

Making the Transition to Intelligent, Connected Stores



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Every day, supermarket food retailers and foodservice operators are looking for ways to reduce energy consumption, equipment and system downtime, or general maintenance costs. But, the first challenge operators face is not knowing what their actual operating performance levels are. To understand this, they need real-time and reliable access to performance data in their stores. The move toward more intelligent, connected stores is providing this information.

Supermarket food retailers and foodservice operators both want to improve operational performance, but their day-to-day business challenges are significantly different.

The food retailer seeks to create a great in-store shopping experience, providing a variety of quality foods and brands. Energy consumption — driven mostly by HVAC, refrigeration, lighting and maintenance costs — tends to be their biggest challenge.

Supermarket retailers have led the way in connectivity. For years, they've employed electronic store and system controls to better manage and control their equipment. And, they've integrated these controls with their IT networks to gain access to real-time performance data. But this hasn't happened across the board, and particularly in older stores, the opportunity to drive better



store performance still exists.

In foodservice, the drivers for equipment and building system connectivity are unique. Operators are in business to provide quality meals with speed and accuracy during breakfast, lunch and dinner. Their biggest challenge is the efficiency of the service processes, and the reliability of the equipment that makes up the “food factory.” And, they need access to a strong service network often made up of preferred local technicians.

A typical foodservice store utilizes 40–45 pieces of equipment; most have electronic controls embedded in the equipment. But, unlike food retail, foodservice operators have not integrated store controls to enable an intelligent, connected environment. It would seem like common sense for them to want the capability to remotely manage equipment to ensure reliable operation, predict failures and resolve equipment issues before they occur — even program new menu options in real time. So why hasn't the connected concept taken off in foodservice? There are several reasons.

1. To become “connected,” a store needs both store and equipment controls that can communicate with each other. Most store controls for small-format retailers have been oversized and are too expensive.
2. An IT infrastructure for connectivity and communication is required (i.e., WiFi, LAN, GSM, etc.). Most foodservice operators have not invested in this capability.
3. Contractors have not supported the move to electronic controls. It represents new technology and a new learning curve.

Today, we're working on solutions that address these foodservice challenges for small-format retailers. Our new ecoSYS site supervisory control platform enables communication between embedded equipment in the store. We've designed it to be easy to install and operate, and it's affordable. We believe that the connected foodservice store is coming soon, and we are excited to help the industry make this transition.

Clarification from *E360 Outlook* Volume 1 Issue 2

In the article that appeared in our previous *E360 Outlook* entitled “DOE Regulations Drive Significant Energy Reductions,” we summarized the DOE's recommendations to comply with its 2017–2018 Final Rules on walk-ins, reach-ins and ice machines. Our intent was only to explore the design options and subsequent supply chain implications associated with the DOE recommendations and is not an endorsement or position by Emerson that the minimum efficiency levels established by the DOE can be achieved by the component or equipment changes itemized by the DOE. The article represents our deep awareness of the issues at hand and reflects a proactive response to the significant challenges imposed by these regulations.