



Dedicated leaders of fashion

“I have absolutely no doubt that the increased margin we have achieved has already repaid the investment we have made in IBM SureOne,”
says Dennis Alexander, Financial Controller of Menarys



Fashion



Problem

Manual stock control was time consuming, inefficient and not maximising sales across multiple branches

Solution

IBM SureOne 4614 POS terminals able to deliver sales information immediately, so stock could be moved to the best-selling store, and ends of lines consolidated to complete ranges.

Benefits

Stock formerly sold at discounts can be held at full price for longer; improved customer service in locating and sourcing garments; faster, improved sales and management information.

Business sector

Fashion retail and department store retail

Location

United Kingdom

Hardware

IBM SureOne 4614 terminals with barcode scanners, with direct connection to back-office IBM Netfinity systems

Software

M/R/S POS 2000 application on SureOne 4614, M/R/S Elite stock control and BackOffice Retailer financial management on IBM Netfinity server.

Fashion front

Menarys, a women's fashion and department-store chain based in Northern Ireland with a turnover of more than £20 million, is growing fast. IBM SureOne 4614 POS terminals have been installed in existing stores and in the brand-new flagship department store in Bangor, County Down, to handle growth and transform stock management.

"At the end of the day, the fundamental reason for having these terminals is improving margins. We are trying to maximise our turnover of course, but if we can improve our margins then that is absolutely crucial to running the business.

"Without doubt we have increased our margins as a direct result of implementing the SureOne solution," says Dennis Alexander.

Brand values

Menarys analyses sales in minute detail with the data provided by the SureOne terminals. Particular brands are examined by colour, size, style and

turnover. "The decisions to take on new brands, and to continue or drop existing lines, have been vastly improved with the POS system. Data is sent from the terminals every evening, and we are able to update the pricing and stock position overnight.

"In the past, buyers would have to literally count the stock on the rails to see what was selling. Now, we know immediately," adds Dennis Alexander.

The analysis of brand performance not only allows tighter margin control, but better customer service and stock optimisation, too.

"If a customer is looking for a particular size and colour, a cashier can use the SureOne to see if the item is in stock at another branch, and order the goods to be transferred," comments Dennis Alexander. "We fulfil around 1,000 such special orders every week. We're not concerned with the individual sale value – service like this wins us a customer for life!"

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Keener stock control

In the past, where different stores may have had only part ranges with some colours or sizes sold out, additional stock was bought to fill the gaps or the stock was sold at reduced prices to clear.

“At the same time, if a particular line is selling well in one store but not in another, we can see this and transfer stock rather than buying more. Obvious in principle but impossible in practice unless you have a system such as the SureOne.”

With the SureOne system, by understanding the complete stock picture, Menarys is able to consolidate the part-ranges of goods from several stores into a single complete range at just one store – indeed, at the store where the range sells best. This prevents wasteful over-buying of stock and allows ranges to be sold at full price until the last possible moment.

Special selection

Menarys selected the IBM SureOne at the recommendation of Micro Retailer Systems (M/R/S) in Cheshire, England, its IBM Business Partner.

“The SureOne is an easily managed till,” says Dennis Alexander. “Just the single, properly integrated piece of kit which is easy to connect with operations made as user-friendly as possible. A definite step forwards from the previous systems we had been using.”

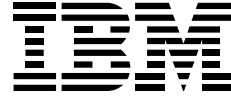
The SureOne’s PC architecture means that it is able to run any standard PC-based retail software, allowing customers to choose the best solution for their needs, an approach not always available with other terminals. Menarys runs POS 2000 on its SureOne terminals, linked to Elite (stock control) and BackOffice Retailer (financial management), all Micro Retailer Systems applications, to provide integrated stock, sales, financial and customer marketing information.

David Powell of Micro Retailer Systems, comments, “We have retail-specific PC software solutions, aimed at the department and fashion store businesses. IBM SureOne POS terminals are the best platform for this business, which requires reliable and robust performance. The reliability of the IBM SureOne has influenced Menarys to install a new Netfinity server and IBM workstations at their head office. M/R/S provided the expertise to deliver a seamless system of POS, front office and back office systems to provide retailers with all the management information quickly and concisely. The SureOne is pivotal to the smooth running of the system.

Special purchase

Dennis Alexander concludes, “For Menarys, which has a strong commitment to customer service, the reliability of the SureOne is essential. From the business angle, we have been able to boost margins and improve our buying performance. We are well satisfied.”





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