



Microsoft Business Solutions Retail Management System Customer Solution Case Study



Women's Sports Apparel Chain Speeds Up Turns, Reduces Inventory, and Pumps Sales

Overview

Country/Region: United States
Industry: Retail

Customer Profile

Title 9 Sports is a women's athletic-wear catalog company based in Emeryville, California. The company has recently expanded and now operates five stores in California, Colorado, and Washington.

Business Situation

The stores' stand-alone versions of QuickSell could not process customer discounts or access inventory from other stores.

Solution

Title 9 Sports installed Microsoft® Business Solutions Retail Management System along with core Microsoft® server products. Data will integrate with Microsoft Business Solutions—Solomon.

Benefits

- Inventory turns higher by 15-20 percent
- Stock on hand down 6 percent
- Sales increased by 8 percent
- Physical inventory 50-70 percent faster
- Chainwide customer recognition
- Highly relevant shipments to stores

“Jobscope came on-site and managed everything....They continually offer suggestions on how to use the Microsoft [Retail Management System] software to our greatest benefit.”

Renée Jacobs, President, Title 9 Sports

Title 9 Sports is a women's athletic-wear catalog company based in Emeryville, California, operating five retail stores—two in California, two in Colorado, and one in Washington. Each store previously used a stand-alone version of QuickSell, the predecessor to Microsoft Business Solutions Retail Management System. With no communications between warehouse and retail locations, there was no way to know when, nor with which merchandise, to restock stores.

Title 9 Sports selected Microsoft Retail Management System with implementation services by Microsoft reselling partner Jobscope Corporation.

This solution has improved inventory visibility and accuracy of shipments to stores. Hours spent on physical inventory are down 50 to 70 percent. Integration between locations allows Title 9 to offer chain-wide discounts and respond to out-of-state customers on a global basis.



Title 9 Sports operates four retail locations—two in California and two in Colorado.

Situation

“Our system travels began with our [Microsoft®] MS-DOS® version of Retail Pro,” says Renée Jacobs, President and formerly CTO of Title 9. “I thought it was expensive for what it did, it was costly to scale, and had a closed database that made reusing information difficult.”

Data Isolation

Lacking integration, previous stand-alone solutions made sharing customer information a manual and time-consuming process.

“Because each store’s inventory was invisible to the others,” Jacobs says, “stores had to send out a wish list so the warehouse knew what items to restock. Inactive items had to be manually deleted from the system. So when we started looking, our prime criterion was an open database.”

“We put QuickSell into stores because it ran on Microsoft® Access,” Jacobs says. “That was easy to import/export and we could write our own queries. We customized it and it

served us well, but we still couldn’t share customer data easily from store to store. And data flow to our warehouse was still awkward.”

One consequence of insular data was that Title 9’s smart marketing concept of its Team T9 memberships, which offer loyalty discounts, was hampered because customers who registered in one location were not on record in others. Separate systems led to integration difficulties in reporting and financials.

Inspection and Decision

“So we inspected leading contenders like Cam Commerce, Retail Pro, and others with chain-level solutions,” Jacobs says. “Since we’d had a positive history with Jobscope, we asked for their expertise. They took the time to dissect our requirements and show us how Microsoft [Retail Management System] was our best answer, point by point, to our exact needs in terms of power and economy.”

Solution

“Since QuickSell was the precursor to Microsoft [Retail Management System],” says Jacobs, “we knew we could recycle our knowledge investment and records. But Retail Management System adds much more inventory control power, chain-wide communications flexibility, and audit capability.”

The Right Microsoft Partner

“We chose a Microsoft partner who was instrumental in explaining how the features and functionality of Microsoft Retail Management System would meet our business needs,” says Jacobs. “Jobscope came on-site and managed everything from data conversions, to receipt printer configurations, to networking issues for us. They are extremely thorough and know retail issues top to bottom. They continually offer suggestions on how to use the Microsoft

[Retail Management System] software to our greatest benefit.”

Jacobs says that to implement the solution, Jobscope initially used Microsoft SQL Server™ Data Transformation Services (DTS) to import item data from proprietary databases into Microsoft Retail Management System Headquarters (HQ), the central-office retail management solution. Headquarters then synched up with each store’s edition of Store Operations, the store-level solution. This capability sped installs at every store.

Title 9 had Jobscope implement Microsoft Business Solutions Retail Management System on a server operating Microsoft SQL Server 2000, Microsoft Windows® 2000 Server, and Microsoft Exchange 2000 Server.

The SQL Server database provides Title 9 with an economical and scalable database that will grow as fast as the company. Its open standards let Title 9 use other Microsoft tools for smooth import/export of data from other systems. The solution promises to integrate well with Microsoft Business Solutions—Solomon, the accounting software used at Title 9.

Benefits

Chain-wide data integration ramifies into many corners of the company.

Bottom-line Business Improvements

“Since first installing [Retail Management System] in our Berkeley store,” says Jacobs, “inventory levels are down 6 percent due to improved visibility on in-transit stock and smarter buying, and sales are up 8 percent. In terms of chain-wide inventory turns, we’re up 15-20 percent.

“We have fresher merchandise and better levels of products that sell because we’ve reduced purchasing time from two days to

one. Now we can replenish our highest-volume stores twice a week instead of once.”

“We’ve increased from three stores to five while actually reducing IT and accounting hours spent on retail,” Jacobs reports.

By using the Global Customers feature of Microsoft Retail Management System, the chain shares customer information among stores and gives Team T9 members their discounts regardless of the store in which they first registered.

Integration Benefits

The new solution provides real-time reporting of current inventory and sales for each location so the warehouse knows what must be replenished in each location.

- **Visibility.** Availability of real-time inventory levels has reduced the time spent in physical inventory by 50 to 70 percent. Weekly warehouse orders are smaller and far less time is spent tracking down lost shipments.
- **Transfer.** Seeing real-time inventory levels lets Title 9 management increase the accuracy and relevance of shipments to stores.

Cost Savings

When any retailer considers upgrading, total installation price and ongoing costs of ownership weigh heavily in the decision.

In Title 9’s case, upgrading from a competent but non-integrated retail system allowed staff and management to accomplish more work in less time on what were once time-intensive tasks.

Even with this jump in efficiency, Microsoft Retail Management System cost Title 9 between 20 to 30 percent less than systems that the retailer rejected, according to Jacobs.

For More Information

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For more information about Jobscope Corporation products and services, call (864) 458-3100 or visit the Web site at: www.jobscope.com

For more information about Title 9 Sports, call (510) 653-9949 or visit the Web site at: www.title9sports.com

Microsoft Business Solutions Retail Management System

Microsoft Business Solutions Retail Management System offers a complete store automation solution for small and medium-sized retailers, streamlining point-of-sale (POS), customer service, and store inventory management, and providing real-time access to key business metrics. Microsoft Retail Management System is a comprehensive solution for single-store and multi-store retailers that empowers independent proprietors, store managers, and cashiers through affordable and easy-to-use automation. Microsoft Retail Management System has the flexibility and scalability to grow with a retailer's business. It works with the Microsoft Office System, Microsoft Windows Small Business Server, and leading financial applications to provide end-to-end support from the cash register to the back office.

For more information about Microsoft Retail Management System, go to: www.microsoft.com/pos

Software and Services

- Products
 - Microsoft Office 2000
 - Microsoft Exchange Server 2003
 - Microsoft SQL Server 2000
- Solutions
 - Microsoft Business Solutions Retail Management System
 - Microsoft Business Solutions–Solomon

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