

Grocery store chain mixes high and low tech to increase sales

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(PhysOrg.com) -- In a marketing strategy that can only be described as brilliant; brilliant enough to win the Media Grand Prix award at the Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity, advertising agency Cheil Worldwide Seoul, conceived the idea of taking life size photographs of a clients grocery store items, pasting them on subway walls to make them look like grocery store shelves, and then allowing prospective shoppers to shop via snapping Quick Response (QR) codes with their cell phones, while waiting for their train.

The client, Tesco's, Home Plus, in South Korea, the second largest grocer in the country, found that after covering the walls of a single subway station with sharp clear pictures of their goods, their online sales increased 130%.

The whole thing works using existing technology. First photographs are taken of entire [grocery store](#) sections; the photographs are then blown up to life-size renditions; then QR codes are applied. Next the photographs or billboards are pasted to the plastic back-lit wall sections already in place in a subway station. Home Plus members then simply walk up to a billboard and snap a picture of the QR code with their smart phone, which automatically adds the item to the customer's virtual grocery cart. When finished shopping, the customer pays at the virtual checkout counter. The purchased items are then delivered directly to the customer's home at the end of the work day, thus relieving them of having to stop for something on the way.

The idea merges [QR code](#) technology, which has been in use for several years, chiefly as a means to allow customers to redeem virtual coupons, with online grocery shopping, which has been around for some fifteen years, taking what must assuredly be, a first step into a truly innovative marketing strategy.

The current system is part of a three month advertising campaign, one which resulted in a 76% increase in registered members, and was meant to trim the lead rival E-Mart holds in the marketplace. No doubt the system will be expanded to full time if the increase in sales carries past the cost of placing the enormous billboards in the subway stations.

If the strategy continues to pay off, it's likely the same approach will be adopted by other vendors around the world and applied in a myriad of ways to entice buyers into buying goods wherever they may happen to be, standing, sitting or waiting.

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