

WHITE PAPER



# Self-service tools help banks thrive in a pandemic environment

By Steve Arel | Contributing writer, ATM Marketplace

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State mandates aimed at slowing the spread of the coronavirus forced financial institutions, like countless other businesses, to shut their lobby doors indefinitely. That pushed all activity outside.

Still, an immediate spike in exterior traffic in drive-thrus beginning in March posed a host of challenges to banks, from efficiently processing transactions to minimizing touchpoints to effectively managing traffic flow.

Self-service solutions went from being popular operational alternatives to the primary transactional platform to enable financial institutions to continue thriving in trying times.

Being able to continue serving customers through the use of technology not only makes the units valuable, but also bolsters the value of banks where machines are deployed. Even in adverse periods, they allow consumers who still have numerous financial needs to access their banks.

The reliance on self-service solutions comes at a time when consumers have become familiar and relatively comfortable with the technology that is prevalent in their everyday lives, at grocery stores, gas stations, airports and retail shops. That has helped ease the shift from in-person interaction and positions them as valuable pieces of banking operations even after the pandemic subsides.

“These dramatic events and the vital role self-service solutions are playing would’ve been inconceivable 10 years ago,” said Joe Militello, vice president of software sales for Hyosung, a leader in self-service solutions for the banking and retail industries.

### Minimize human interactions

With lobbies being the primary venue of physical proximity and contact for banking customers, governors nationwide ordered their closure shortly after the pandemic was declared federally. The full transition to self-service solutions has proved relatively smooth, as consumers have become accustomed to and comfortable with the technology that’s now used everywhere from groceries to hardware stores.

ATMs, staples of banking options, remain key pieces of the revamped strategy of financial institutions. Eliminating physical exposure to employees and other customers, they allow users access to bank services and, most significantly, cash and check transactions through checking and savings accounts.

### Add core integration for customer interaction

As activity shifts completely outside lobbies, banks want to provide service to more customers and to do it more quickly, minimizing the disruption as much as possible. That’s where technological diversification among self-service solutions factors in, extending the capabilities of units far beyond traditional ATMs that have access, cash and transaction limitations, making units easier to use and effective for both tellers and consumers.

Enhanced machines integrate the capabilities of the ATM along with other core functions of the financial institution, including access to all of one’s accounts – home loans, equity lines of credit and auto loans.

The units allow customers to perform more complex and robust transactions. They can make withdrawals from equity accounts. They can submit cash payments on loans. They can deposit checks, designating a portion to checking and some to savings.

Perhaps, most importantly, customers can conduct their banking business 24/7, when it’s most convenient to them.



## **Incorporate video tellers**

Enhanced self-service machines provide virtually all of the services that can be administered from a visit inside a bank – right up to being able to see the teller with whom one is interacting.

Because not every transaction conducted in the drive-thru is a simple deposit or withdrawal, video capabilities help banks mitigate risk by facilitating high-dollar transactions that typically require authorization, solve complex customer problems and complete the handful of transactions that are not self-service in nature.

Video-enabled machines further promote social distancing. Tellers don't even have to physically be at a bank and potentially come in contact with fellow employees. They can access systems from their own homes, with the ability to perform tasks as normal.

## **Use cash recycling for efficiencies**

Increased dependence on self-service terminals elevates the importance of available funds and equipment. Banks can ensure both through cash recycling technology and managed services.

Recycling cash through exterior self-service units builds efficiencies and makes for fewer touchpoints throughout the operation. The process is straightforward: Cash deposited into machines is counted, registered and doled out to customers requesting a cash withdrawal.

Devices must always be able to fulfill cash withdrawals for customers. Taking in and dispensing money, cash bins can eventually fill up or empty depending on the level of activity.

