



What is it?

Norway's leading financial services group DNB NOR which includes the Post Bank, is developing a pilot for delivering basic banking services through the outlets of one of Norway's largest chain of food outlets, building on six years experience of offering banking services in local shops through a 'Post in Shop' project.

The Post, with the Post Bank has a legal obligation to provide basic banking services across the country¹. The Post has long co-operated with local retailers on an ad-hoc basis. In 2001, a formal agreement between the Post Office and three major retailers was made and 1,175 post offices in shops were subsequently established. Customers are spread evenly throughout the country, and the customer base is characterised by a large number of low income earners, women and elderly.

How does it work?

By developing an integrated IT system and building on technological developments linked to shops' till systems customers can access bank services such as deposits, withdrawal and payments. If customers ask for more specialised financial products, such as mortgages, credit cards and insurance products, they can book an appointment with their nearest Post Bank branch using a free phone number. Additionally, Post Bank staff visit individual shops from time to time to talk with shop customers directly and provide more specialist advice.

A substantial effort has been made to ensure a user-friendly 'fool proofed' till interface, making the transactions secure without taking up too much time at the check out point. The cashier checks ID whilst the customer types in account information on the pin code keypad. The system approves or rejects the transaction requested automatically, and the cashier has no access to personal account information which is printed out on a receipt, minimising any potential data protection issues.

What are the key features?

- Basic banking services offered at the till whilst ensuring full data protection
- Basic banking services at a greater number of outlets, with improved opening hours and at lower cost than through traditional branches
- Referral systems to specialist advisors
- The project also increases the number of services local retailers can offer, increasing the shop's transaction volume
- In many rural areas the shop functions as the social hub. For individuals who do not easily embrace new technological solutions, the concept provides access to basic banking delivered on a face-to-face basis. This is especially useful for elderly residents.

¹ With at least one outlet in each local authority the smallest having 214 inhabitants January 2007 <http://www.ssb.no/folkemengde/tab-2007-03-08-13.html>