Suits U: A case study. The RFID Experience.

For retailers looking to streamline operations and increase efficiency, having visibility into inventory issues is critical. RFID technology integrated to a retail management software and platform like Retail Pro® is particularly useful for fashion retailers because it provides centralized and comprehensive inventory insights.

For Suits U, a men's suits and accessories retailer, optimizing their physical inventory management process was becoming increasingly important. Suits U enlisted their Retail Pro Business Partner, Retail Information Systems, to implement their RFID solution with Retail Pro to satisfy that need.

5 Ways Integrated RFID Can Help You Manage Your Store

Efficiency

Integrated RFID and retail management technology helps you increase merchandising efficiency From their start Suits U has been using their Retail Pro to manage replenishment and inventory, along with customer data, back office, performance, and operations. With Retail Pro, they have grown to a 12-store business spanning 3 US states and the internet.

"Everybody wears too many hats in retail," Nainani said. "We needed Retail Pro technology to help us gain greater control in-store and inventory management."

As they grew, physical inventory and other inventory management processes became a labor-intensive bottleneck. A considerable amount of time and employee labor was spent performing each step of stocking: Getting the goods, entering data, tagging items, scanning, sorting for individual stores, taking and arranging deliveries and checking in all the merchandise. After that, periodic merchandise checks were needed to reconcile the numbers entered in the system matched the items on the sales floor. "The entire process cost us days of time," says Nainani. "Integrating RFID with Retail Pro helped us eliminate steps in the merchandising process."

Suits U tags every item with RFID technology, which gives them granular, zone-level visibility into their inventory and allows for quicker, more accurate physical inventory checks. The process is now finished in a few hours rather than several days, achieving significant efficiency gains.

Accuracy

Higher stock accuracy helps you save sales. Because our RFID technology is integrated with Retail Pro, Suits U is able to keep all of their software up to date on inventory and variances are minimized. "We have so much work to do with just selling – we don't have time to worry about whether the inventory count is accurate on the computer," Nainani said. "Integrating the RFID solution from RIS with our Retail Pro has given us a better way of looking at retail."Staff at headquarters can even help store managers locate particular inventory items in their stores using the RFID data so that, for example, they can locate and transfer clothing from one store to another as needed to save a sale.

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The ability to transfer merchandise among stores gives Suits U a powerful tool: The ability to say "yes" to virtually every customer. "If a customer can't find the suit they're looking for, they'll walk out the door and they might never come back. But the zone-level inventory tracking we get with RFID integrated with Retail Pro lets us see if we have that suit at another location and we save the sale," says owner Jerry Nainani.

Better Fulfillment

Better inventory visibility enables more flexible fulfillment. Progressive retailers are increasingly looking at their brick and mortar locations as sources of supply in omnichannel fulfillment, and better visibility into their stock with inventory management technology like Retail Pro and RFID allows them to fulfill orders in smarter ways. For example, if a sales associate at Suits U can see that the Federal Road location in Houston has a particular suit coat, they can have it shipped immediately to the Cullen Boulevard location, to quickly fulfill a customer request. Retailers are creating unique sets of workflows that encourage and allow store associates to optimize order picking within -- and track inventory throughout -- their stores. That way, stores like Suits U can keep customers satisfied, experience incremental revenue, and maintain the store-level inventory accuracy required for unified commerce. "*I have so many ideas for how to leverage the technology to optimize our process!*" says owner Jerry Nainani. "We're building our tech strategy with Retail Pro and RFID from our Retail Pro Business Partner, RIS."

Fewer Lost Sales

Integrated RFID helps you keep customers happy.When a customer requests an item that can't be immediately located, the unfortunate result is often a lost sale. And those costs add up: Last year, CNBC reported out-of-stocks, overstocks, and returns are costing retailers $1.75 trillion a year and that figure is growing. RFID is crucial in expediting product delivery for retailers like Suits U that are particularly focused on customer experience. The technology, integrated with their Retail Pro, allows Suits U to centrally manage inventory and simultaneously saves sales from walking out the door due to out-of-stocks. Because RFID pinpoints where the inventory item is in the store, down to the zone, managers know exactly where it is and can get it quickly and accurately to the location where it is wanted -- and associates can focus on delighting their customers rather than on locating merchandise. Happy customers mean repeat business, and that means increased revenue.

Inventory Control

More control over inventory management enables you to keep growing. Poor inventory management not only impacts customer satisfaction, but it also impedes growth. Suits U stopped opening stores and expanding its sales territory because managers were struggling with keeping tabs on merchandise. Shrinkage -- the loss of inventory caused by factors including employee theft, shoplifting, administrative error, vendor fraud, damage in transit or in store, and cashier errors that benefit the customer – was also a factor.

"Now, with RFID integrated with Retail Pro, I have much more control over inventory"

By integrating RFID with the Retail Pro solution to increase physical process efficiency, Suits U has more control over its inventory and can continue opening new stores. The new hires it makes are to staff that growth rather than take on additional labor costs related to increased stock. "Now, with RFID integrated with Retail Pro, I have much more control over inventory," Nainain said. "I'm confident that I can keep expanding our operations and opening new stores."