



*Boots The Chemists and IBM  
create great chemistry*



**Retail, Health and Beauty  
IBM 4694 and IBM 4820 SurePoint**



<b>Customer</b>	Boots The Chemists
<b>Location</b>	Peterborough
<b>Retail sector</b>	Retail, Health & Beauty
<b>Business issue</b>	High-street retailer Boots needed an attractive, fast, efficient, new touch-screen terminal which was also user-friendly and future proof, for eventual roll-out to its 1,400 UK stores
<b>Solution</b>	IBM 4694 POS terminal with an IBM 4820 touch-screen, running IBM General Sales Application software jointly developed with Boots and the IBM Astra touch-screen front-end
<b>Benefits</b>	Improved efficiency and throughput, reduced queues, faster transaction and staff training time, increased selling space on a less cluttered, sleeker POS and better customer service from more confident staff

**High-street health and beauty retailer Boots The Chemists has reaped the rewards of installing the IBM 4694 POS terminal in combination with IBM 4820 SurePoint touch-screens, cutting queues, increasing efficiency and vastly improving customer service.**

Boots The Chemists is a high-profile retailer familiar to millions of shoppers all over Britain and beyond. With 1,400 UK stores and 62,000 employees, upgrading point-of-sale terminals is an enormous task. So when Boots, a long-standing IBM customer, decided to upgrade terminals in its busy Peterborough store, it knew who to turn to.

Neil Mathieson, Senior Project Manager for Boots, tells about the successful combination of the 4694 terminals and 4820 touch-screens:

“The primary objective was to streamline our more complicated and time-consuming transactions, such as selling travel insurance. To retailers, time is money and the IBM solution has proved its worth by speeding up some processes by 75%.”

**Seven times easier**

The previous terminals at the Peterborough store were up to 15 years old, so Boots managers decided that, that store was the perfect place to road-test the 4694 solution. IBM and Boots technicians installed 42 new terminals in time to put the POS to the ultimate test – the Christmas rush.

“It was a huge help that the new solution was implemented just before our busiest time of year,” says Neil Mathieson. “Thanks to the 4694, our supervisors spent 90% of their time attending to customers instead of 90% of time on the tills! It was a complete turnaround. The new solution meant increased throughput, shorter queues and happier customers – all essential benefits in the retail industry.”

Another valuable benefit was the ease of use of the terminal and touch-screen, which produced dramatic savings in staff training time. Says Neil Mathieson, “It used to take us up to six hours to train a staff member to use the previous terminals. Because the 4694 is much more intuitive and user-friendly, it has cut training time by a factor of seven to just 45 minutes.”

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*Neil Mathieson, Senior Project Manager, Boots The Chemists*

### **Soft solution**

The IBM General Sales Application software solution is a tried and trusted IBM application used by Boots on its previous POS system. The company decided to build on its 15-year investment in this software by retaining it at the back-end and adding the cutting-edge, Java-based, Astra touch-screen interface. Because the Astra software was jointly developed by IBM and Boots, seamless integration, scalability and simplified processes were ensured.

Neil Mathieson explains how IBM tailored Astra to the company's requirements. “IBM used our feedback to modify the development tool to provide us with additional capability. They were very good at listening to our suggestions and responding to our needs. We have an excellent partnership. We also used our store staff in designing the look and feel of the screen software, leading to a better tailored offering.”

Thanks to the IBM solution, staff resources have now been optimised and efficiency at the point of sale has increased markedly. Neil Mathieson lists the improvements: “There are so many soft benefits from using the new 4694 and 4820 touch-screen; everything, including help, is available on screen, it is much faster to process certain products and staff are much quicker and better at using the terminals. It saves time and trouble all round.”

### **A screen dream**

As well as being fast and simple to use, the new POS system looks a lot sleeker. Neil Mathieson says, “Because the screen takes up far less room than a keyboard, the new solution has tidied up the point-of-sale area and released valuable selling space. It looks much better – more modern and better suited to Boots' overall image.”

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) is a priority for Boots and with over twelve million Advantage Card holders, customer loyalty is paramount. The 4694/4820 solution will help the company in its pursuit of excellent service and customer satisfaction. Neil Mathieson explains:

“Knowing our customers is the main thing; we want to eliminate the concept of the back-office because in retail the goal is to use your time effectively at the front-end, serving customers. The IBM terminal helps us do this by centralising both information and function – eventually we'll even put the Boots Intranet onto the screens.”

Asked whether the 4694 and 4820 combination has lived up to hopes, Neil Mathieson is very positive: “We trusted IBM, and its products have exceeded our expectations. The screens have worked perfectly – no outages, no bugs. It's been a dream installation!”

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*Neil Mathieson, Senior Project Manager, Boots The Chemists*





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