FRENCH CONNECTION GETS CONNECTED

FRENCH CONNECTION

Global fashion retailer cuts overnight processing and delivers timely, reliable and accurate business intelligence (BI) that includes sales information with Redwood automation.

KEY POINTS

◢ The retailer needed accurate Business Intelligence to provide information on stock movement and margins.

◢ Two members of staff worked overnight to gather, collate and compare data.

◢ With Redwood automation, French Connection eliminated risky manual data entry.

◢ Stock and sales information is now current, with accurate Business Intelligence reports.

◢ Automation now coordinates e-commerce and retail stock pools, and creates a complete view of stock.

A DATA ENTRY CHALLENGE

The French Connection Group is a widely recognized global fashion brand. Based in the UK, the company designs, produces and distributes clothing for more than 30 countries through a network of branded retail stores and licensed franchises.

To remain competitive, they needed accurate, up-to-date business intelligence to provide dynamic information on stock movement and margins.

French Connection relied on a manual system to support retail service and BI. Every day, each retail outlet transmitted large amounts of data on sales, inventory and other critical business details to the main data store in the UK. There, two people waited for this information with a paper "run sheet" for the day.

They would work overnight from 6 PM to 6 AM manually gathering, collating and comparing the data from their point-of-sale (POS) systems into their SAP® ERP landscape. If there were any problems, the whole process had to stop, which sometimes meant late night calls to management. At the end of the next day, the process started all over again.

All of the steps in the process had to be manually copied and rescheduled, every night. It was a lot of human labor with great potential for error.

Every week, based on this data, the company would produce a master report on sales and inventory movement. This was extremely important for management at every level, so it needed to be accurate and on time.

TIME TO CHANGE

French Connection selected Redwood RunMyJobs® to automate its overnight processing. However, what started as a way to simplify this everyday task became an opportunity for the company to develop a whole new way of managing critical business processes.

First, the retailer streamlined weekend reporting with automated detection of incoming store data. This meant that manual activity and intervention was eliminated.

RunMyJobs integrated easily with French Connection's custom-developed solutions, and enabled it to connect different elements quickly, right into its SAP ERP solution. If something unusual happened during an overnight reporting process, an automated fix or workaround could keep the overall process running. The retailer could also set up email alerts. Now every step in the process is connected – from warehouse to point-of-sale.

Now RunMyJobs provides French Connection with all the control, visibility and adaptability needed to work consistently across the globe. Management now get reports several times a day, and are more informed about the entire company.

> " Our project with Redwood paid for itself. It gave us tremendous flexibility and adaptability. We found ourselves telling our business users 'We can do that'.
>
> — Hazel Cawood, Business Systems Analyst, French Connection

RAPID RETAIL RESPONSE

With process automation, nobody has to sit up all night monitoring the data gathering and reporting process. Data is automatically transferred at point-of-sale. French Connection now finds it easy to change and adapt to any issues that arise.

The relationship between business and IT has been transformed to a collaborative effort. While, business processes are clear to all stakeholders.

The retailer has a more detailed and accurate view of what's selling and how its inventory is doing – with less effort. The savings in time, money and resources helps support an IT help desk.