

# PARTY SUPPLIER HELPS TO INCREASE SALES FORCE EFFICIENCY & SAVE MONEY BY DEPLOYING INTEGRATED BLACKBERRY SOLUTION

## Industry

- Retail/Wholesale

## Region

- North America

## Company Size

- Small Organization – (11-99 employees)

## Solution

- Wireless Merchant back-end order system by AGS Advanced Software Inc.
- BlackBerry® Enterprise Server
- BBM™
- Bluetooth® barcode scanners

Party Goods Warehouse Inc. (Party Goods) supplies a wide variety of event and holiday-related products to a supermarket chain with more than 1,000 stores in five southeastern states. Based in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, the company employs nearly 50 people, many of whom are sales representatives who visit stores every week to take product orders.

### The Challenge

Since Party Goods supplies many of these supermarket chain locations, its salespeople required an efficient way to process orders. In the past, staff used bulky, expensive and unreliable handheld computers that did not always have a strong signal and required a full-time employee to manually upload and double-check every order, a process that would often take two or three days.

The company's previous sales equipment also failed to address the specific back-end needs required by its client. Invoices had to be separated depending on which department the product was being sold to, which was difficult for salespeople who needed to produce a number of separate invoices during each store visit.

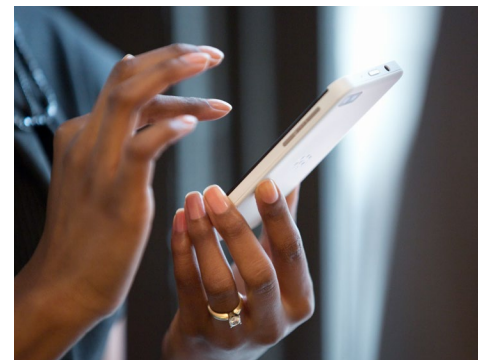
"The system we had in place wasn't helping us manage the business the way we needed it to," said Don Giordano, Operations Manager at Party Goods. "Things were somewhat disorganized – our reporting system was not very effective, we didn't have a good sales solution and we didn't have any inventory control for the warehouse purchasing or receiving."

Since the system was lacking any sort of data compression technology, the handheld computers would also constantly send huge amounts of packet data to the server, leading to costly monthly data plans. The company needed a sales system that was reliable and offered solutions specific to their needs.

### The Solution

Party Goods began working with AGS Advanced Software Inc. (AGS), an Ottawa-based development company that could customize its Wireless Merchant software to integrate with Sage 300 ERP, Party Goods' back-office accounting software. With extensive experience deploying its software on BlackBerry smartphones, AGS knew that it could offer the efficient and customized solution the company was looking for.

Party Goods sales representatives are now equipped with BlackBerry smartphones and a Bluetooth barcode scanner used to scan all items being sold. Staff can enter the quantity they are looking for and send a single order through the Wireless Merchant back-end system to the warehouse, where it is processed through the pick system into separate department-specific invoices, automatically printed and packed with the orders for shipment.



**"BlackBerry smartphones are highly secure, reliable and straightforward. Combining these devices with Wireless Merchant application has resulted in an integrated BlackBerry solution that has helped make our sales force more efficient, saved the company money and allowed us to better serve our client."**

**Don Giordano**  
Operations Manager  
Party Goods Warehouse



With the customized AGS solution in place, Giordano no longer has to worry about a weak signal impacting orders. If an order can't be processed immediately due to signal issues, the Wireless Merchant app queues the order by saving it to the salesperson's BlackBerry smartphone, where it is later re-sent when the signal strength increases.

When interacting with their clients, salespeople now have immediate access to updated account information, including the status of past orders, product inventory and payment history. The staff at Party Goods also use BlackBerry smartphones to communicate using BBM, take pictures of in-store product displays and leverage the Calendar functionality to help organize pre-order dates.

"There are a number of reasons we work exclusively with BlackBerry smartphones when deploying Wireless Merchant," said Marc Cashman, President of AGS Advanced Software Inc. "The true BlackBerry brand of security coupled with its speed, lack of delays and overall stability is crucial for us."

Giordano estimates that over 90 per cent of all field issues Party Goods was having were resolved by using BlackBerry smartphones. Since the Wireless Merchant application also stores information on the BlackBerry devices and only sends small data packets of information to the server when necessary, Party Goods also uses less data than before.

#### Party Goods Benefits

By deploying BlackBerry smartphones equipped with the Wireless Merchant application, Party Goods saved an estimated \$500,000 almost immediately in workforce reductions, equipment and reduced monthly data plans and expects to save an additional \$150,000 in its second full year of deployment.

"There's a sense of comfort now, knowing that our people in the field have the equipment that they need," said Giordano. "It used to be more of a challenge to get through each and every day, but with the reliable BlackBerry smartphones running Wireless Merchant, I have peace of mind, which is worth an awful lot."

Based on his experience working with BlackBerry smartphones and the Wireless Merchant software, Giordano has a simple message for other businesses.

"I would encourage everyone to look into a BlackBerry solution. They're great devices that help allow people to work more efficiently and can have a huge impact on the bottom line."

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#### Key Benefits

- Cost savings in staffing, equipment and data
- Greater mobility among the salespeople
- More effective reporting system and inventory control
- Added security and reliability

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