

# Coinstar and PayPoint boost access to cards

Gift cards are set to become more widely available through a new programme to sell them in local convenience stores such as the Co-op and Spar.

Coinstar E-Payment Services is rolling out a network of "gift card centres" in outlets that use PayPoint, the over-the-counter payment system that is used for mobile phone top-ups, buying bus and rail tickets and paying bills, TV licences and the London congestion charge.

It involves a display rack carrying many of the UK's leading retailers of clothing, books, music, experiences, sporting goods and electronics. It follows the introduction of the first gift card centres in high-street stores such as WH Smith before Christmas.

PayPoint's branded retail network numbers over 17,500 terminal outlets located in

thousands of independent local stores and chains such as Nisa-Today's, Costcutter, Londis, Spar UK and the Co-op.

"This is a significant step for Coinstar's gift card programme," says Mohit Davar, managing director of Coinstar E-Payment Services. "By partnering with PayPoint, we build on our initial success with WH Smith and broaden the reach of our innovative gift card programme to many retailers across the UK."

Gift card centres, based on gift card malls in the US, provide greater access for companies that want to use small numbers of gift cards for rewards and gifts. It is also predicted to help increase consumers' understanding of using cards for gifting, making them more popular with participants in motivation and incentive programmes.

## Sodexo adds to voucher offer with Vivaboxes

Vivaboxes, the Europe-wide supplier of voucher-based gifts for the corporate sector, has been acquired by global voucher and card group Sodexo.

Launched into the UK last year, the gift boxes contain a selection of samples from top brands with a voucher that allows the recipient to obtain the "full-sized" product of their choice from the selection.

The range includes wine, fragrances, champagne, whisky and magazines, aimed at both the consumer and the corporate markets, with DVD and games boxes due to be launched soon.

Sodexo Pass managing director Iain McMath said the acquisition would complement its existing SayShopping multi-store voucher, "building on that to develop our offering in the wider gift and incentives sector".

"The acquisition of Vivaboxes allows us to offer our UK clients not just an enhanced gifting experience but actually something they won't find anywhere else in the marketplace."



## Gift card launch for Red Letter Days

Red Letter Days has followed up the launch of its new gift cards online with the introduction of cards into branches of Sainsbury's nationwide.

Set to be on sale at 581 stores, they offer a choice of a wide range of Red Letter Days experiences, with four cards available at two price levels of £49, which includes paintballing and a junior cowboy adventure, and £99, which includes Ferrari driving.

The launch comes out of a partnership with prepaid card specialists InComm Europe,

which implemented gift card centres in Sainsbury's, offering a range of different retailers' cards in one place.

Red Letter Days is currently the only UK experiences company to offer gift cards online, available at nine price levels from £50 to £1,000.

Its director of sales and marketing, Zachary Soreff, said: "With other significant retail launches planned for 2007, Red Letter Days gift cards will be available almost everywhere in the country."



### VOUCHERS OF THE WORLD UNITE

Fifteen years ago, vouchers were the crumpled pieces of paper your granny gave you at Christmas which sat in your wallet until you reluctantly handed them to a cashier with one eye over your shoulder to make sure your mates weren't watching. How things have changed.

With the voucher industry now worth in excess of £2.2 billion and set to grow by an annual rate of 14 per cent, vouchers are now an accepted and acceptable form of currency and gift. Offering your recipient the choice of thousands of products and experiences, you're never going to "get it wrong" with a gift voucher.

Voucher sales in the business-to-business arena, whether they're ultimately for consumers, employees or customers, are also increasing year on year, proving that vouchers are more attractive than ever. Indeed, marketers and sales promotion agencies are revisiting their old friend the gift voucher and enjoying the benefits of this renewed relationship – easy administration, beneficial discounts, secure funds and data to prove return on investment.

So, whether you're a piece of paper, plastic card or e-voucher, whether you're used for loyalty schemes, on-pack offers, customer rewards or pure gifts, vouchers of the world unite and be proud of the journey you've taken and revel in your success – it can only get better. Now where's that voucher in my wallet...".

**Kevin Harrington**  
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Sodexo Pass & SayShopping vouchers

**SAY  
SHOPPING  
PASS**

What's an imaginative way to incentivise and reward your customers?

