

# Case Study

Cross-Channel Retailing

## Expedite Multichannel Fulfillment

The integrated shipping tools included in a multichannel retail management system helped this specialty retailer fulfill orders automatically.

by Erin Harris

**R**obert Wayne Footwear has been in business for more than 25 years, and the retailer operates 56 brick-and-mortar locations and an e-commerce platform. The e-commerce platform was launched in 2004 and, at the time, was not integrated with the brick-and-mortar locations in any way. Inventory management, invoicing, and shipment tracking were manual processes and caused the retailer's e-commerce platform costly issues. Adrian Rosas, director of online operations at Robert Wayne Footwear, was tasked with implementing a multichannel software solution that would integrate the retailer's brick-and-mortar stores and e-commerce platform, fulfill orders seamlessly, as well as provide the real-time visibility necessary to operate a successful online operation.

When retailers manually update their inventory with spreadsheets, mistakes and oversights will happen. "We faced various operational challenges with our e-commerce platform in 2005, primarily pertaining to time and order accuracy," says Rosas. "We were doing everything manually with the website. We experienced a great deal of human error particularly in order shipments and invoicing, inevitably leading to costly issues." For instance, Rosas explains that misshipments were a particular pain point for Robert Wayne Footwear's online business. "The average cost to ship an item is between 13% and 16% of our margin," says Rosas. "We lacked inventory visibility, which led to errors. If we had to ship something three times (the original order to the customer, from the customer back to the retailer, and the correct shoe from the retailer to the customer), our margin was greatly reduced, and in most instances we absorbed a small loss."

That didn't include allocated percentages for payroll, marketing, rent, and other fixed expenses. "If you make that mistake four or five times a week at 52 weeks a year, you're talking about an additional employee's salary in misshipments."

Rosas states that the Robert Wayne Footwear's original website design worked well and met the retailer's needs for

about a year. But, to alleviate shipping errors and gain inventory visibility, Rosas wanted to have multichannel data located on one database. He wanted to rid the retailer of manual inventory management and to gain real-time access to inventory and customer data. The retailer chose Celerant Command Retail's integrated e-commerce technology. "We've had a long-standing relationship with Celerant, as we've always used Command Retail for the brick-and-mortar side of the business," explains Rosas. "Once we realized we had a sustainable e-commerce business, we worked with Celerant to add data from both channels onto one system." Celerant's e-commerce technology integrates into the Command Retail POS and back office system. The company designed the Robert Wayne Footwear website and integrated it within its POS system to deliver real-time inventory and POS data. There is no need for double, manual

entry of orders, because inventory is shared with the retailer's brick-and-mortar store locations.



Robert Wayne Footwear uses the e-commerce technology included in Celerant Command Retail for inventory visibility.

### The Benefits Of Brick-And-Mortar/ E-Commerce Integration

Integrating channels has allowed

Robert Wayne Footwear to experience an increase in website traffic. "We have been able to reallocate time and resources from the labor once dedicated to manually managing inventory and shipments into experimenting with new marketing venues," says Rosas. "Our site is more sophisticated now, and we offer more information for the customer. That alone has helped to double our conversion rate." Rosas explains that some improvements are branding-based, as the stores now use the website as a resource, which aids customer service. In addition, the retailer has been able to expedite the fulfillment of its online orders with Celerant's integrated shipping tools, including UPS (United Parcel Service), FedEx, and USPS (United States Postal Service). Celerant's integrated shipping tools have alleviated the retailer's costly misshipment problem. Finally, the retailer has one view of the customer, regardless of where they shop. ■

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