



## 15 Reasons You Shouldn't Have Missed RetailNOW 2015

By Amber Murdock

For three and a half days in a steamy Floridian setting, the only industry association representing the point of sale and retail technology industry held its annual tradeshow and networking event. RSPA's RetailNOW event is often called the "must attend" event for anyone selling POS, but this year's event in Orlando, FL was more energetic than ever: a real "don't miss." But, in case you did, here are 15 reasons why you really should have been there:

### 1. The Welcome Reception that couldn't be stopped.

The Orlando area was rain-drenched for several days, including during the time RetailNOW started. Even the original location of the event's Awards Reception, the Emerald Plaza, was not immune. Quickly relocated to the Sun Foyer near the Event Registration desk, the party didn't stop. And the Reception-goers were treated to a packed house, filled with music, food, and exceptional networking.

### 2. Kelly Funk's "Out of this World" Welcome Address

Complete with CO<sub>2</sub> blasts and a 2 minute video depicting a space shuttle blast-off. RSPA President and CEO kicked off the 2015 RetailNOW Event in an epic fashion. Quickly followed by an address of encouragement in her "Perception vs. Reality" speech, which featured a demo of Samsung's GearVR (talk about perception!) as well as an unveiling of RSPA's newly minted mission statement, and exciting association-related announcements, including the upcoming launch of a new website and a revamped Certification program.

### 3. Annual Member Meeting Featuring Electronic Voting

Four open seats on the RSPA Board of Directors were at stake when the Member Meeting was called to order at 10:15am on Monday, August 3. After using an electronic voting mechanism for the first time at an RSPA member event, Bob Bauer (BMC); BJ Maynard (Management Control Systems), and Paul Leduc (Globe POS) were elected for terms on the Board. And voting at RSPA may never be the same.

### 4. Community Luncheons with Experts

Always a mix of education and networking, the three Community Luncheons—W2W, Canadian, and the brand new Entrepreneur—stepped up a notch by featuring speakers with specific expertise. In the Canadian Networking event, RSPA Attorney, Bob Goldberg made a special appearance and provided insight and advice to Canadian resellers. W2W Community members received a unique workshop on Communications from Georgetown University professor, Dr. Jeanine Turner. And Entrepreneur Community participants were treated to an intimate conversation with the "world's #1 Entrepreneurial Guru," Michael E. Gerber.



**5. A Fun First Look: Carnival Style**

Popcorn, Candy, Pizza... for free! The First Look Reception (sponsored by World Pay) was a unique event (another RetailNOW first) which allowed showgoers to see the products and enjoy the whimsy of food carts that were circulating throughout the show floor.

**6. 33 Education Sessions**

33 sessions presented 5 topic areas for RetailNOW eventgoers to choose from: Security in the Era of Insecurity, Building Successful Businesses, Practical Technologies, Hot Topics in Technology, and POS' New Era, many sessions during the two mornings of education were standing room only.

**7. Hollywood Style Kudos for the Industry's Best**

RSPA rolled out the red carpet on Tuesday, August 4 to honor the best in the retail tech industry. VSR partnered with the association to present 8 Innovative Solutions Awards in 4 categories, and 19 awards were handed out to Vendor members of the RSPA, in 5 categories. ISV Future POS took top honors, winning the 2015 Gold Medallion award.

**8. An Industry Legend inducted into the RSPA Hall of Fame.**

Heralded as a diplomat and class act, the inimitable Clarence Wiggins joined other industry trailblazers in RSPA's Hall of Fame. Honored with remarks from mentees Wayne Williams (Macro Integrations), BJ Maynard (Managed Control Systems) and Lou Collie, the award was presented to Wiggins' daughter, Valeria Wiggins Davidson.

**9. Show Floor Wows and Surprises.**

The RetailNOW Show Floor could have been easily mistaken for a Black Friday morning sale with the rush of attendees going in the front door as soon as it opened. The two days of the show floor did not disappoint. Dozens of exhibiting companies announced new products and partnerships, embodying the electric energy of the show floor. With three cutting edge pavilions, and row after row of booths, the show floor definitely had the excitement of a post-Thanksgiving sale.

**10. Morning General Sessions: Better than Coffee**

Each morning kicked off with an opening session that really "got engines running" (pun intended). Kelly Funk's address was the first, but the next two mornings really brought out some RSPA heavy hitters. The RetailNOW Jam Band made a triumphant, acoustical return on Tuesday morning, providing an upbeat and rhythmic intro for keynote speaker Ken Schmidt, former Director of Communications at Harley Davidson. Schmidt promptly proceeded to knock the socks off everyone in attendance. On Wednesday, August 5, RSPA's hottest in-house speaker, Bob Goldberg, took the stage to open the last morning of the event. Walking through the QIR agreement, and providing the cautionary warning that "everyone needs to have a breach plan," Goldberg took the data security topic by the horns in a riveting address.



#### 11. Vendor Presence

RetailNOW 2015 saw the entrance of new vendors on the Show Floor, as well as vendors who took on sponsorship roles at the event. More than 95% of the education sessions were led by RSPA vendor members, and vendors also brought partner meetings on-site. For any solution provider in the POS space, RetailNOW 2015 was a smorgasbord of potential products, partnerships, and possibility.

#### 12. A Powerhouse Panel

Rounding out the final morning of the show, Kelly Funk brought together a panel of industry leaders to provide some actionable and thoughtful insight before event attendees went back to their businesses. Greg Dixon (ScanSource), Henry Helgeson (Cayan), Joe Majka (VeriFone), Oliver Manahan (MasterCard), David Shaw (Postec), and Jeff Yelton (Ingram Micro) had a reflective conversation and some great advice for the Channel.

#### 13. Hot Topics

EMV, Omnichannel, Tablets, Data, Tokenization, Mobile POS, M&A. These topics and many more are buzzing throughout the channel. RetailNOW 2015 was no different—except that those who want to talk about these topics, those who have expertise in these topics, and those who have technology to address these topics were brought together in one place.

#### 14. Networking Events

If you're looking to make connections in the industry, RetailNOW remains the #1 place to do so. There were more than 14 RetailNOW related networking functions, as well as many other networking lunches, receptions, dinners and parties sponsored by vendor members and their special guests.

#### 15. Right Place at the Right Time.

Between lively receptions, energy-filled mornings of general sessions, timely education sessions, show floor exhibits that offered an exclusive glimpse into the future of the industry, as well as the gathering of an association that continues to evolve with the times, RetailNOW is always the right place for anyone in POS. But, the rapid pace of change, the convergence of technologies and the increasing rate of partnerships—not to mention the opportunities that await an agile Channel—this is definitely the right time to be a part of both the event, and the Association that runs it.