



Point-of-sale Automation Proves Greatest Gift for Belle Provence's Growing Shop

The right tools make easy work of purchasing, sales transactions and inventory management

Overview

When Diane and Roy Reinsch started Belle Provence in 1983, they knew that their sense of style and keen sales expertise would set them apart from their competition, but they had no idea the gift and accessory shop would grow to its current 2,100 square feet, six employees and 5,000 SKUs.

The complexity of the details and reporting for Belle Provence's inventory and customer preference tracking and purchasing standardization grew as well. The store stocked extensive lines of gift, home and decorative accessories, specialty items, linens, fragrances and jewelry from suppliers such as Potluck Paris, The Thymes, Crabtree & Evelyn, Chilewich and Hobo International.

Dealing with such a diversity of products efficiently meant the Reinsches had to abandon their trusty electronic cash register and invest in technology. They chose the HP's Point of Sale solution and its bundled Microsoft POS software.

To maintain their competitive advantage, the Reinsches had several considerations:

- Monitor inventory, purchasing and supplier information at the point-of-sale to have real-time information that is immediately actionable;
- Organize large amounts of sales data in a comprehensible format that allows a snapshot view of what was purchased, when and how much it cost;
- Automate accounting and ordering processes to free up more time for customers.

Challenge

Until they were fully automated, the Reinsches faced a common problem. They could not track which items in their vast inventory were most popular – knowledge integral to their purchasing strategy and ultimately, their growth. They knew people were buying but not what (specifically) they were buying. Belle Provence couldn't target regular customers to let them know when new shipments of their favorite items arrived. This lack of automation also contributed to many long nights and early mornings physically counting what was in stock and what needed to be ordered.

Customer service also suffered without real-time information. If a customer called asking for a specific item, there was no way to tell them with any level of certainty whether that merchandise was in the store and, if not, when it would arrive. They had outgrown their

system.

Belle Provence needed a new point-of-sale system in place to address the following challenges:

- A lack of real-time inventory information necessary for re-stocking and customer inquiries;
- Inefficient tracking of customer preferences that prevented targeted marketing;
- Automated systems that decreased time spent on manual inventory and increased time spent with customers.

Solution

The Reinsches set out to find a system that would help automate their processes and be easy to use. It was also crucial that the new system have bar code reading and touch screen capabilities. To gather information, they talked to others in their industry and Roy drew on his 25 years of experience in the tech industry to arrive at what they needed – full automation. Belle Provence customers have high expectations and they wanted a transaction system that would serve them quickly and securely.

Ultimately, the Reinsches chose the HP POS solution because it was logical and easy to use, even for a novice. In addition, it provided the highest levels of accuracy and security and was flexible enough for a growing business.

Results

Belle Provence changed the way it did business by automating its systems. They took the focus away from the “back room” so they could spend as much time as possible with their customers to better serve their needs. They could now be more strategic about which products they wanted to carry and in what quantities, and work more efficiently with their suppliers. The results speak for themselves:

- Conducting inventory went from taking several days to several minutes;
- Now all sales and inventory information is collected at checkout and available immediately for use in different reports and analysis to further improve efficiency.

Products

HP’s Point of Sale solution and peripherals (touchscreen, credit card reader, bar code scanner, receipt printer and cash drawer).

Customer quote

“Our transition to HP’s POS system was seamless and provided us with all the tools we needed to move from a fully un-automated store to a fully automated one. The real-time information we’re able to collect and use on a daily basis has helped us provide the highest level of service to our customers and our suppliers in a way we didn’t think possible for a small business,” said Diane Reinsch, co-owner, Belle Provence.

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