

# Whittard of chelsea

Business



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Company: NSB Customer: Whittard Of Chelsea Submitted by: MCC

International Date: April 2000 Whittard of Chelsea has saved time and money, improved stock control and customer service, in its first nine months of using NSB's front and back office EPoS software. The use of automated retail technology has not only delivered substantial business benefits but also freed up Whittard's sales and management staff from time-consuming administration duties so that they can concentrate on their core expertise – selling. Established in 1886, the high street speciality tea and coffee retailer invested £500, 000 in NSB's Object PoS and NSB's RMS NT systems software in 1998.

Its aim was to improve internal buying processes, speed up till transactions, and generate more accurate stock and management information on daily sales across 120 UK outlets. The rollout of the software, on Epson IR (intelligent register) tills with touch sensitive screens was completed in August 1999. Whittard chose NSB's systems because of the strength of the company's customer references, and its impressive performance in a pilot project. Finance Director and Head of IT Richard Knight says, " We wanted a rugged EPoS system that could report accurate sales figures, provide a faster PoS terminal, solid sales transactions, and support stock control management. Our previous EPoS till system was unreliable and couldn't give us accurate management information, which is so crucial in a competitive retail environment.

" He adds, " Since we chose the NSB software it's lived up to all our expectations" Whittard saw business benefits from its new software investment as soon as the first systems went in." With the previous system it

would take four hours to transfer new price files to all our shops and only 80% made it through because we'd have communications problems," says Knight. " Today, it takes only 30 minutes and we rarely have trouble." The till software proved easy to learn and use by the company's 500 staff and was soon delivering accurate sales data to managers over the company's ISDN network in record time. Whittard has also enjoyed additional business benefits from feeding through the sales information to its head office JBA merchandising and financial software, enabling management to react quickly to fluctuations in demand and competitor pressures.

" Because of the flexibility and responsiveness of NSB's systems I can look at sales on a daily or weekly basis, track slow and best selling lines, and know what stock needs to be reordered quickly because it's selling well," says Knight." As a result of being able to tighten our stock control and improve our merchandise buying process we now have the ability to boost our profit margins. It means we're getting the kind of information from our systems that larger retailers get so we can compete against them more effectively. By keeping shelves stocked with popular lines identified by the EPoS software, Whittard's has also improved its customer service. Long queues at the tills are also a thing of the past. With the NSB till systems being so much faster than the previous software, Whittard's shops are reporting less congestion even when sales figures are up.

The company particularly noticed the positive effect on the business last Christmas." There were no queue problems last Christmas and we had a good season sales-wise," says Knight. " Transaction processing at the tills was so much faster. It proves that you need good, solid till software in our

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business, with options to support promotional discounts and do credit card reading quickly. You don't want customers queuing for ages as that's when they change their minds about what they're buying!" Whittard's staff are particularly happy with the new till systems because they no longer have to do time-consuming and boring administration tasks, such as logging daily sales and compiling paperwork to send back to head office.

Today, the NSB systems complete these tasks automatically." We've probably saved half a man-day a week per store on streamlining admin/paperwork tasks, which is more time spent by managers and staff on selling," says Knight. Knight is currently working on completing implementation of the back office functionality of the NSB till software. He wants to be able to check and log warehouse deliveries automatically, and transfer stock between shops using the till software instead of by manual paperwork." It'll save us more time and effort and give us a more accurate fix on stock levels held by every shop in real-time," says Knight.

Knight is very pleased with NSB's performance thus far. He concludes "We're processing as many customers as before but faster, plus we've got access to accurate sales and stock data in record time. Our business can only benefit as a result."