

A guest at the Singapore Retail Industry Conference and Exhibition 2019 using an unmanned booth by Pick & Go. The booth eliminates the need for cashiers, with shoppers paying for their purchases by tapping in and out of gateways. ST PHOTO: NG SOR LUAN



Enterprise S'pore sees scope for unmanned stores

Format offers fresh customer experience, reduces manpower needs

Melissa Heng

With convenience stores leading the way in unmanned stores, planners see scope for similar formats in the wider retail sector.

At the Singapore Retail Industry Conference and Exhibition 2019 yesterday, three home-grown retailers showcased new concepts using technology such as radio-frequency identification (RFID), cashless payments and artificial intelligence (AI) that let shoppers enter stores and buy items without having to interact with a salesperson.

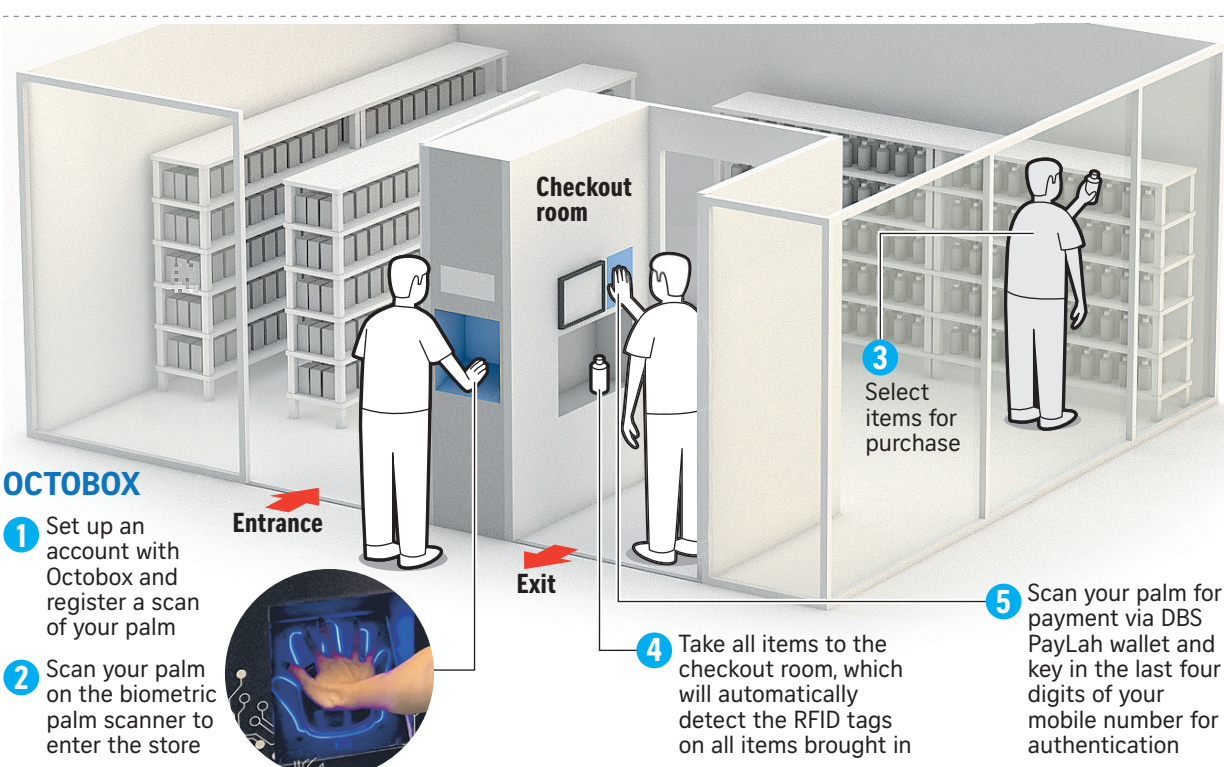
The companies – Pick & Go, Octobox and OMO Store – developed their innovative ideas with support from government agency Enterprise Singapore.

Mr Alan Yeo, director of the retail and design division at Enterprise Singapore, said unmanned stores deliver a fresh experience for customers while boosting productivity by reducing the manpower traditionally needed to run the stores.

The stores said inventory management, cashiering and cash counting can be automated, improving productivity by more than 50 per cent. Intelligent analytics can be used to map shopper habits and enable retailers to adapt product mix, displays and layouts.

Mr Yeo said: “While convenience store operators are leading the adoption of the unmanned store format, we see potential for such

How the unmanned stores work



OMO STORE

- Set up an account with OMO Store
- Scan QR code from OMO Store's mobile app to enter the store
- Select items for purchase
- Take all items to the checkout kiosk, which will scan the RFID tags on all items
- Pay via cashless payment options including credit card, Nets and GrabPay

PICK & GO

- Set up an account with Pick & Go
- Scan QR code from Pick & Go's mobile app to enter the store or submit pictures of yourself via the app to enter the store via facial recognition
- Select items for purchase and artificial intelligence will automatically log the items in your virtual cart
- Exit the store when you are done shopping and your selected items will automatically be charged to your account with payment options including Mastercard and Visa

Sources: OCTOBOX, OMO STORE, PICK & GO STRAITS TIMES GRAPHICS

New centre brings myopia care closer to community

Cheryl Teh

A new myopia centre in Bedok North aims to boost the way Singapore tackles the growing problem by bringing specialist care closer to communities.

