



Museum Retail

Peter Buonincontro, Associate Director of Visitor Services of Portland Children's Museum

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Case Study

SITUATION

Portland Children's Museum, a nonprofit organization founded in 1946, is the oldest children's museum west of the Mississippi. The museum is a safe place for children and their parents to learn, discover, and create using their limitless imaginations. Portland Children's Museum and its 60 employees profoundly believe in the power of play and how it contributes to children's lives and development. Since 2001, the Museum has hosted over 1.6 million visitors from across the country and the world. It has become a top regional resource in Oregon for early childhood development. It is also a place of research for educators studying the kinds of environments and approaches to teaching that inspire children to grow and learn.

Non-profits are often focused more on the mission of their organization instead of the business processes necessary to making that mission possible. This was definitely the case for the Portland Children's Museum. They ignored key business processes within the organization for far too long, causing all areas of tracking, booking, and promoting throughout the museum to be outdated. They were using a "shoebox computer system" that made it difficult (and extremely slow) to produce records or reports of any kind. Peter Buonincontro, Associate Director of Visitor Services said, "We desperately wanted and needed more staff resource time promoting our mission, and less staff time devoted to tracking and compiling of records." They also needed to consolidate many different types of information and have it all feed into their accounting system. On top of this vital functionality, Portland Children's Museum craved a user friendly system to ensure all employees, teachers, and clients had a trouble free experience working at and with the museum.

Portland Children's Museum realized that the business side of their organization could no longer be ignored. In order to live out their mission, they would need a top of the line solution in place.

SOLUTION

The museum researched options for about 6 months until they heard New West Technologies present their *Museum Retail POS Solution* in the fall of 2007 that encompassed all the needs and wants of the museum. Portland Children's Museum knew of two other non-profits in their area who were working with New West Technologies at the time. They took field trips out to those businesses and researched the capabilities of their solutions. Portland Children's Museum found that the Museum Retail POS Solution was a Mobile POS (Point of Sale) with Microsoft Dynamics® RMS (Retail Management System) and Microsoft Dynamics GP as the backend foundation allowing seamless integration of their front office systems all the way to their accounting. They were immediately impressed with the "endless potential" of the Museum Retail POS Solution and soon contacted New West Technologies for an evaluation.

From the start of their partnership, New West Technologies was honest about what the Museum Retail POS Solution could and couldn't do, and they worked extremely hard to make sure the solution could help the museum focus on their mission. It didn't take long to install the Museum Retail POS Solution.. It

did, however, take time to get all the users trained up to speed on the immense capabilities of the solution. The museum was going from a “bicycle to a convertible” and everyone had 1000 questions from day one. They wanted to fully utilize the Museum Retail POS Solution to the best of its ability. New West Technologies appreciated their enthusiasm and were open to questions, suggestions and advice throughout the training process and into today. They went out of their way to ensure Portland Children’s Museum could meet the goals of their mission. Peter Buonincontro says “The Museum Retail POS Solution they offer really gives new life to non-profits, because business just doesn’t work efficiently without a good system in place.”

Robyn Kocienski, Visitor Services Coordinator of Portland Children’s Museum

“The staff time saved by New West Technologies has allowed our museum to focus on developing a true eCommerce solution which benefits our whole organization.”

BENEFITS

Deeper Integration for Museum Sales

Portland Children’s Museum has multiple areas to track for their business records, including store memberships and sales, group sales, student records, birthday sales, and much more. New West Technologies’ Museum Retail POS Solution allowed the museum to compile this information into readable reports, making a significant difference in their business processes and freeing days of work for museum employees. The museum is also able to analyze and track the items that sell best throughout the museum, saving them thousands of dollars in meaningless orders and overhead. They are eliminating the guessing game and seeing the benefits.

In addition to this primary integration, Portland Children’s Museum wanted deeper integration for their online sales department. They can now show the product or program online, sell it, capture the buyer’s information, transfer it into Microsoft Dynamics RMS for reporting and then transfer all the data into their Microsoft Dynamics GP accounting system. This opened the door for a whole new level of business for Portland Children’s Museum. For example, Portland Children’s Museum offers early childhood education programs for children and their parents. In the past, they had never seen these classes sell out and even had to cancel events due to lack of interest. But now with this easier online process for parents, they sold out 35 classes in 3 months time with requests to have even more scheduled! It’s easy for the parent to update the reservation, and it even shows the number of spots left in class (urging them to “ACT FAST”).

More Time for Mission Promotion and Development

Portland Children’s Museum finally has the time and ability to focus on their mission: to inspire imagination, creativity and the wonder of learning in children and adults by inviting moments of shared discovery. According to Peter Buonincontro, Associate Director of Visitor Services, the Museum Retail POS Solution has saved them at least \$20,000 a year in staffing costs by being able to repurpose those people to be mission focused, ultimately enhancing what the museum can offer their community and the future. The museum can now organize a more beneficial arena for children and their parents without having to take hours each day to compile and track data. Robyn Kocienski, Visitor Services Coordinator says, “The staff time saved by New West Technologies has allowed our museum to focus on developing a true eCommerce solution which benefits our whole organization.”

Opened Door for Growth

Portland Children’s Museum can now take part in marketing to their constituents. With the Museum Retail POS Solution, they’re able to pull lists of contact information quickly, send them reminders to book their next birthday party, and track the activities they have participated in at the museum. The record keeping is allowing the museum to proactively reach out instead of taking a “sit back and wait” attitude.

The Museum Retail POS Solution has helped the museum maintain a consistent revenue stream as they incorporate the new technology into their business processes, allowing for limitless growth of the organization.

SUMMARY

Portland Children's Museum has a new level of excitement within their organization. There is no longer a fear of the future or technological unknowns- it is one of potential, growth, and hope. The Museum Retail POS Solution and New West Technologies have given the museum renewed confidence to be successful in the somewhat daunting corporate world.

Experts in Microsoft Dynamics Retail Products

Founded in 1992 in Portland, Oregon, New West Technologies is a leading integrator of retail point of sale (POS) software solutions and Microsoft Dynamics retail products. As a full-service technology provider with extensive experience in business computer networking and retail software development and installation, we deliver comprehensive, practical solutions that dramatically improve your profitability and workflow management.

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