

Pandemic Series:

The impact of technology & the role of Conexus

This pandemic article series takes an analytical look at the impact technology has made on our industry through the COVID-19 crisis. We are asking our members: What did our industry learn? How have they adapted? And what role does Conexus take as an industry leader and partner?

Prepared by



What technology is helping you handle the national coin crisis?

And the hits keep coming for our industry!

On the surface, a lack of coins may seem like a simple problem. While dealing with a global pandemic and EMV rollouts, a dramatic drop in coins in circulation can seem like a drop in the bucket. And it makes sense that we are having a problem with cents right now. The pandemic meant everyone wanted contactless payments overnight, and customers stopped taking in change to CoinStar when they stopped going inside their grocery stores. You can't even turn in your change at the bank without making an appointment first. And because circulation was high before the pandemic, the U.S. Mint recently decreased coin production, further contributing to the shortage now.

The problem becomes complex when you consider the balancing of our cash drawers and the needs of our customers. Convenience stores have a high percentage of lower income and possibly unbanked customers who cannot simply switch to debit or credit. They pay in cash because that is all they have. According to Jeff Lenard, VP of Strategic Industry Initiatives at NACS, 40% of in-store purchases and 14% of outside transactions are paid in cash. The convenience industry cannot afford to ignore our cash customers. We need to get coins back into our stores.

So, what can we do to keep customers happy, balance our tills, and make it through to the other side of this shortage?

Conexus members have created some options to assist retailers in this struggle:

Round up for Charity

Point of sale providers have worked to provide a "round up" for charity option in their software updates. This option is new for some providers, but others have had the round-up functionality for a while. If your point of sale is not currently capable of this, contact your provider to see if they have a new update available with this capability.

Encourage Paying in Coins

Mr. Lenard offered some examples of what retailers are doing to encourage customers to pay with coins or to bring their coins in to trade:

- [Select 7-Eleven](#) stores are asking customers to bring in \$5 in spare change in exchange for a credit in the same amount and a free Slurpee.
- The one-store [Stop and Go Mini Mart](#), which operates a Growler Guys concept in Bend, OR, is offering \$1.05 on the dollar if customers bring in change.
- [Sheetz](#) is encouraging customers to bring in loose change to donate to its employee-run charity Sheetz for the Kidz. Sheetz also offers the option of receiving change on a Sheetz Z-card gift card or cents added to the customer's Sheetz loyalty club account.
- [QuikTrip](#) offers multiple ways to provide change:
 1. They provide a code on the customer's receipt that credits the change to a future purchase.
 2. They can place the change on a gift card.
 3. Customers can round up to donate their change to Folds of Honor to support military families.
 4. QuikTrip is also encouraging customers to bring in change to be counted at the store.

PLU Workaround

Ken England of Clipper Petroleum is using a clever process to overcome the shortage until his point of sale provider's new release is available:

"This is what we did two years ago - We had to come up with an alternative plan since none of our point of sales in use would allow us to create an automatic 'round up' functionality. This process was easily

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implemented by our field personnel and quickly adopted by our clerks.

“Accounting loved it because they only needed to know the sales for that department on a daily basis to allocate the money to the Clipper Petroleum Foundation.”

The good news is – more and more point of sale providers are adding round up for charity functionality and are working hard to help the retailers in our industry through this national coin crisis. In the meantime, the options above allow us to balance our tills, hopefully keep our customers smiling, and do some good. It is compelling to see how much disruption we have experienced in the past five months.

Let's keep solving forward!

Clipper Petroleum's very simple workaround:

- > Create a charity/donations department on the POS Department; it should be non-taxable.
- > In the pricebook, create 105 new items:
 - PLU 5001 has a price of \$0.99
 - PLU 5002 has a price of \$0.98
 - All the way to PLU 5099 which has a price of \$0.01
- > Add a few more in case someone wants to add a whole dollar amount:
 - 5100 = \$1
 - 5200 = \$2
 - 5500 = \$5
- > From the clerk's perspective, the process is intuitive, and we never need them to calculate the donation amount.
- > Ring up all the items that the customer is purchasing and press the button to display the total owed.
- > Ask the customer if they want to round up to the next even dollar.
- > If they say yes, the clerk just uses the last 2 digits of the total to determine which PLU to use.
- > For example, if the guest's total was \$5.37, and they agreed to the roundup to the next dollar, then the clerk entered 5037 as the PLU (which has a value of \$0.63).

Partnering with Conexus

Conexus enables all industry stakeholders to improve their profitability by providing data and operations standards, technology innovation and advocacy. Our work reduces the implementation costs, maintenance and time-to-market of enterprise system automation. Our community is comprised of the brightest technologists in the industry; providing clarity in a complex technology landscape and ready network to help your company maximize its technology investments. Our involvement, in partnership with NACS, with broad-market vendors, standards bodies and regulatory entities ensures the technology landscape comprehends our industry's interests.

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and be a part of the solution.



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