

## Validation/Clearing Solutions Highlight Exhibits at Industry Coupon Conference

By Jack Grant

Solutions are needed to combat the mis/malredemption and fraud associated with paper coupons. These persistent problems continue to create financial hardship for manufacturers, retailers, media partners, as well as retailer clearing houses and manufacturer agents.

Some of these solutions were among several others on display last month in Las Vegas at the annual Industry Coupon Conference hosted by the Association of Coupon Professionals (ACP) in collaboration with other industry groups.

“The exhibits gave manufacturers and retailers the chance to learn about the latest technology and solutions that improve couponing,” said John Morgan, executive director of ACP.

For example, the **Intelligent Clearing Network (ICN)** introduced a solution that electronically validates and clears coupons and other incentives at the point of sale (POS) in grocery, drug, and mass merchant retailers. By replacing today’s manual, convoluted, and fraud-prone process, ICN’s clearing network provides manufacturers, media companies, and retailers with true “real time” redemption information the moment the incentive clears the retailer’s POS system.

“Solving the problem at the POS is the most effective way of addressing the problem,” Rich Thibedeau, ICN’s Executive Vice President of Operations told *CPGmatters* in the exhibit area. He said the company’s single connection to a retailer’s POS also provides a very elegant digital solution which eliminates the need for downloading and uploading files to the POS.

By implementing a validation service for processing paper coupons at the POS, he explained, the industry can potentially save up to hundreds of millions of dollars every year. Manufacturers and retailers will see direct improvements to their bottom lines.

Meanwhile, the growth of digital coupons is placing a strain on retailers’ POS systems. As the popularity of digital coupons continues to grow, explained Thibedeau, ICN’s software has the ability to take the strain off the retailer’s POS systems and eliminates the need for downloading and uploading files to the POS. The more media programs the retailer adds the more complicated the POS processing becomes.

The bottom line: ICN provides a single connection to the retailer’s POS which can serve the needs of both paper and digital coupon validation and clearing.