



## CASE STUDY

Expert Hardware was founded in 2005 by five independent hardware store owners with the aim of creating a brand based on excellence in customer service, product knowledge and value for the consumer. The group is driven by the members, for the members and by combining resources across the areas of marketing, branding and purchasing, we facilitate our members in competing effectively in the marketplace and maximising returns.

Expert Hardware delivers value and competitive advantage to its members across a range of business areas. One such area is technology.

As many members do not have the time or resources to undertake a study of the marketplace in relation to Electronic Point of Sale solutions, a project was established to undertake this on their behalf. After an extensive RFP and evaluation process, the group appointed Retail Integration as the preferred supplier to the group with their Meridian EPOS system.



The first Expert Hardware store to go live was Expert Hardware in Ranelagh on the 1<sup>st</sup> March of this year, followed by Expert Crumlin which went live in April.

*“Even after only a month of live operation, the business benefits of investing in such a system are clear to be seen. Old, time consuming and potentially error prone manual business processes and procedures are a thing of the past. In today’s business environment, having accurate, real-time management information is critical to the success of any business. With the Meridian system, there is no end to such information.” Brian Beegan, Expert Ranelagh.*

Stock management is another critical area when managing a retail business. Sales analysis information allows you to ensure you are holding the optimum level of each stock item, which often varies depending on the time of year in many cases. This not only ensures that sales are not lost through being out of stock but also helps to minimise the amount of cash tied up in over stocked items. In a non-EPOS environment, stock taking a range in excess of 5,000 items is a time consuming and labour intensive task. This process is greatly enhanced and indeed simplified by the Meridian system.



Brian Beegan, Expert Ranelagh with Paul Clarke from Retail Integration

*“Sales information is available at your fingertips analysed in any format from hourly to daily, weekly, monthly or any period you want to review. Sales can be reported on by individual product, product groupings or even sales assistant. The ability to easily configure promotions and special offers is critical to any business and Meridian offers a range of options in this area. Margin management and profit analysis is also available at the touch of a button, allowing the retailer to maximise returns.”*

Meridian is fully integrated with Big Red Book and is compatible with other accountancy packages such as Sage to provide the back end accounting system where further efficiencies are gained by automation of otherwise manual processes.

Support is a vital component of any system installation. *“Retail Integration operates a system whereby the specialist who installs your system is on hand on a one to one basis for a period afterwards, so project managing the entire process from pre-install to post-install. This may sound simple but is in fact of significant benefit. Having dealt with the support personnel since implementation, I can safely say that their support is second to none.”*

*“If one looks at the investment overall, the amount by which you have to improve your bottom line to pay for the system is surprisingly low and makes the investment decision a real no brainer.” Brian Beegan, Expert Ranelagh.*



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*"We are only in the initial stages of installing our new EPOS system but can already see the benefits on a daily basis. Our invoicing and receipts are much more professional and detailed and the analysis we have at the touch of a few buttons is superb. I look forward to fully completing the installation side and realising all the benefits of our new EPOS system." Alan Feighery, Expert Crumlin.*