

By Paul Wahl, Editor

Stand Out. Or Stand Aside.

Each day, retailers in the equine trade industry are confronted with a paddock full of challenges. The face of retail changes more quickly today than ever in history.

Consumers are more demanding. Help is hard to find. Costs for everything from shipping to toilet paper eat into profit margins.

On top of that, retailers stress about the impact that the Internet will have on their brick-and-mortar businesses. How much are catalog retailers hurting my business? Who will I sell my store to when I'm ready to retire?

The challenges rise to an ear-splitting cacophony at times.

They key to survival is creating a stellar retail experience, finding a way to set your store apart from all the others across the globe.

Technology is one way to do accomplish the task.

It wasn't that many years ago that purchases made in a feed store or a tack shop were written up by hand on a pad with a piece of carbon paper between two sheets. It worked, and everyone else in retail was doing the same thing.

Over the past couple of decades, specialty store retail has launched a revolution of technological changes. In many ways, the bulk of equine trade retailers are still in the carbon paper days.

It's difficult to reconcile the dichotomy of using space-age technology to sell a product whose roots are as old as saddles or Western wear. Equine retailers often think of themselves more as