The evolution of the Datsun/ Nissan Z Cars

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After what seemed like a slow and agonizing death of a once-great car brand, Nissan it finally trying to turn things around. Their new A To Z lineup are look exciting and well thought out, and more importantly, for us petrolheads, there's a new Z-car on the horizon. Now, while we wait for the new Zed to hit the showrooms, here is a summary of the evolution of one of the best sports cars ever made.

First Generation S30 (1969-1978)
The origin of the Z car can be traced back to one person, Mr. Yutaka Katayama, then President of Nissan USA. He realized the importance of an affordable sports car, and pushed the company to build one. Designed by Yoshihiko Matsuo, the resulting Datsun 240Z was a low-cost, two-seater, fixed-roof sports car powered by a 2.4 liter inline six-cylinder engine producing 150 HP and 145 lb-ft of torque. The ar proved to be an overnight success as consumers found it to be affordable, fast, and far more reliable than its European competitors. Datsun would go on to update the engine to a 2.6 and later 2.8-litre, Creating the 260Z and 280Z respectively.

To learn more about the 240Z's origin please see our previous article "Yoshihiko Matsuo and how the 240z became a design icon"

Second Generation S130 (1979-1983)
The second generation of the Z-car was called the 280ZX. It retained the 2.8 liter engine but made only 135 HP and 144 lb-ft of torque, thanks to strict US emission regulations. The car was also bigger and heavier, being grown into a gran tourer. Nissan adopted the interior accordingly, updating the car's upholstery and adding multiple creature comfort. The power issued was addressed in 1981 with the introduction of the Turbo-ZX, which bumped up the power to 180 HP and 202 lb-ft of torque.

Third Generation Z31 (1984-1989)
Two things happened with the new 300ZX. First, Nissan completely dropped Datsun badge, bringing all of their cars under the parent nameplate. Second, the inline six-cylinder was phased out for the 3.0 liter VG30E, Japan's first mass-produced V6 engine. The new engine made 164 HP and 174 lb-ft of torque but the turbo variant raised those figured to 225 HP and 246 lb-ft. The car also received styling updates such as pop up headlights, boxy shape, and a novel LED taillamp. Overall, this generation of the Z-car remained a GT car, though with more power than is predecessor.

Fourth Generation Z32 (1989-2000)
Z31 was a technological marvel, being the first car designed with the help of a Cray-2 supercomputer. The box shape was rounded out and the engine received a twin-turbocharged double overhead cam setup, producing 279 HP and 277 lb-ft of torque. The new engine gave the car a 0-100 of 5.9 seconds, which was impressive since the new car weighed a little over 1.6 tons. The weight can be partially attributed to the car's plethora of advanced features such as four-wheel steering, Variable Timing control, powered seats, and many others. All these features drove up the weight, complexity, and price.

Fifth Generation Z33 (2002-2008)
From 1999 to 2000, Nissan experimented with a back to basic 240Z Concept but did not put it into production. In 2001, the company debuted the sleek new 350Z with a new 3.5 liter DOHC V6 producing 287 HP and 274 lb-ft of torque. The new Z was designed to be a fun affordable sports car, just like the original 240Z. The interior lacked the high-tech features found in the Z32, instead offering a largely plastic interior with basic amenities. However, this downgrade becomes a moot point as the driver floors the throttle, as car's high performance would allow it to go toe to toe with cars form dedicated performance brands.

Sixth Generation Z34 (2009-present)
Although visually similar to the Z32, the Z33 received plenty of changes under the skin. The wheelbase was shorted by four inches, the displacement was raised to 3.7 liter, giving the car a new power figure of 326 HP and 270 lb-ft of torque. The 0-100 was cut down to 5 seconds, taking the car very close to supercar territory. The bare-bones interior was updated with improved upholstery and a few creature comforts. Although cutting edge in 2009, the has begun to show its age and is badly in need of a replacement.

POS trends shaping the future of retail

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POS systems have gone from merely being a tool to record sales transactions to a robust platform for improving customer experience. The point of sale system is the very heart and soul of any business, one that can integrate marketing, inventory, accounting and data analytics and create synergy between them. According to a report from Grand View Research, global point of sale terminals market is expected to reach USD 108.46 billion by the year 2025. As business owners depend on data to make better decisions for their businesses and customers demand unique shopping experiences, POS systems are becoming the bridge between businesses and consumers.

As with all things rooted in technology, POS trends are continually changing and evolving. As POS systems are going through a makeover, business owners and retailers should stay up to date with the latest trends coming in the industry.

Increase in Mobile Payments
As the number of mobile users keeps growing, customers are using smartphones for most of their transactions. This development not only took us away from two traditional industries – cash and cash registers but also encouraged the technology to move further and create a portable Point of sale solution for the retailers. Asia Pacific countries have fully embraced the use of mobile payment as there is a 16.2% year on year growth of mobile POS users. It mostly consists of scanning codes and authenticating the transaction. Startups with new technology are creating digital wallets which are enabling users to pay from their phones conveniently.

Usage of data analytics
The change in demand alongside technology also pushed for changes in POS systems. Retailers are turning to data analytics to understand their customers better to make more data-driven decisions. Customers want to make their shopping experiences as flawless as possible. POS systems have a feature similar to some of the best business intelligence tools in the market. It can help you process the data from your customers to create the best experience. Using this trend, businesses can identify buyer habits, improve their marketing strategies and use real-time data to make improvements.

Transition to cloud-based POS
Cloud-based POS is currently one of the leading POS technology trends today. Forbes reported that 61% of merchants are looking into getting cloud-based POS for their businesses. Additionally, it is predicted that there will be a 50% increase in cloud-based POS adoptionbefore the end of 2021. The advantages of cloud-based POS are simplicity, flexibility and functionality. Client-based POS requires time to set up. It also requires an IT team to deal with the maintenance of the system. Cloud-based POS replaces all of that with a single app.

Faster payment processing
Customers want transactions to be faster alongside having a personalized shopping experience. With increasing spending capabilities, more customers are coming in and business owners have to find newer modules to keep up with the demand. Upgrading the POS systems and adding features accordingly will help to ensure faster transactions. These features include contactless payment options that support RFID like Google Pay, Apple Pay and Samsung Pay.

Online spending
There has been a huge shift in customer spending from in-store to online, with better deals being available online. Many retail stores are trying to offer a more 'online' experience, by making tablets available for people to look up information and make transactions. Customers can place these orders to be delivered to their home as well. Retailers are looking for processes to improve their businesses. As a result, they are collecting customer details such as e-mail addresses at POS to set up digital sales accounts for them to send an e-mail receipt and personalize their shopping experience while connecting online platforms, mobile apps and physical experiences.

AI Integration
The added benefits of AI integration are leading this trend. Customers are increasingly favouring the idea that artificial intelligence would shop for them given that their shopping preferences are understood. Moreover, using AI-enabled POS system has other benefits as well. AI-enabled POS system can help secure customer information and prevent fraud by sending instantaneous alerts. As online shopping is gaining more popularity, the bar for shopping experience has been raised higher. Through the use of AI, the same experience can be provided for the in-store shopping experience. AI can personalize shopper's behaviour and offer relevant products to customers. As AI uncovers customer's buying habits, it can help to reduce the loss of inventory by detecting checkout errors.

Having a state-of-the-art POS system for business means that more can be done other than just collecting payment. Combined with a CRM platform, customer data can be collected and analyzed more efficiently and more accurately. With a state-of-the-art POS system, more transactions can be handled and consumers using the latest payment methods like mobile payments can be catered to.