



Shoe Carnival Drives Profit and Greater Operational Efficiency Through Merchandise Financial Planning (MFP) System Implementation

Leading footwear retailer leverages enVista's software implementation services to reduce manual processes, improve efficiency and drive profit



ABOUT

With humble beginnings as one location in Southwestern Indiana, Shoe Carnival has built a business that now extends to stores in over 35 states and online. The focus of its growth has been on its customer base, one that is price-conscious but following popular trends. This has given the brand a core focus on driving an experience that provides customers with deals, but also loyalty to the brand which now counts over 32 million loyalty members and over \$1.25B in annual sales.

OVERVIEW

During the previous engagement, enVista was able to ascertain that some key challenges could be solved by modernizing the tools used in the planning. The dated system being utilized required many manual and redundant processes to update plans often requiring several days to update via spreadsheets. After conducting a formal merchandise financial planning (MFP) selection, Shoe Carnival selected [Aptean](#).

OPPORTUNITY

As part of the selection process, the enVista team put together a tentative timeline for the implementation of MFP. After reviewing the resource needs for an implementation of this size and complexity, Shoe Carnival realized they needed to engage a third party to guide them in the implementations so as not to disrupt the day-to-day business operations. Based upon the successful outcome of the selection project and the strength of enVista's resources and knowledge in this space, Shoe Carnival engaged enVista's retail technology practice and leveraged its team's experience as former retailers to guide the design and process changes around the implementation.



EXECUTION

In putting the project plan into action, enVista's dedicated retail planning experts worked closely with the client and the selected system provider to act as the interpreter linking the needs of the business with the strengths of the new technology. Clients frequently rely on their tried and true practices, believing the new systems should support the long established routines. This results in missed opportunities to employ modern best practices which maximize the potential of the new system.

Throughout the implementation, enVista acted as a trusted guide, providing expert advice on the benefits of the changes. Without the subject matter expert as a filter, the client may request system customizations which incur an additional price tag while not adding real value to the business. While there were some necessary customizations to the new system, the majority of requests were managed through use of modern best practices or new processes. Also critical to the new system's performance is data quality. Review of data current state often reveals opportunities to improve the data cleanliness, which in turn improves the effectiveness of the new technology. Hierarchies and merchandise style attribution were among the data constructs reviewed and revised.

The final steps to implementing new technology involves development of rigorous test scripts which are used not only to test the system, but act as the training templates for the internal superusers. enVista constructed the test scripts to allow the client to "kick the tires" on the final build and design of the new system, while also familiarizing users with mastering the use of the system. Utilizing a "train the trainer" approach, the client had internal buy-in with the system prior to full scale adoption, making the transition seamless and positive.

RESULTS

The MFP system implementation project kicked off in early March 2020. The upheaval caused by Covid-19 required a move to remote implementation with a team that spanned multiple time zones and countries. Through these challenges, the go-live date stayed on target.

The MFP implementation provided multiple benefits to the Shoe Carnival team, removing many of the manual obstacles and driving profit by bringing together the merchandise vision, the merchandise financial plans and the execution of the plans. The open-to-buy pivoted from manual completion in Excel to execution in the system, eliminating redundant efforts, increasing efficiencies and accuracy and improving company-wide visibility driving investments to the right areas. This also allowed updates to company-wide plans to be completed in less than 24 hours instead of taking days at a time. Increasing efficiency and accuracy with MFP allows Shoe Carnival much more agility in reacting, driving and managing profitable revenue both pre and in season.

