

## Case Study Spotlight

# The National Gallery Refines the Art of Retail with **AdvanceRetail Suite**

The largest and arguably, best known art gallery in Australia is the National Gallery of Australia (NGA) which attracts around 700,000 visitors annually. The NGA collections include more than 160,000 works of art across four main areas: Australian art, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island art, Asian art, and European and American art.

It also hosts a wide range of visiting exhibitions from around the world, from pop art to classical European collections.

The NGA building includes two retail outlets: a main shop which stocks specialist publications and books, DVDs, art posters, cards, stationery and hundreds of specialty items; and an exhibition shop which primarily promotes merchandise associated with visiting exhibitions. The NGA also maintains an off-site warehouse that holds bulk supplies of books and paper products.

### **Hard to predict**

Working out how much stock to order and what kind of demand to expect is tricky at the NGA, especially when dealing with seasonal goods or items relating to visiting exhibitions. The number of consumers varies markedly from one month to the next and it's not always easy to accurately anticipate the public appeal of an upcoming exhibition.

A few years ago, for example, the annual total of visitors to the NGA was only a little over 506,000. Yet in 2009-2010, more than 470,000 people came to a single exhibition – Masterpieces from Paris – and over the course of that year, 836,735 people visited the gallery. Between 2011 and 2012 almost 700,000 people attended the gallery.

### **When the shop and warehouse systems can't communicate**

The task of inventory planning and management was previously further complicated by the retail outlet's legacy retail software system and a warehousing and inventory system that tracked stock. The two applications had been set up independently of each other. Inconsistencies in the use of product codes and bar codes meant there was no way to automatically transfer stock between the two systems, or between the warehouse and shops. In addition, the software was unable to operate off line, so whenever the network connection was interrupted, staff had to resort to calculators, pen and paper.

Eventually, the limitations began to hamper the business and NGA management decided to replace the legacy software with a new, integrated system from AdvanceRetail Technology.

In order to manage the seven month deployment project and take control of the system, NGA employed Kirsten Pace as Commercial Accountant.

"The only way we could get the full picture about activity in the shops was to have a system where retail and the warehouse worked together," Pace says.

## **A whole-of-business solution**

The software deployment involved several modules including AdvanceRetail Head/Back office which supports all aspects of store operation including inventory management, pricing, purchasing, ordering, receiving, stock take, sales analysis, sales history and reporting; a communications gateway to control movement and integrity of data between registers and the store back office; a point of sale module to manage the entry of customer transactions and discounting; and reporting.

“Since we moved onto AdvanceRetail Technology, we can transfer data to and from within the system. We don't need to hand write notes and send them to the warehouse any more. In addition, the reporting is so much better,” Pace observes.

“We can run reports in different ways, depending on how we set up a product. We can look at NGA and standard sales, standard and exhibition sales, posters, postcards, objects and framed objects. There are multiple ways of dissecting the same data, so we can better analyse what's selling and the stock situation at any time,” she adds.

Standard reports include sales by category, such as books, and by subcategories, such as children's books, Asian or food related books.

The discounting functionality is used extensively to manage member benefits and pricing promotions such as “3 for the price of 2” bundles, specials or percentage discounts that are applied to complete categories or subcategories.

In the very near future, the NGA plans to expand its reach and its retail presence with the creation of an online shop. When it does so, the shop will be supported through the use of AdvanceRetail Technology web services.

“The key things between the old and the new are that stock and shops are integrated, and the system can work off line. Staff can still sell and the information is still recorded. We couldn't do that before. We've been able to train people on the system quite easily and the guys on the shop floor are pretty happy with it. It gives us a complete picture of the business,” Pace concludes.