

Bookseller offers shoppers a drink

IDEA OF THE WEEK

NEW TECHNOLOGY can deliver the latest films straight to television sets, and novels can be read on the internet. Retailers who are worried by such developments may want to look at how one firm has fought back, writes Rachel Bridge.

Fopp, which sells music, films and books, has installed a bar in its new city-centre store in Edinburgh so that customers can have a drink while they shop. The company decided to open the bar because the building was once a restaurant and already had a licence. But the concept has gone down so well with customers that Fopp is

now planning to open bars in more of its 14 stores across the country.

Peter Ellen, managing director, says: "We have had a phenomenal response. People love the idea of coming to a store where they can have a beer and browse through the stock at the same time. We did this as a low-key trial to see if we could deal with the practical issues of running an in-store bar. It has worked very well."

Ellen says that having a bar on site works particularly well



Stuart Wallace

Doing the rounds: tipping customers browse the CD selection at Fopp's Edinburgh store

for in-store events such as public appearances by bands. Fopp, which opened for business 21 years ago, is also staying one step ahead of its rivals by testing a prototype CD vending machine at its Glasgow shop. The machine is accessible from outside the store and customers will soon be able to buy CDs with cash or credit cards at any time of day or night.

Ellen says: "We have some incredibly loyal customers, so we are focusing all our efforts on trying to come up with ideas to excite them."

So, if you fear you may be in danger of losing out to new technology, now is the time to start thinking laterally.

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