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The use of new retail technologies could triple if customers understood their true value, reveals Hitachi Consulting UK

- New technologies like QR codes, in-store iPads and self-service checkouts represent an untapped opportunity for retailers, new research reveals -

LONDON, UK, November 19th, 2012 - Hitachi Consulting UK, a recognised leader in delivering proven business IT strategies and technology solutions, has today released new research that reveals that only 12% of Britons have ever scanned a QR code when shopping – but that three times this number would be willing to do so if they believed that it would offer them added value in the form of discounts, rewards or a more personalised service.

For those aged between 18 and 24, this jump is even higher, with 82% of those surveyed reporting that they would use a QR code if they felt that they could gain some value from it – a four-fold increase from the number of young people who are using this technology right now. Nearly three quarters (71%) of respondents in this age group also revealed that the ability to pay for purchases via a handheld card scanner – and therefore beat the queues – would be the technological development that would improve their shopping experience the most.

Overall, 40% of those surveyed agreed that new technologies that can make checkout more efficient would be the most desirable, followed closely by the availability of in-store iPads or internet kiosks, as long as they served a practical purpose, such as checking product availability and/or arranging delivery without having to rely on the sales staff.

The survey of 1,000 UK consumers aged between 18 and 55+ was in support of Hitachi Consulting UK's research into the 'Shopping Particle', the term used to describe the exact moment in every retail transaction when the customer makes the decision to buy a particular product, whether online or in-store, at a particular price and from a particular retailer.

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The Hitachi Consulting UK study gauged consumers' perceptions and preferences on many different aspects of the shopping experience, and uncovered a wealth of information related to customers' buying behaviours. Its findings will help retailers to tap into the specific customer insight that they will need to drive sales, boost profits and increase customer retention.

Chris Gates, director of retail at Hitachi Consulting UK explains:

“Although it's probably not surprising to hear that QR codes and in-store iPads are mainly being used by a small group of early adopters, it's interesting to note how quickly interest in these technologies soars as soon as consumers can see the point of using them.”

“Successful retailers already know that consumers want good value and efficient service, but they need to start thinking about how the latest technology can enhance both of these areas, whether that means more personalised discounts and promotions or just a faster checkout. Consumers clearly have an appetite for using these new tools, but only if retailers can use them to add value to the shopping experience, and then communicate these benefits to their customers effectively.”

About Hitachi Consulting Corporation

As Hitachi, Ltd.'s global consulting company, with operations throughout North America, Europe, the Middle East and Asia, Hitachi Consulting is a recognised leader in delivering proven business and IT strategies and solutions to Global 2000 companies across many industries. With a balanced view of strategy, people, process and technology, we work with companies to understand their unique business needs, and to develop and implement practical business strategies and technology solutions. From business strategy development through application deployment, our consultants are committed to helping clients quickly realise measurable business value and achieve sustainable ROI. Hitachi Consulting's client base includes 25 per cent of the Global 100 as well as many leading mid-market companies. We offer a client-focused, collaborative approach and transfer knowledge throughout each engagement. For more information visit www.hitachiconsulting.co.uk.

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