Case Study: The Trusts

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Infinity Builds Trust at Point-of-Sale

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RETAIL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

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For the past decade, Triquestra's point-of-sale retail software has supported the Portage and Waitakare Licensing Trust's (The Trusts) efforts to manage the growth of its retail liquor operation. As well as enhancing its retail environment, the efficiencies generated by Triquestra's Infinity software have enabled the Trust to maximise its return to the community it serves.

About the Trusts

Established in the 1970s, the Trusts oversees the sale of liquor in the region, operating 24 retail liquor outlets. Today, the Trust is a $92 million dollar business, with the majority of this generated directly through the sale of liquor.

The Trust's decision to upgrade from Triquestra's POS2000 system to its Infinity platform in 2004 reflected the growth of the organisation's retail operation and the increasing importance it placed on real-time sales and inventory data across its store network to create a better customer experience.

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A Reasonably Easy Decision

In 1995, the Trust set out to find a point-of-sale system to deploy at its liquor stores throughout the West Auckland region. After an extensive period of research, the Trust opted for Triquestra's POS2000 system as the most effective way to extract the business intelligence it required.

"POS2000 was exactly what we needed. When we reviewed the available systems, it was clear that Triquestra's offering was well regarded in the market and fitted well with our business model. We also had confidence in the people we dealt with and with the direction the company was headed. It was a reasonably easy decision."

"Inventory is our business"

"Inventory is our business. Like all FMCG businesses, we need access to accurate and in-depth information that tells us what's happening in each of our stores," says Ian Caulfield, the Trust's Group Finance and IS Manager.

Before the upgrade, the Trust had used its Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system to maintain inventory for all of its outlets. Now, POS2000 provided transaction information to the ERP system to track the sales inputs for a given day. This information was consolidated and updated inventory figures were sent back to POS2000 where any previous stock information was overwritten.

However, the Trust soon out-grew POS2000 as its appetite for real-time inventory and sales data grew stronger.

"The major issue with our set-up was that if we got our timing wrong, a store manager would do a stock take and the information in their system would no longer be accurate. They could do their stock take, load their numbers into the POS system and it would tell them they're $5000 out."

"We very quickly came to a point where our store managers were saying: 'There are a whole heap of timing issues here so I'm not going to take responsibility for getting this right. I'm just going to send it through to head office and they can sort it out'."

There was also an increasing business need to analyse sales data, says Caulfield.

To Infinity and beyond

When Triquestra introduced Infinity in 2000, it was clear to the Trust that an upgrade was in order.

"Before we implement a substantial change in the business we do an environmental scan.

One of the great things about working with Triquestra is that they're very good at sharing best practice knowledge gained from working with their other clients.

"We were able to speak directly to Whitcoulls and Barkers Menswear and ask them how they were using Infinity and how it was working for them. The feedback we received was useful and instructive and we haven't looked back since implementing Infinity."

Caulfield says an advantage of working with the Triquestra team is their ability to customise their out-of-the-box solution to meet the Trust's exacting needs.

"Ultimately, our upgrade was done in partnership with Triquestra. Our business model demands that head office has visibility of all of our branches individually; but we also need a consolidated view. We worked with Triquestra over a period of about three months to establish what additional functionality we required and how they would go about incorporating it."

Real time from the point-of-sale

Caulfield says that Infinity has allowed the Trust to fundamentally change the way its information management systems work.

"We still have the same ERP system but we have taken inventory management down to the point-of-sale. All transactions that affect inventory occur at the point-of-sale and are controlled by the store manager. So too is adjustments, for breakages or stolen items.

"When our managers do a stock take the information is in real-time so they are responsible for identifying and reporting any variances that have occurred. That's made a huge difference. We're now asking the managers to identify why they have a stock variance as opposed to just reporting it back to Head Office," he says.

A more intelligent business

For any growing business, analysis of sales figures to identify trends and popular locations can provide that vital competitive advantage. Since implementing Infinity, the changes the Trust has made to its information management system have given it access to a better quality of business intelligence.

"We have built an interface from Infinity to our data warehouse. From this we extract analysis of our inventory movements, profits and sales. This information allows us to ensure we're providing the right product to our customers," says Caulfield.

"One of our goals is to encourage customers making larger purchases into our bigger stores. We want customers to know that they should go to a King Dick store for their Christmas shopping because there's a larger range, more stock, more staff, more advice and the prices are lower. However, if you just want a bottle of wine for dinner tonight, a Local Liquor store is ideal.

"The business analytics information we now have easy access to, allows us to structure our business to best meet our customers' needs."

"It just goes"

"In our business there are very obvious busy periods - Friday and Saturday nights in particular - where we put through a huge number of sales. Infinity is such a robust application that we never have any issues even during our busiest times. It just goes - we don't need to be in constant contact.

"Our employees now have all of the functionality that they need and it's very quick. From users point of view it's very simple: scan the product, take the money and the rest takes care of itself. This allows us to focus on the customer's needs and not just process the transaction.

"We are looking at some minor refinements but this is really going to be the core of our retail system for the next five-to-ten years," concludes Caulfield.

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