

# Drive Growth With An Integrated Solution

This multichannel retailer manages its entire operation with an integrated retail management solution.

by Erin Harris

The Miami HEAT franchise has operated its official team store, Miami Hoops Gear, since 1998. Miami Hoops Gear includes two brick-and-mortar locations (i.e. its flagship store on the mezzanine level of the American Airlines Arena and a satellite location at Dolphin Mall in Miami), as well as nine kiosks on the arena concourses and an e-commerce platform. Andy Montero, senior director of retail operations at Miami Hoops Gear, needed a reliable POS and inventory control solution to manage merchandising, store operations, payment processing, and integrated e-commerce capability for all channels.

## Avoid Inventory Mistakes, Choose An Automated Solution

Some of the NBA (National Basketball Association) teams have a third-party company operate the team's merchandise venues. However, the HEAT wanted to run everything — including its retail stores — on its own. “Typically, retailers located in sports arenas operated antiquated cash registers that ring up merchandise using little information [e.g. \$13.99 apparel or \$13.99 novelty],” says Montero. “That’s an inventory nightmare. To keep track of inventory, they would do manual inventory counts — one at the beginning of the game and another at the end of the game. It was very time-consuming and labor-intensive, not to mention prone to error.” Montero wanted an automated solution that enabled staff to conduct purchase orders online as well as have 24/7 inventory visibility for all locations. The HEAT’s mall loca-

tion is open during normal mall operating hours (e.g. 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.), and customers come in at different times throughout that time frame. However, during a game, the arena’s store and kiosks experience extremely high traffic before tipoff, during half-time, and again at the end of the game. “POS problems are not an option during game time,” says Montero. “Fans are there to watch the game. We accommodate very high volumes of traffic in short periods of time. However, if customers experience long lines or problems at the POS, they may leave, and we lose the sale.”

## Are Local Solutions Providers Important To You?

It was important to Montero to choose a local solutions provider. Montero wanted a solutions provider that offered 24/7 support and provided on-site support should a problem occur during game time. He chose Retail Technology Experts (RTE), a Miami-based retail technology solutions provider. RTE implemented Retail Pro to integrate all of Miami Hoops Gear’s key store operations in one product. The solution enables staff to navigate between components (i.e. customer management, POS, receiving) without the need to launch or exit other applications. The solution’s capabilities streamline front and back office operations as well as inventory management. Retail Technology Experts also integrated payment processing so the retailer no longer has to use a separate system for credit card transactions.



Miami Hoops Gear has gained 24/7 inventory visibility for all locations.

The solutions provider installed IBM POS hardware and Retail Pro 8.5 in each brick-and-mortar location and later integrated the retailer’s e-commerce operations with the solution. The solution was installed in warehouses for retail receiving, shipping, and transferring as well as for the finance department in order to keep track of all finance records. As new software versions are released, the solutions provider installs updates via the VPN (virtual private network) or goes to each location to do so.

Going forward, Montero plans to upgrade to Retail Pro version 9 in the summer of 2010. Montero credits Retail Pro with optimizing the inventory and POS. “Out of all the NBA teams, we are the only franchise to have won the NBA annual retail award twice,” says Montero. “We received those awards because Retail Pro allows us to control inventory and track trends and multiple sales per transaction.” ☐

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