

## Microsoft Business Solutions Retail Management System

### C-Store

#### C-Store Doubles Revenue in Three Months by Tracking Purchases and Serving Customers Faster

*"This is New York! Longer than two seconds is forever," says Neil Barrella of CLB Check Cashing, Inc. Hurried customers would stick their head in the door, see a line at the register and some would leave.*

*Convenience stores set very high standards for checkout speeds in point-of-sale (POS)/retail management systems. But POS should be just the entry point for pliable data to pump up profits. Microsoft® Business Solutions—Retail Management System gave CLB 1360 Gas Corporation, one part of a keen-eyed financial conglomerate, exact knowledge of fast- and slow-moving items. Now they stock up on what sells and scratch items that linger on the shelves.*

*With 2,100 SKUs and more than 100,000 pieces of auto and convenience items, physical inventory once took three shifts per store. Now Barrella reports that time has been cut to 8 percent of previous.*

#### The Situation

"Twenty-five years ago, our founder Louis Renzo was pumping gas and saving his money," said Neil Barrella, director of construction and development for CLB Check Cashing, Inc. in East New York, NY. "Today there are 30 check-cashing locations and CLB 1360 Gas plans to open more convenience stores every year. When we invest in something, we make it pay. And Microsoft Retail Management System has sure paid out."

Barrella evaluates building sites for gas and convenience locations. He designs the buildings and oversees build-out. "Then I make sure they're profitable," he says.

"When we had no Retail Management System," says Barrella, "inventory got delivered and you hoped it left through the register and not your back door." Manual stock tracking took so long, it was done infrequently. As a consequence, "We were purchasing by habit, not by the numbers. That seemed okay till Retail Management System gave us twice the money we'd left on the table every month."

When CLB opened a 2,400 sq. ft. C-store in October 2003, management followed traditional wisdom and stocked up on grocery items "because our gut told us they would sell. It's what convenience stores always stock."

Poor visibility of stock levels showed up in stockouts. With three shifts a day in most stores, one manager might not relay news of a needed item. "Twelve hours later," Barrella points out, "you're out of coffee or soft drinks. When the word gets out on that, you lose more customers."

#### Customer Profile

CLB 1360 Gas Corporation is a gas and convenience store affiliate of CLB Check Cashing, Inc., a multimillion-dollar financial company that watches return on investment and employee security closely.

#### Business Situation

Running convenience stores inside gas stations was profitable, but obvious bottlenecks told executives that an information system would pump up profits if it were easy to learn, had solid security, and could give store managers better visibility.

#### Solution

Microsoft Business Solutions Retail Management System has been installed and staff trained on every aspect of its use. Its phenomenal bottom-line results have ensured it will be installed more widely in existing stores.

#### Software Used

Microsoft Windows® XP Professional  
Microsoft Windows 2000  
Microsoft Business Solutions—Retail Management System Store Operations  
Intuit QuickBooks® 2003 Professional

#### Partners

Business Solution Partners  
Roslyn, New York  
[www.bspny.com](http://www.bspny.com)

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### **The Solution**

CLB Check Cashing, Inc. senior vice president Bill DeRespino selected Microsoft Retail Management System for the several ways it sped traffic through the registers. His criteria list read "Fast" all the way down: Fast to check out any kind of transaction, fast initial installation—less than three weeks—and fast and easy deployment through the chain.

"Retail Management System got thumbs up from two IT staff in different parts of our company. And our experience with Microsoft has been excellent," says DeRespino, "so it wasn't difficult to decide." When DeRespino saw the plain logic of Retail Management System screens and heard credit card sales would take just six seconds, he was sold. Each store would have two registers with integrated credit card processing and a printer; no separate credit card terminal needed. Previously, cashiers had winced at credit card purchases if there was a line in the store.

Shawn Ezhaghi, the retail systems project manager from Business Solution Partners of New York installed the hardware and Retail Management System, and began customizing it to CLB's exact needs. Barrella has "the usual businessman's self-educated background in PCs," so it wasn't difficult to help enter the inventory.

"Shawn was great," says Barrella. "In two hours we trained 21 people. They'll train others. Shawn stayed until everybody knew transactions, reports, receiving, security, and how to even customize their own reports. Business Solution Partners beat our three-week deadline."

Managers are amazed at how easy Retail Management System is to set up and learn, even with some cashiers' limited computer knowledge. CLB is considering using Retail Management System in two more locations in the coming month.

### **The Benefits**

"I can handle seven people at a register in two minutes," says Barrella. "Retail Management System is as close to self-service as is possible and still have a cashier watching. That's one way we brought in more money.

"We doubled our revenues in three months because Retail Management System reports showed us what we should be buying versus what we had been buying. Our standard grocery items weren't selling and some go bad. You don't have to analyze anything in great depth to see that if windshield wipers, work gloves, and seasonal winter items are at the top of the best-sellers list, then let's stock those items and make sure we don't run out."

As RMS propagates through the chain, every CLB manager will know what sells best in his or her neighborhood. They will do breakdowns by department and SKU and see sales by item or by the hour, shift or day. "Finally, we can forecast what to buy," says Barrella. "It's like a crystal ball that constantly tells us what to change. And we do constantly change. What sells fast is not always what you think. We've become a bigger customer to certain suppliers so we negotiate better prices. As spring comes, we'll make sure today's hot sellers don't get heavy on the shelves in April." Barrella set up just 17 departments.

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"Managers and I will know from one neighborhood to the next when each store gets busiest and when it lags," says Barrella. "We can save a lot when we schedule staff by customer count."

He has been impressed that new staff learn Retail Management System in less than 30 minutes. "If you've touched a computer for five minutes in the last five years," he says, "you can use this system." Retail Management System also helps Barrella compare employee productivity. "Some are there to sell and some are there to get a paycheck," he observes.

"A retailer pays several ways for every square foot of building space and every foot of shelf space. I need desirable merchandise and industrious employees to make those areas pay their way and make profit. Retail Management System helps me sort out who and what makes money change hands."

Manual stock counts, grueling without an inventory system, once took 24 to 30 hours but can now be done in two. CLB accountants get the store-level data from the store.

"At CLB, you know right away if something is a failure or a success," says Barrella. "We'll be putting Retail Management System into more stores every month. It makes our smart managers smarter."

*For more information about Microsoft Business Solutions Retail Management System, visit [www.microsoft.com/BusinessSolutions/POS](http://www.microsoft.com/BusinessSolutions/POS).*

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