

Improving Operator and Consumer Experience through PayRange Integration



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

U-Select-It (USI) released the Evoke Snack 5 ambient glass-front merchandiser in 2017. The Evoke Snack 5 is part of USI's next generation merchandisers, the Evoke series. With the Evoke series, USI introduces its new control board, FLEX, which features PayRange built into the control board, making the Evoke series the first in the market to offer built-in PayRange integration. Vending operators who purchase Evoke Snack machines will be able to take advantage of PayRange consumer marketing capabilities and mobile payment options without incurring the cost of or taking the extra steps of ordering and installing a PayRange BluKey™. Vending operators maximize their investment and future-proof their business when purchasing an Evoke series machine with out-of-the-box PayRange integration.



“Both operators and end consumers understand the value of PayRange right away,” Jim Chico says. “I believe the demand for PayRange integration within vending equipment will continue to be strong going forward.”

— Jim Chico, President, Global Sales of USI

THE BIRTH OF THE EVOKE SNACK

USI is one of the world's largest manufacturers of automatic, retail vending and controlled dispensing equipment, producing tens of thousands of machines annually and offering around 20 different food-service vending models. Back in 2015, the engineering team at USI were working on a major redesign of the master control board and the result was FLEX, an innovative, open architecture platform control board. The goal was to create an even better experience for the end consumer while creating a machine that operators could install and maintain as easily as possible. “Everything that we're doing in this next generation machine is centered around elevating that customer experience,” says Jim Chico, President, Global Sales of USI.

As leaders in the vending industry, USI had already heard about PayRange from vending operators. In particular, one major vending operator who was using several hundred PayRange BluKey devices on his fleet raved about how PayRange offered his customers the ultimate frictionless buying experience. During the control board redesign process, USI leadership had a well-timed meeting with PayRange Founder and CEO Paresh Patel. As a result, the

engineering teams at PayRange and USI collaborated to integrate the PayRange BluKey OEM Module™ right into the new USI FLEX control board, which coincided with the introduction of the Evoke snack line.

USI Evoke merchandisers improve the level of engagement and overall purchasing experience for end consumers through its intuitive 10.1" touchscreen and enhanced visual merchandising. For operators, Evoke drives revenue and operational efficiencies through its shopping cart mode by allowing consumers to purchase up to three items in a single transaction, as well as through its intuitive service mode. Integrating PayRange directly in the FLEX control board is in line with the Evoke Series' goal of offering the best experience for both operators and end consumers.



From an end consumer's point of view, having PayRange capabilities means not only the ability to pay easily with

CASE STUDY U-SELECT-IT (USI) AND THE EVOKE SERIES

a mobile phone, but also the opportunity to participate in reward programs that include discounts and free vends.

PayRange benefits the operators by capturing sales from consumers who don't carry cash and lifts sales by increasing spending from consumers who have money preloaded in their PayRange account. In addition, PayRange offers flexible, targeted marketing to build customer loyalty and increase repeat purchase.

"Although we're vending machine manufacturers, we're not just vending anymore," says Jim Chico, about how he sees the industry as a whole. "We are in the convenience services industry." Building machines with a control board integrated with PayRange capabilities means USI is bringing convenience not only to end consumers, but also to vending operators worldwide. Both consumers and operators benefit as more machines are PayRange-enabled.

When the Evoke Snack line launched in 2017, feedback on the PayRange integration was immediate. "We had people coming into our booth at NAMA and saying, 'You mean I don't have to buy the BluKey? That's amazing,'" Jim Chico says. Vending operators appreciated this new, even easier way of adding PayRange to their business, while end consumers benefit from the increased likelihood that vending machines will accept PayRange.

A CASHLESS FUTURE

A couple of years ago, most vending operators were reporting around 15% of transactions as cashless. Today, many operators believe cashless sales are between 50% and 70%. There's every reason to think that the trend towards more cashless transactions will continue. "Our machines will be ready as the customer base continues to grow," says Scott Hudis, Director, Electrical Engineering at USI. "This type of feature is going to become even more attractive."

Since the successful launch of the Evoke Snack line in 2017, USI is working on bringing the FLEX control board, with the BluKey OEM Module integrated, to its legacy merchandisers including the Mercato Snack and Alpine series lines by 2019.

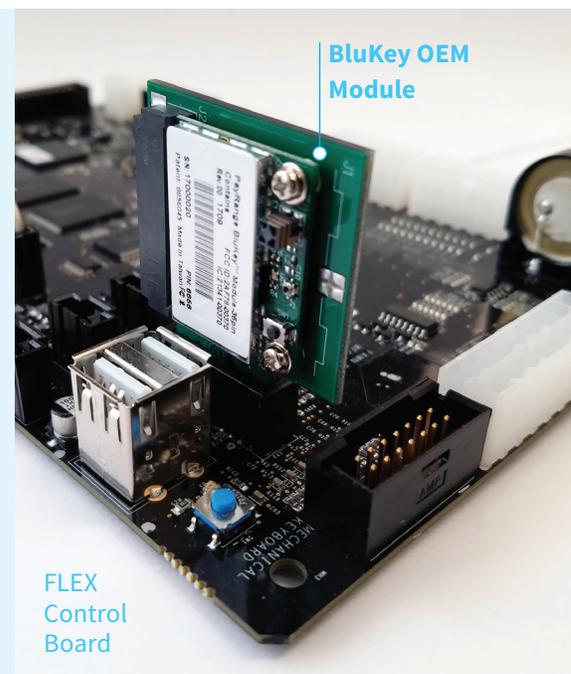
"Having PayRange built-in is a major feature set in our FLEX control board," says Jim Chico. "To our customer, it's another method for them to get sales. For the end consumer, it's one more barrier to adding cash to the machine that has now been knocked down."

"Both operators and end consumers understand the value of PayRange right away," Jim Chico says. "I believe the demand for PayRange integration within vending equipment will continue to be strong going forward."

THE TECHNICAL SIDE OF PAYRANGE INTEGRATION

USI decided to utilize an open architecture approach for its new control board and because the decision to integrate PayRange was made during the control board redesign process, it only further streamlined the integration process from an engineering point of view.

"Through FLEX's open architecture platform, we have the ability to integrate value-add applications directly on the board as opposed to having a hodge-podge of wires behind the machine doors," adds Scott Hudis, Director, Electrical Engineering at USI. Integrating PayRange into the FLEX control board is a perfect example of how FLEX integration offers a feature of real value to both vending operators and end-consumers.



BluKey OEM Module

FLEX Control Board