service programs, order

PC-in-an-enclosure offerings present several challenges, including larger footprints that take up valuable space, lack of hardening for the self-service environment and lack of flexibility in deployment.

out-of-stock items, try products (and even download them digitally), such as DVDs and music, before they buy. Airlines and hotels are increasing their use of self-service solutions to help automate and speed check-in, while the entertainment industry is using compact kiosks to provide a number of services, including hospitality and gaming options, to their patrons.

PC-in-an-enclosure offerings versus an integrated kiosk solution
While a seemingly low initial purchase price is attractive, a PC-in-an-enclosure offering presents several challenges, including:

- *Footprints that take up valuable business space. Many businesses that deploy self-service solutions have space-constrained workspaces, where a PC-in-an-enclosure option might be a difficult fit.*
- *Lack of hardening for the self-service environment. A PC is not necessarily designed for harsh, customer-facing, self-service environments that may be subject to dust, dirt, grime, grease, shock, vibration, spills, magnetic fields, radio frequency interface, power surges and outages, temperature and humidity changes, and rough handling. IBM kiosks are designed to help withstand a harsh retail environment.*
- *Lack of flexibility in deployment. Typically, PC-in-an-enclosure offerings are highly customized, one-off designs that are not optimized for different mounting options or application software choices.*
- *Possible stability and support issues. A PC-in-an-enclosure offering may be more susceptible to inconsistent disk image and driver configurations, which may raise service and maintenance costs, and which may change every six months. This rate of change can potentially pose problems for organizations that want to roll out the same solution to multiple businesses or that plan to expand in the future.*

Highlights

Integrated kiosk solutions are purpose-optimized, best-in-class self-service solutions that revolve around the customer experience.

Best-in-class kiosk solutions

Integrated kiosk solutions are purpose optimized — comprising hardware, software and services designed to work together. These best-in-class, self-service solutions revolve around the customer experience and take into account the user interface, the enclosure and the applications themselves — and how they will be used in an organization's specific self-service environment. Well-designed, integrated kiosk solutions can offer hardware consistency, which allows businesses to be more confident that the kiosk platform will remain compatible with, and can integrate seamlessly into, the enterprise environment. Integrated kiosk solutions can be more stable, giving businesses the flexibility for longer-term deployment and support of their self-service devices. And manufacturers that produce all-in-one self-service solutions must understand the daily rigors that the kiosks will experience — such as spills and rough handling — and build them to help withstand such treatment. Beyond integrated self-service devices, world-class kiosk solutions incorporate best practices, including design and development, implementation and ongoing management services.

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*IBM employs a comprehensive,
leading kiosk approach that
helps enable businesses to get
the most out of their self-service
solution investments.*

*IBM's kiosk practice combines
elements including design centers,
kiosk engineering labs and flexible
service offerings to create self-
service solutions that meet
client needs.*

The IBM kiosk practice and IBM Anyplace Kiosk

To help enable businesses to capitalize on a successful self-service solution
deployment and get the most out of their investment, IBM employs a compre-
hensive, leading kiosk practice, which includes:

* *A business evaluation of an organization's self-service environment.*
* *Collaborative design services resulting in a customized enclosure and form
factor that complement a company's self-service solution.*
* *Integration and testing and rollout services, including site preparation, instal-
lation and employee training.*
* *Self-service solution management, monitoring and software distribution;
application and data management; and backup and data recovery services.*

IBM's kiosk practice combines design centers, kiosk engineering labs, self-
service specialists, an extensive network of IBM Business Partners and flexible
service offerings to build self-service solutions that meet the needs of its clients.
Providing flexible and low-cost platforms, IBM self-service kiosk offerings range
from standard, off-the-shelf installations to fully customized kiosk solutions.

The IBM Anyplace Kiosk is an innovative, self-service-optimized solution that enables businesses to deliver a rich multimedia experience.

IBM Anyplace Kiosk

Complementing its broad kiosk practice is IBM's innovative self-service-optimized device, namely the IBM Anyplace Kiosk. Whether end users are shopping, traveling, dining out or simply accessing information, organizations can deliver a rich multimedia self-service experience with the IBM Anyplace Kiosk.

- *Compelling interactive experience. A full range of screen sizes, bright image quality, outstanding graphics and audio support exciting multimedia content and applications. Plus, a presence sensor activates the kiosk when a user approaches.*
- *Ultra-compact form factor. Provides multiple deployment options—on an aisle, counter or tight wall space, or integrated into a freestanding floor mount—to help business owners place their self-service touch point where it's most relevant to their users: at the point of decision.*
- *All-in-one integrated design. Helps enable business owners to avoid purchasing separate pieces, parts or accessories and to take advantage of features and hardware that are designed to work together.*
- *Self-service hardened. Spill resistant and built to help withstand daily use and rough handling, the IBM Anyplace Kiosk is rigorously tested to meet both PC industry and IBM quality standards.*
- *Robust, stable platform. Helps enable efficient roll out of self-service solutions, and of future deployments. Choose from a variety of operating systems, including IBM Retail Environment for SUSE Linux® software, or Microsoft® Windows® software.*

Why IBM?

IBM has more than 20 years' experience in developing, testing and supporting kiosk systems worldwide. Leveraging over 30 years of retail POS experience, the IBM kiosk practice and IBM Anyplace Kiosk exemplify self-service solutions that can help differentiate a business organization. Equipped for a broad range of self-service applications in multiple industries, the IBM Anyplace Kiosk includes solutions from IBM and IBM Business Partners, such as in-aisle CD/DVD preview stations, product information, guided selling tools, self-ordering in restaurants and unattended check-in and checkout for hotel guests. IBM self-service solutions also include Ready for IBM Retail Store Innovations solutions that are pretested for use with the IBM Anyplace Kiosk. These real-world solutions can help deliver a variety of business benefits, such as enhancing the customer experience, boosting employee productivity, empowering end users and increasing revenue potential.

For more information

To learn more about the IBM Anyplace Kiosk, contact your IBM representative or visit:

ibm.com/retail/store

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1 Tamara Mendelsohn, *The Retail Kiosk Comeback,* Forrester Research, November 11, 2005.

2 Ibid.