Run by doctors from the Singapore National Eye Centre (SNEC), the clinic, which opened yesterday, will provide comprehensive care, especially for patients suffering from high myopia, and at the same time carry out research.

Senior Minister of State for Transport and Health Lam Pin Min said there is a need for more such centres in the heartland, given that Singapore has one of the highest rates of myopia in the world – with close to nine in 10 citizens above the age of 18 expected to suffer from the condition by 2050.

Already, “65 per cent of our children tend to develop myopia by Primary 6”, he said, with the number growing to 83 per cent by the time they become young adults.

Singapore is often labelled as the “myopia capital of the world”, said Dr Lam, adding that in three decades, it is projected that 80 per cent to 90 per cent of all Singaporean adults will be myopic, with as many as a quarter of them suffering from high myopia. Couple that with the “increasing eye care needs of our ageing population”, it has become necessary to explore new models of care.



An optometrist at the Bedok North myopia centre carrying out an eye test on a child from PCF Sparkletots yesterday. The clinic, which opened yesterday, will provide comprehensive care, especially for patients suffering from high myopia, and at the same time carry out research. PHOTO: LIANHE ZHAOBAO

“Over-reliance on specialist care to manage myopia will not be sustainable,” Dr Lam said.

Instead, the centre’s optometrists will play more of a role in assessing those with myopia, instead of relying on specialists.

Since the centre’s soft launch in June, its optometrists have seen around 600 patients. The numbers are expected to grow to 1,000 to 2,000 patients every three months.

Dr Wong Tien Yin, medical director of the SNEC, said: “Here, our optometrists take the lead with man-

65%

Percentage of children with the tendency to develop myopia by Primary 6, according to Senior Minister of State for Transport and Health Lam Pin Min.

80-90%

Projected percentage of Singaporean adults who will be myopic, in three decades.

aging patient care, supervised by the specialists, so specialists do not need to see every patient. This centre runs on quite an efficient model, which will allow us to see a larger number of people.”

The SNEC is working with Singapore Polytechnic to provide its students with clinical attachments and internships at the myopia centre.

“Working with the SNEC myopia centre allows our Diploma in Optometry students to further experience first-hand the challenges in managing myopia and other eye disorders within the community,” said

Dr Adrian Yeo Chao Chuang, director of the School of Chemical and Life Sciences at the polytechnic.

The SNEC also launched an illustrated picture book on good vision care and habits for parents and children yesterday.

Titled Amanda The Panda: Outdoor Play Keeps Myopia Away and co-authored by the clinical directors of the centre, it will be made available at primary schools and libraries, and can also be bought at local bookstores for \$12.90.

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Trio arrested over robbery at Ang Mo Kio jewellery shop

Lester Wong

He tried to conceal his identity with a motorcycle helmet and dark clothing, but within 36 hours of allegedly robbing a jewellery shop in Ang Mo Kio on Wednesday, police had nabbed M. Jegatheesh, 27, and his two accomplices.

The first suspect was picked up within 15 hours of the police receiving a report at 4.09pm on Wednesday that the shop at Block 574 Ang Mo Kio Avenue 10 was being robbed.

Senior Assistant Commissioner Lian Ghim Hua, who is deputy director of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), said pre-

liminary investigations showed that the robbery involved deliberate planning and execution.

More than 120 officers from the CID, Police Intelligence Department, Ang Mo Kio Police Division, Bedok Police Division and Woodlands Police Division worked on the case.

After reviewing hours of CCTV footage, and having conducted in-

vestigations on the ground, they swooped in on the suspects, who were arrested separately in Marsiling, Woodlands and Whampoa West.

Besides Jegatheesh, who was charged in court yesterday with robbery with common intention, police also picked up Veeramani Subran Das, 31, and Sharavindran Suppiah, 36. They will be charged

in court today.

They are alleged to have stolen \$100,000 worth of jewellery before making their getaway in a car.

Two elderly Chinese men, who are brothers, own the Hock Cheong Jade and Jewellery shop. They were inside the shop during the robbery, but neither was harmed.

Police said the stolen items have

since been recovered.

If convicted, the suspects could be jailed for up to 10 years and given at least six strokes of the cane.

“This is a brazen robbery committed in broad daylight. The main robbery suspect went to great lengths to conceal his identity to evade detection and arrest,” said SAC Lian. “Despite that, the suspects were arrested within 36 hours. I would like to commend the tenacity and strong team work of the various police units.”

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