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Jim Contardi,
Senior Vice President,
Retail Solutions, Prepaid

Economic turmoil often results in the unexpected emergence of alternative payment instruments. The current recession and subsequent changes in consumer spending habits have led to a rapid increase in the popularity of branded prepaid “general purpose” reloadable (GPR) cards. Unlike conventional prepaid cards, prepaid GPR cards allow customers to reload the cards with additional funds and even set up direct deposits to the cards. These features make the cards especially appealing to unbanked and underbanked consumers who may be finding it increasingly difficult to gain access to traditional credit and debit products.

Because of the rising usage of prepaid GPR cards, more and more merchants are making them part of their prepaid product portfolios. However, merchants evaluating prospective GPR card programs (or reassessing their current offering) should be aware that all programs are not created equal. In addition to comparing the design, scalability and reliability of prepaid GPR card programs, merchants must carefully consider issues of security and compliance.

First Data’s new white paper, *Selecting a Secure and Compliant Prepaid Reloadable Card Program*, examines the fundamental compliance questions that merchants must ask before they launch a prepaid GPR card program.

By partnering with an experienced provider, merchants can confidently offer their customers a flexible product with a compelling combination of security, value and convenience. For example, *Urban Bank and Trust Holding Inc.*, believes that by partnering with First Data with “proven experience in the marketplace” they are providing “benefits to businesses and consumers alike.”

And the *Direct Selling Association*, the national trade association of firms that manufacture and distribute goods and services sold directly to consumers, recently endorsed First Data’s *Money Network*™ as the electronic commission payment distribution service of choice for its member companies. There are more than 15 million direct sellers in the United States, and more than 20 companies are members of the Direct Selling Association. [Learn more.](#)

First Data Related Events

- **April 5-8, 2009**
NACHA Payments Conference
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- First Data at NACHA
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- **May 6-8, 2009**
Food Marketing Institute –
Markettechnics
[read more](#)

- **May 16-19, 2009**
The National Restaurant
Association Show
[read more](#)

- **May 18-20, 2009**
NACStech
[read more](#)

Turning a Mobile Phone into an Electronic Wallet—It Takes a Village

In January, Barry McCarthy, General Manager, Mobile Commerce and Point of Sale, discussed how consumers soon may manage all their accounts from a single mobile device. Currently, there's no single entity that can reasonably facilitate that function for users, which is why McCarthy discussed a new kind of account provisioning role called Trusted Services Manager (TSM). The function has yet to be fully defined and will likely require various constituents from various industries to partner for success.

The fifth and final installment of First Data's mobile commerce white paper series, *Trusted Services Management: The Key to Accelerating Mobile Commerce*, identifies the goals and addresses the challenges of the TSM role from defining how to get account information onto mobile devices to ensuring consumers have the broadest possible purchasing power and access to their electronic accounts. We also take a look at who might be best suited to fulfill the TSM role. The ability to provision a mobile device to access multiple accounts is a complex issue, and TSM can make the concept of electronic wallets a reality.

Earlier papers in our mobile commerce series can be found in the [First Data white paper library](#), including *Mobile Account Management: The Mobile Commerce Enabler*; *The Risks and Opportunities in a Mobile Commerce Economy*; *Mobile Payment: The Linchpin of Mobile Commerce Economy* and *Going Direct with Mobile Marketing*.

Barry also shares insight into additional innovations in the mobile payments arena in a recent *American Banker* article titled, *The Future of Payments Is Anything But Flat*.

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Quick-Service Restaurant Gift Cards Promote Customer Visits and Spending

More than half of Quick-Service Restaurant (QSR) gift card users visit QSRs more often because of their gift card. And while they're there, three-quarters of them spend over the original card value. That's what our recent Prepaid Card consumer survey revealed. The two-part study asked consumers who use gift cards at QSRs to participate in a survey and make notes about their gift card experiences in an online diary. This month we share a summary of survey results in our Market Brief, *QSR Gift Card Usage—Consumer Insights*. Next month we'll bring you findings from the diaries.

