



Rav Garcha (above, right) with his innovative electronic shelf edging while Peter Lamb has launched a chiller van service for commuters

Nisa shop is first in UK to use electronic shelf edging 'You have to keep innovating'

C-store owners lead the way with hi-tech ideas

by Ed Chadwick

Independent convenience store owners continue to prove that the sector leads the way in retailing by unveiling technical innovations that leave the multiples in their wake.

Nisa retailer Rav Garcha's Shrewsbury store was this week the first shop in UK to go online with hi-tech electronic shelf edging.

He will be able to instantly beam price changes to screens in any of his stores to take advantage of latest promotions.

And Sussex shopkeeper Peter Lamb is blazing a

trail by launching Lamb's Larder Mobile, a chiller van service which will meet commuters at two railway stations with evening meal deals and wine they have ordered online at their desks.

It comes just weeks after he began a "click and collect" service at his 650sq ft store in Bells Yew Green.

"You have got to keep innovating and looking for opportunities to expand," said Mr Lamb. "Our store isn't huge but our mobile service will take us to customers within a 20-mile radius.

"We have built up a fan-

tastic network of producers who supply us with local goods from fresh meat to vodka and the demand has boomed."

Mr Lamb's innovation comes in the same week that Tesco launched a trial of a 'virtual' grocery store at Gatwick Airport which will allow passengers to buy items in the departure lounge for home delivery as they return from holiday.

Mr Garcha, meanwhile, is the first of any kind of retail outlet in the UK to trial electronic shelf edging. The units are made by Swedish-based firm Pricer and cur-

rently used in thousands of c-stores and supermarkets across Europe.

The product's UK distributor Herbert Retail is working with Nisa on the trial and is in talks with other symbol groups about expanding.

Retailers or their symbol groups can instantly beam prices to the labels using infrared transmitters linked to computers, meaning that there is no lag time between the start of promotions and increased sales.

"I've not had any comments from customers yet," added Mr Garcha.