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**This Smart Retailer Got Managers
Out of the Back Office – and Back
onto the Floor**



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Smart retailers pay a lot of attention to merchandising because it can make a huge difference to a customer's experience in the store – and their likelihood of buying.

Imagine, if you will, trying to plan out the merchandising for a nationwide retail chain with tens of thousands of items and thousands of employees – and ensure every store is compliant with the company's brand and merchandising plans.

That's an everyday reality for Bevan Smith, Visual Merchandising Manager for [The Warehouse](#), one of New Zealand's largest retail chains.

Smith and his team plan the organizational schematics (the in-store merchandising plans) for the stores. Until recently, delivering the schematics to store managers and ensuring compliance were big issues.

Getting Store Managers Away from Their Desks – and onto the Floor

In the past, Smith and his team would email updated schematics to the store managers, who would print them out ("using reams of paper," said Smith) and then distribute them to store associates.

This not only resulted in slow implementation, **it also caused store managers to spend too much time locked away in their offices reviewing and printing schematics.**

"Combined with their other responsibilities, store managers used to spend the majority of their days parked in front of desktop computers in the office upstairs, away from staff and customers," said Smith.



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The Warehouse knew the importance of store managers spending time on the floor. When managers are on the floor, they can better train staff, assist with sales, ensure customer satisfaction and keep an eye on stock.

This desk-bound situation was a big problem, and the company was anxious to solve it.

Investing in Manager Mobility

[Experts have found](#) that the highest performing retail organizations get managers out on the floor by investing in the right mobile technology.

The Warehouse was no stranger to developing apps for in-house digital solutions. They certainly had the budget for another custom app to streamline the chain's merchandising efforts, and they even had an in-house IT team who could build the app. But Smith had another idea.

"From the moment I started [a] free 14-day trial, Showcase demonstrated excellent support, and proved to be all ready to go," said Smith. "It didn't make sense to add another project to our IT team's to-do list when Showcase was ready for implementation."

Now Updated Schematics Don't Kill Trees – and They Get Implemented FAST

Smith and his team use Showcase to send merchandising changes to stores quickly, painlessly and *digitally*. The head office also uses the app to send weekly communications and mailers.

"We make layout and merchandising changes frequently. Because store managers see new schematics as soon as we upload them into Showcase, they're better able to plan and take pre-emptive action, which eliminates a lot of unnecessary 'rework.'" Smith explained.

"I'm pleased with how Showcase has helped me and my team to keep stores looking as they should, to make the most out of labour saving, and to make it easier for customers to shop."

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“Our store managers now spend more time on the floor supporting staff and serving customers. Store compliance with merchandising has improved, too. Across the company, I believe that we’ve reduced paper usage and associated printing expenses substantially.”

Store managers aren’t the only ones seeing the benefits. Regional managers loved it too. With Showcase loaded on their tablets, they were able to spend more time on the floor and have more productive conversations with managers during store visits.

Melissa Murray, Communication Specialist with The Warehouse, recently noted another benefit they didn’t know they needed – but it’s making the merchandising team’s life so much easier: *The app works offline.*

With stores as large in size as The Warehouse’s, internet connection can be spotty at times. The company is making a concerted effort to improve the technology in each of their stores, but in the meantime, they know they can always rely on Showcase for communicating important messages to personnel on the floor.



Now Store Managers Can Manage their Stores – Not Their Desks

Merchandising plans shouldn’t be yet another reason for managers to stay cooped up in their offices. The Warehouse solved the problem with an effective, efficient solution for their merchandising team using the Showcase app.

How will *you* mobilize your managers?

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