

Viking heats up sales with NCR/ReadyTouch kiosk

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contributor

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Range roving

With thousands of options and colors to choose from, the full line of high-end kitchen appliances and accessories from Viking Range Corporation sometimes proves difficult to display completely and effectively on dealers' sales floors.



Photo courtesy of ReadyTouch

Viking's product kiosks help both customers and sales staff, providing information on products and accessories customized for the individual store

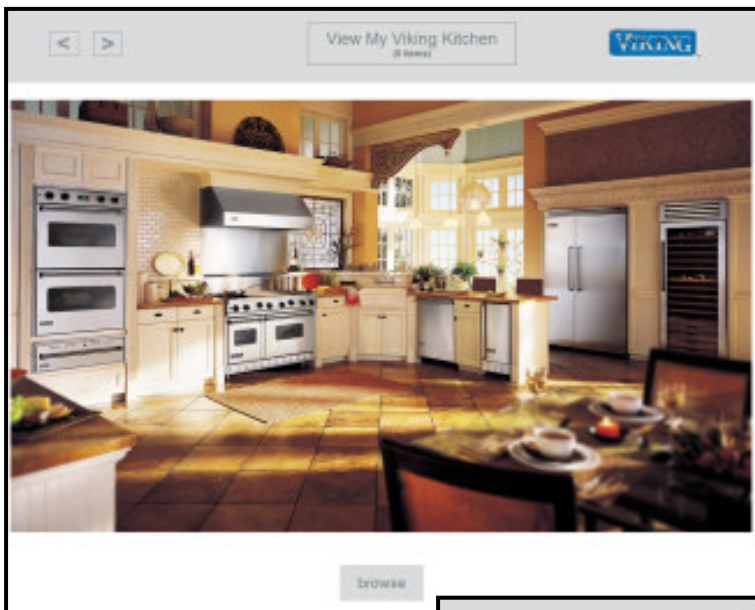
Viking, headquartered in Greenwood, Miss., uses a two-tier system of independent distributors and more than 2,000 dealers across the United States. Prices may vary from one market to another and, because of the array of products and the sheer physical size of eight-burner ranges and massive refrigerators, many retailers can display only a portion of the line.

To help dealers and customers access product and pricing information and design custom kitchen installations, Viking turned to ReadyTouch and NCR for an in-store solution. NCR supplied the hardware and ReadyTouch developed the software for kiosks that would aid customers as well as salespeople.



“This system is deployed as a tool for the salesman and can be utilized by veterans on the floor as well as salespeople that are new to the Viking product line,” said Bob Woods, vice president of sales for Viking. “At the same time, consumers that are looking for information on the Viking product line can access and use the system to answer their questions. It is a very simple and intuitive system to use.”

Each kiosk can be customized for the individual store, displaying only the product and accessories that particular store sells. The kiosk draws product information from the database used by the Viking Web site, so there is no duplication of work or data. Updated information is pushed to the kiosks through a patent-pending system developed by ReadyTouch.



The kiosk supplements the distributor’s catalogs, providing images of every finish and configuration of each product, which the catalogs can’t offer. By using the kiosk’s “Design My Kitchen” function, customers and sales associates can configure an entire kitchen installation in minutes.

Chris Parisis, owner of two stores in California, said, “The ReadyTouch Kiosk is a wonderful tool. It’s constantly used by customers just browsing and by our sales staff to get access to product information. It’s especially helpful for sales associates — they can much more easily sell Viking appliances.”



Viking expects to see benefits in three areas. The first is in increased sales, “because it will be easier to up sell and cross-sell products because customers can see them,” Woods said.

Second on the list is fewer mistakes. Customers will be able to make sure all the elements have the same trim or the proper backguard included in the order. The kiosk is designed to warn customers if they select kitchen elements that will not work together. For instance, ranges with a char-grill option require certain ventilation hoods. The system will ensure the customer selects the proper hood for the selected range.

Once a kitchen has been designed, the kiosk prints the model number and pricing information for the sales associate to write the order. With a full-size color printer, salespeople also can print brochures with the store’s name, logo and pricing information customized for each customer.

Finally, the system provides reports on what items customers look at before they buy. The system will give Viking reports that compare what customers look at to what they actually buy. “For the first time, a manufacturer can see directly onto the sales floor and who is looking at what items,” said Peter Bostwick, ReadyTouch’s chief executive officer.

“This is a great example of extending outside of the traditional grocery or merchandiser to leverage our family of products and partners to create compelling solutions in other industries,” said Mike Webster, NCR’s vice president and general manager for self-service.



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