Bringing the convenience and personalization of eCommerce to physical retailers and their customers:

FutureProof Retail

"Technology platform configurable for any retail format."

FutureProof was founded in 2013 by a group of impatient shoppers, award winning developers and retail technology veterans. The company develops technology that brings the personalization and convenience of eCommerce shopping to physical stores.

Going Candid with the Executives; William Hogben and Di Di Chan

Why was the company set up?

Di Di and I were in an airport trying to buy a bottle of water, stuck in a slow checkout line while watching the boarding time tick closer. We ended up having to abandon the purchase and run to the gate, and while we were sitting on the plane feeling thirsty we figured we could solve that problem for everyone else. It's obvious that mobile self scanning is a huge win-win for both the shopper and the retailer, so we set to work on

it and we focussed on Grocery first, since it's where people spend the most time waiting in line.

How successful was your first project roll on? Share the experience?

It was received very well by techies and early adopters, some of those first users have purchase counts in the 100s now. The feedback we kept getting again and again was that they appreciated the control of the process. The only complaint was too many bag checks - at that time the staff were very cautious with self scanning and were bag checking every customer on the way out which sometimes left people with a bit of a sour taste.

What kind of mixed responses have you received from your consumers over the years?

Solving loss prevention was the most important feedback and it came from the retailers rather than the

customers. Shrink can feel like a very personal issue especially for smaller merchants, and many were expecting shrink to be similar to self checkout kiosks. We heard from customers that they wanted to be trusted and felt that being treated as potential criminals gave them permission to get away with whatever they could. We also heard from merchants that felt that customers had to be put on alert that they're being surveilled or else they'd slide into dishonesty. Merging these two clearly competing perspectives required the development of a unique loss prevention solution which became a critically valuable part of our product.

How do you and your company contribute to the global IT platform and society at large?

We make contributions to open source and give talks about our development techniques. Some of the technologies we invented for FutureProof are now widely in use by other developers - in the last month outside developers downloaded one of our technologies 24,193 times, so I think it's fair to say there's a good number of projects with FutureProof technology in them now.

"Make something that is customer centric - that's unambiguously good and improves people's day as much as we can."

What drives/inspires you to excel in your field of business?

Once we realized that this is a win-win, that shoppers and merchants both have everything to gain and nothing to lose, we just had to make it happen. Right now, within a few miles of you reading this article, there are people waiting in line and they no longer have to be. In fact, at an average US grocery store the combined yearly line waiting is about 216 years - it's spread over multiple people and trips but that's 3 human lifetimes, spent waiting in year at every grocery store.

With 33,000 grocery stores in the US alone that's not an insignificant amount of human effort, and we're motivated to unlock all that time and give it back to the community.

Do you have any new products ready to be/getting ready to be rolled out into the market?

We are announcing a new component for deli and counter service soon, which can be used as a stand-alone or with the mobile self scanning app. The new counter service product allows any customer (with or without the app) to place orders from delis, seafood counters, coffee bars etc without waiting for a number, and get a text or notification when their order is prepared. It frees customers up to shop instead of waiting at the counter, and it helps staff be more efficient too.

Where do you see you and your company a couple of years from now?

We named our company FutureProof because we think the most important piece of technology is how it can be grown and expanded on. There are lots of considerations to maintaining a future proof product - specifically using the right core technologies, designing it for flexibility and integration, and keeping up with the latest and greatest features - so in a couple of years from now we'll be continuing to develop along those lines keeping our platform FutureProof for our customers.

Meet the Master Duo

William Hogben, Founder & CEO: Will, a mobile application developer and entrepreneur, has created industry-leading mobile apps for the past seven years. His first app, Mr. Shuffle, was one of 500 in the original AppStore launch. Will's apps have been featured by the New York Times, rated #1 in Entertainment, awarded Best in Category at CES, and tweeted by Zuckerberg.

Di Di Chan, Founder & President: Di Di, an entrepreneur and public relations expert, has over 15 years of experience in fundraising, event planning, industry research and education. Prior to FPR, she founded Di Di's Events and OIM Education, coordinated a million-dollar fundraiser for the All Stars Project, established and maintained alumni groups for UCLA and NYU, and planned the first Salt Lake City Kitchen Incubator project.

William Hogben,
Founder & CEO

Di Di Chan,
Founder & President