Gander Mountain

Gander Mountain increased productivity by 85,000 man hours per year using RFgen Inventory Control Solution

At a glance...

Industry
Outdoor Outfitters

Application
Inventory Control

Gander Mountain Company, based in Saint Paul, Minnesota, operates the nation's largest retail network of stores for hunting, fishing, camping, and marine products and accessories. Established in 1960, Gander Mountain offers a wide assortment of outdoor equipment, firearms, camping supplies, fishing and marine products, technical and rugged outdoor apparel, and technical and casual footwear as well as gunsmith and archery services. Gander Mountain's 116 outdoor lifestyle stores provide approximately 6.6 million square feet of retail space in 23 states. Additionally, Gander Mountain's direct marketing division, based in Greenville, NC, includes internet and catalog operations under the brands Gander Mountain®, Overton's® and Consumers Marine®.

The Challenge

Ten years ago, Gander Mountain was growing too big for its own IT system. Their stores, from New York to Florida and west to Colorado, were experiencing those growing pains on a daily basis. Simply put, the product selection in each store was growing too large. Their inventory tracking system couldn't efficiently handle the expanding product selection offered by each store.

When it came time for store managers to download their product SKUs into the company database each day, they had to manually download from three to six different batches of product lines such as fishing items, hunting apparel and seasonal products. The process took 20 to 30 minutes per batch. Sometimes, inevitably near the end of the batch download, the system would run out of room causing the whole download to crash and all data to be lost. The time consuming process would have to begin all over again. Clearly, something had to change.

The Solution

The installation of RFgen software was one of the first major projects for Brian Sword, Gander Mountain's new IT Installation and Support Manager. He worked closely with RFgen's sales and technical staff to identify Gander Mountain's processes and requirements. After seeing a demo of the superior technology of RFgen's mobile data collection software suite, Sword said simply, "The decision was a no-brainer for us."

Sword introduced the RFgen software solution to Gander Mountain's top management and store managers at their semi-annual summit meeting. Sword set up a mini-store on stage and proceeded to astound the audience with his demonstration of the speed and ease of downloading SKUs on mobile devices connecting to RFgen. "The gains in productivity and the time saved were so dramatic, all the managers wanted to know was how fast they could have it in their stores," Sword said.

"Often, with new software, there are restrictions or limitations to what the user can do with it," Sword explained. "With RFgen, we were able to bring our managers a product that had no negatives and simply gives them the ability to do their job faster and easier. It's quite rare and it's a win-win for everybody."

Integrating new software with existing software can be a potential mine field too, Sword emphasized. "It's very rare when a newly integrated system actually works and doesn't break down. RFgen software ran strong right out of the box. It didn't take a year or two to work out the kinks like so many other products."

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The Result

Gander Mountain was able to take RFgen software and run with it. They did all of their own development, implementation and employee training.

RFgen's key benefits for Gander Mountain:

- Increased Productivity - "Productivity gains have been astounding," Sword said. "We've cut out two hours of labor per person by using RFgen's real-time automated data collection system." Across 116 stores, that's a productivity gain of 232 man hours per day that adds up to approximately 85,000 man hours per year.

- Speed of Real-time Data - One of the biggest surprises for Gander Mountain was the overall speed of RFgen. "Now we scan a UPC, and - boom - the information is there NOW!" Sword said. Gander Mountain no longer has to wait eight hours for the data to be compiled.

- Reliability - Instead of their old technology that failed repeatedly, RFgen gives them reliability they can trust. As a result, Gander Mountain's points of failure in their system have decreased. "Now if something fails," Sword explained, "It's our own hardware - never RFgen."

- Quick and Easy Licensing - Gander Mountain is a very dynamic business. They open four to five new stores yearly, close old ones and remodel existing ones. These changes require new RFgen licenses. "Transferring and adding licenses has been very easy, thanks to RFgen's staff. They have been a delight to work with," Sword said. "All we have to do is send a purchase order and within minutes authorization codes are emailed to us. Our new users are up and running fast."

- Easy Performance Reviews of Individual stores - When Gander Mountains' CEO visits stores to review their operations, he immediately asks for a mobile scanning device and starts clicking SKUs. He looks for empty pegs which have no merchandise. He wants to know why the peg is empty. Is the store out of stock? Is the product in the back room but hasn't been brought out yet? Is there a problem with the distribution center? "So much valuable information is gathered on these mobile devices by everyone from the CEO down to the sales associates. It's amazing how integral RFgen software has become to Gander Mountain's daily operations."

As Gander Mountain's business has evolved over the last 10 years, RFgen enabled solutions have grown with them. "So many vendors sell you a service, and once you pay for it, you never hear from them again. RFgen is different. They stand behind their product and they have proven to be a great technology partner." Sword concluded.

"Gander Mountain is such a dynamic company," said RFgen's Tom Rhoades. "They have been a long-term dedicated customer that loves the ease and capabilities of RFgen software because it does everything they need it to do."

About RFgen Software

Incorporated in 1995, California-based RFgen Software provides flexible and reliable mobile supply chain solutions that solve real-world business challenges. As a certified Oracle, SAP, Microsoft, Deltek and Vocollect partner, RFgen actively seeks companies facing challenges managing their internal supply chain operations and solves them using real-world experience, industry best practices, and state-of-the-art technology. RFgen's Mobile Framework division specializes in development tools for mobile, wireless and voice environments and provides open standards based connectivity to a multitude of systems (database, SOA, legacy, etc.). RFgen's ERP Integration division focuses on providing certified, open-source transactions and integration expertise for Oracle E-Business Suite, Oracle JD Edwards, SAP, Deltek Costpoint and Microsoft Dynamics solutions.

RFgen's Mobile Framework is an open systems development platform that speeds the path from idea, to proof-of-concept, to solution deployment. RFgen provides built-in, native functionality for extending real-time and on-demand access to enterprise data to almost any mobile device available today. RFgen's Mobile Solutions are currently installed in more than 35 countries, in over 2,600 locations, and are supported by a certified group of over 125 solution partners.

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