

# Retailer scores big

*Sporting goods chain fields challenges of growth with an IBM® solution from Computer Configuration Services*



Almost any organization challenged by its own growth sooner or later wrestles with a critical question: Where do you find a technology solution that can go the distance?

From a single small-town sporting goods and bicycle shop founded in Covina, California in 1949, Chick's Sporting Goods has grown to a 10-store chain that is among the top retailers in the sporting goods industry. Chick's caters to the active lifestyles of Southern California customers, offering a range of golf, baseball, in-line and ice-skating, ski, snowboard, tennis and other sports apparel and equipment.

The company's evolution has caused growing pains in more ways than one. With only one small warehouse, Chick's must push product out the back door almost as soon as it comes in the front, and get it out on to store floors the same day. With 10 stores that need to talk to each other and to the head office, the chain needs to connect as smoothly as sprinters on a relay team. Meanwhile, sales through the Web site have been climbing rapidly, yet only two stores have Internet access and managing the online sales process is a chore. As in any retail environment, speed is essential, and downtime isn't an option.

"With 10 stores, everything for us is 'times 10' - inventory, invoicing, receipts, you name it," says Erin Diebold, IS Manager. "Work-wise and connectivity-wise, that adds a lot of issues for us. Our IS department is basically two people, so throw in new technology, and we're struggling."

The hurdles are now being cleared, thanks to ongoing support from Computer Configuration Services (CCS), an IBM Premier Business Partner, and a solution based on retail software from Island Pacific, also an IBM Business Partner.



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– Erin Diebold, IS Manager, Chick’s Sporting Goods

### IBM upgrade and end-to-end system strengthen the lineup

Although a Unix system had served Chick’s well for 10 years, Ms. Diebold knew it was aging and needed upgrading to handle their expanding needs. “We also wanted an end-to-end system that wouldn’t require us to integrate multiple pieces from different vendors. We went through a two-year evaluation process of different vendors, including IBM and Sun, to make sure we made the right decision.”

Chick’s selected a suite of retail applications from Island Pacific (formerly SVI Retail) that runs on the IBM @server iSeries platform to handle most of Chick’s business processes, from ordering merchandise and tracking inventory to selling product and paying invoices. Island Pacific in turn engaged CCS to handle implementation and support of the hardware, including on-site training.

The task was not an unfamiliar one for CCS. It has provided quality solutions to the IBM midrange community since 1987, with certified level-one support and service on IBM @server iSeries, IBM @server pSeries, IBM storage and networking solutions and more. CCS also provides 24/7 hotline support, which has been instrumental in the success of the Chick’s project.

### Small staff gets seventh-inning stretch

Mitch Kleinman, Executive Vice President of CCS, explains, “We’re handling much of the telephone and on-site technical support for the IBM @server iSeries implementation, helping Chick’s understand the system and install printers and other devices. Even before the solution is fully implemented, Chick’s has been able to leverage our expertise and the services of the application provider to do a lot with its small staff.”

IBM Business Partner:	Computer Configuration Services (CCS)
Solutions:	Supply Chain Management
Territory:	Nationwide
Customer Target:	Retail Industry

Thanks to CCS project management, the first inventory upload to the system is on track and Chick’s is looking forward to seeing the benefits of speed, responsiveness and connectivity. All of which will keep the product moving and the cash registers humming.

### What’s on deck also?

“We’ve just moved to phase two of the project, which is server consolidation using IBM’s internal NT cards,” says Mr. Kleinman. “We’re also upgrading some of the network and terminal services, and connecting the stores to a network as part of the roll out.”

All in all, Chick’s has been more than satisfied with the IBM platform.

“We have IBM for our store servers running point-of-sale cash machines, and we also had an IBM RS/6000® in our office, so we were quite pleased when we found out that the Island Pacific software runs on the IBM @server iSeries,” says Ms. Diebold. “IBM is a company we want to stay with; when needed, they’ve been with us at 6 a.m. and at midnight, and that support is important to me.”

Although Chick’s lacked experience with the IBM @server iSeries server, CCS has supported Chick’s all the way to the goal line.

### Teamwork makes the save

“Two months ago, I wasn’t sure how we were going to pull this off,” confesses Ms. Diebold. “CCS has been very supportive. They have the knowledge and experience we need, and they’ve been great to work with. They are helping us understand the system and providing support well past our ‘go live’ date.”

She adds, “We can spend time learning the software and hand over the job of making it work on the hardware. With the help of CCS, I don’t have to give up control of the business aspects to figure out how to make our policies and procedures work with the software. I’m much more confident knowing we have CCS there.”

With IBM technology and industry-leading software all tied together with CCS technical support and training, Chick’s is all set to score home runs against the competition.

For additional information on how **Computer Configuration Services (CCS)** can help your organization, contact us at **800-274-0042 x224**, or visit our Web site at **www.ccseservers.com**.

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