

AMAZON'S JUST WALK OUT TECHNOLOGY MAKES WAVES

Shoppers are ready for a full-size cashierless grocery store, but is the competition?

June 15, 2021 • Winsight Grocery Business • Jennifer Strailey

For the first time, Amazon's Just Walk Out technology will be available in a new full-size Amazon Fresh grocery store. On June 17, the Seattle-based e-tailing giant will open the doors to its newest Amazon Fresh in The Marketplace at Factoria in Bellevue, Wash. The new store marks the grocer's 14th location in the U.S.

Shoppers at the Bellevue store can opt to use the Just Walk Out cashierless checkout or go through a traditional employee-staffed checkout line.

As Amazon explains it, "Just Walk Out technology is made possible by a combination of computer vision, sensor fusion and deep learning, and adds convenience to customers' grocery shopping experience by giving them the option to come in, pick up what they want and skip the checkout when they're done. Anyone

shopping at the new Amazon Fresh store can take advantage of the technology, which connects to customers' Amazon account or credit card."

Customers can decide to go cashierless or kick it old school at the store's entry gates, where they are prompted to choose if they want to use Just Walk Out shopping or the traditional checkout lanes.

Shoppers who opt for Just Walk Out shopping can enter the store in three ways: by scanning the QR code in their Amazon app, using Amazon One to scan their palm or inserting a credit or debit card linked to their Amazon account. Each option will open the Just Walk Out gates.

Once inside the store, anything shoppers take off the shelf is automatically added to their virtual

cart, and anything they put back on the shelf comes out of their virtual cart. At the end of their trip, customers shopping with the Just Walk Out experience scan or insert their entry method again to exit.

"Customers have enjoyed the effortless shopping experience enabled by our Just Walk Out technology at our Amazon Go, Amazon Go Grocery, Amazon Fresh stores in the U.K., and third-party retailer stores," said Dilip Kumar, VP of physical retail and technology at Amazon, in a statement. "The feedback has been fantastic, with customers noting that skipping the checkout allows them to save time and reduce contact in stores."

Shoppers not yet comfortable with the sci-fi-meets-supermarket experience at the Bellevue Amazon Fresh have other payment options. They can use one of the staffed



checkout lanes to pay with cash, credit or debit card, Amazon One, the In-Store code in the Amazon App, or SNAP EBT.

Customers who use the Just Walk Out experience will be sent digital receipts, also available in their Amazon account. Traditional checkout shoppers will get a paper receipt, and recognized Amazon customers will also receive a digital receipt.

“Bringing Just Walk Out technology to a full-size grocery space with the Amazon Fresh store in Bellevue showcases the technology’s continued ability to scale and adapt to new environments and selection,” added Kumar.

The Future of Checkout Is Now
“Amazon’s ability to scale its cashierless tech to a full-size grocery store with Just Walk

Out technology will send ripples throughout the grocery and retail industry, giving a snapshot of what the future could look like,” said Joe Scioscia, VP of sales for VAI, an enterprise resource planning distributor working with grocery and food distributors. “While kiosks and cashierless checkout have been around for some time, this type of technology is being adopted for customer-facing systems and throughout the supply chain, signaling the power of RFID [radio-frequency identifying] technology and scanning while shopping.”

As shoppers become increasingly comfortable with this payment technology, Scioscia sees grocers both large and small racing to catch up to cashierless.

“In the next few years, I expect to see other grocery brands ramp up their abilities to offer

contactless shopping experiences in connection with both grocery delivery services and curbside pickup,” Scioscia said.

Michael Jasczyk, CEO of GK Software, agreed. “Customers are looking for convenient and frictionless ways to get in and out of the store quickly, and Amazon is meeting this demand in grocery stores using innovative solutions, such as QR codes and palm scanning,” he said.

As a result, added Jasczyk, grocers need to evaluate their payments technology and ensure that it fits within their retail format as well as its shoppers’ needs.

“The future of checkout is here, and retailers must deploy technology that’s designed for simplicity and convenience to stand out from the competition and win over customers,” said Jasczyk.