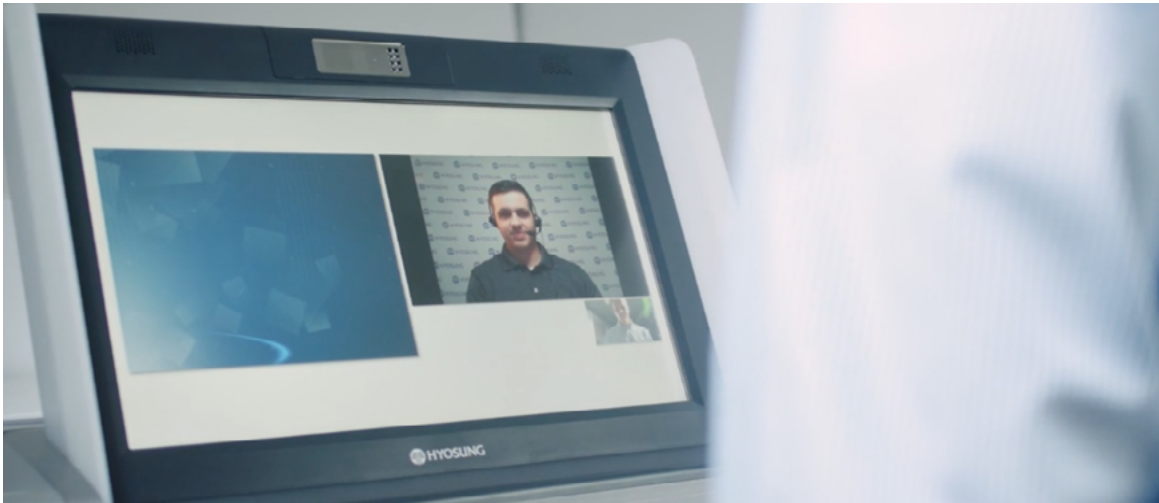
The intent of shelter-in-place orders was to minimize exposure, thus lessening opportunities for spreading the virus. Cash recycling removes unnecessary interactions, reducing risk. It also eliminates non-value-added tasks that reduce operational expenses.

“The less often you have to send an employee to a machine to open it, fill it and sit in a back room to count and sort for a machine, the less exposure you have for customers and employees on top of operational efficiencies of not doing non-value added tasks,” said William Budde, vice president of product marketing for Hyosung.

## **Managed services increase ATM uptime**

With increased self-service unit usage, it's imperative that the machines experience minimal, if any, downtime. Managed services feature an array of capabilities that help increase unit uptime, capitalizing on automation that notifies bank officials whenever issues – or potential issues – surface.

Notification of faults enable immediate responses to down machines. Technological improvements make for better information accessible to technicians, providing them more thorough details and improving the likelihood that issues get fixed the first time. Automated dispatching can be used, too, to immediately get the right person to resolve the problem, creating faster resolution.



Sometimes, resolution is simple and doesn't require a physical visit. In those instances, remote access can be used to tap into systems fanned out across a region – or even across the country – to resolve issues without requiring an on-site service technician, saving time and money.

### The way ahead

The pandemic has ushered in a new normal for the financial industry – both for banks and for their customers. A number of institutions already have accelerated plans to abandon and replace pneumatic tubes with outdoor self-service machines designed to provide the same level of service.

The ability of self-service technology to continue to operate as in-person channels were restricted has sped up widespread adoption of such solutions, which gradually had been progressing toward commonplace.

“Self-service technology is permeating every space of consumers' lives,” Budde said. “Consumer behavior has been changing across all industries toward self-service. The current environment has accelerated a trend that many people think will be permanent in the banking industry.”

### About the sponsor:

*Hyosung America is the North American subsidiary of South Korea-based Hyosung, Inc., a global leader providing ATMs to the retail off-premises and financial institution markets. Since entering the North American market in 1998, Hyosung has become the largest provider of ATMs in the United States. Hyosung Americas is headquartered in Irving, Texas, and provides research and development support in its Global Software Center in Dayton, Ohio. For more information about Hyosung solutions, visit [hyosungamericas.com](http://hyosungamericas.com) or call 1-877-HYOSUNG (496-7864).*