

SPOTLIGHT**SOMEONE'S IN THE KITCHEN**

Betsy and Dave Lyons own two stores, Leather Unlimited (1972) and Someone's In The Kitchen (1988). Both are located in Rapid City SD and are using Retail Pro. Someone's In The Kitchen originally opened with 1,300 sq. ft. and in May of 1996 has grown to 3,000 sq. ft.

We asked Betsy to tell us more about her growing kitchen store.

Betsy: We carry everything for the kitchen from gadgets to high-end cookware, as well as small appliances, table top, gourmet foods and coffees and teas. We also carry cards, bath products and gardening items. Since we've opened we have expanded our bridal registry, added an espresso bar and a kitchen for cooking classes. We have fourteen full and part-time employees and are located in Rapid City's only indoor regional shopping mall. Our customers are of all ages. Their needs range from cookware or utensils for home use to that special gift. We shop the gift markets in Denver, Minneapolis, Dallas and Atlanta and strive to find unique and unusual items for our customers.

**How long have you been using Retail Pro?**

Betsy: Someone's In The Kitchen went on-line in the fall of 1992.

What did you use before Retail Pro for inventory control and POS?

Betsy: We used to pull tickets and mark the items off an inventory list. It was very time consuming. Obviously when you get to the volume we are doing now, it becomes impossible to track your inventory that way. Being computerized is crucial when you have 7,000-10,000 SKUs.

How has Retail Pro affected your POS and inventory control?

Betsy: Retail Pro is critical. We couldn't function without it. It is a fairly simple system and we needed something that would work for both hard and soft goods. We wanted a computer system to track our inventory and this is one of the main functions of Retail Pro. We aren't tying up a lot of unnecessary money in our inventory and we can tell what our merchandise turn is and how much to order.

What do you find are the most useful aspects of Retail Pro?

Betsy: Obviously inventory control is the most important feature. The inventory reports are extremely valuable since they can tell you how the different departments, vendors and items are performing. We have also utilized the customer list for doing general mailings

EASE OF USE

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as well as limited mailings to customers who have specifically indicated an interest in an area such as cooking classes. In addition, the time it takes to do a physical inventory has been reduced from two and a half days to one day. Retail Pro has enabled us to poll both stores to the main office. We have installed the mains on a laptop so I have the capability of working in the office or at either store and still have access to all the data I need.

How do your employees like working with Retail Pro?

Betsy: There is a simplicity to Retail Pro. We have a lot of employees and some of them don't have computer backgrounds and were nervous going on-line. We felt the system was very easy to use and we didn't lose any employees. That's a good sign! The person who does most of the receiving can work at one of the point-of-sales and receive merchandise, then go to the back room and print up the tickets. The network allows her to work at any station without being tied to the stockroom.

As we grow, it is becoming necessary to delegate more of the reordering to some of the employees. It has been fairly easy to train people to reorder accurately using the RPRO reports.

What made you buy Retail Pro?

Betsy: I liked the fact that it worked for hard and soft goods. In the past we were locked into an old system and when the company discontinued their system, we were stuck. It is obvious that RTI is continually working on Retail Pro to improve it. I think RTI listens to their customers and tries to improve Retail Pro on the basis of customer feedback.

Did you compare us to other systems?

Betsy: We looked at 3 or 4 other systems and shopped for almost two years before we made our decision to go with Retail Pro. We came close to buying a couple of the other systems and I'm really glad we waited. I know of one store that purchased a system we had considered buying. They later switched to Retail Pro.

What future plans do you have for your store?

Betsy: Our only plans at the moment are to become the best at what we do and find ways to run our stores as efficiently as possible. I plan to devote more time this year learning about the aspects of Retail Pro which we haven't utilized yet.

Have you financially benefited from Retail Pro?

Betsy: Most definitely! Retail is much more challenging than it was 25 years ago. To survive you have to be aware of and respond quickly to changing market trends. As I mentioned before, a good POS system can minimize your inventory investment by providing you the information to order accurately and efficiently. In addition, it can alert you to changes in consumer spending, allowing you to modify your buying strategy and maximize your profits.



Thank you.



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