



DEFINING THE BOUNDARIES OF KIOSK RETAILING

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The purpose of this research was to gather data to define what comprised kiosk retailing. The study was guided by the following questions: (1) How many different types of kiosks existed and what were the distinguishing characteristics of each type? (2) What was the type and amount of merchandise kiosk retailers offered to their customers? (3) What types of sales approaches were used? (4) How were issues of security handled? (5) What plans did these retailers have for expanding their businesses? Interviews were conducted with 26 kiosk retailers.

There were four main categories of kiosks; these were carts, retail-merchandising units (RMUs), wall-unit fixtures (WUFs), and proper kiosks (PKs). The merchandise sold represented six categories: gifts, accessories, clothing, toys, communication devices/ services, and health and beauty products. Most units carried multiple brands. In terms of sales approach, all of the participants greeted customers who approached. However, there seemed to be a feeling among several participants that they could not be too aggressive in their sales approach. Four distinct categories of maintaining security were reported: using locks or other means of securing items, relying on mall security, watching people, and using an electronic alarm system. Most retailers did not view security as an issue. Twenty-two respondents thought that expansion would include opening additional kiosks. Approximately half of the respondents indicated that they felt that the companies might open traditional, in-line stores sometime in the future. Kiosks are now considered to be final outlets for all types of retailers, from independent retailers to corporate chains.

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