# itim

# itim Case Study
## The Entertainer

Transforming Operations to Enable Scalable Growth

Driving Scalable Growth Through Strategic IT Transformation

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# Customer Profile

# The Entertainer

## The UK's Largest Independent Toy Retailer

The Entertainer operates 482 stores across various channels, including standalone locations and strategic partnerships with leading retailers such as Marks & Spencer, Matalan, and Tesco. In 2023, the company achieved impressive revenue of £220.7m.

As the UK's largest independent toy retailer, The Entertainer is driving significant expansion. In 2022, the company expanded its partnership with Tesco, initially launching branded toy zones in 35 stores as a trial. The success of this initiative led to a full-scale rollout, with the integration of 853 additional Tesco stores across the UK and Republic of Ireland by February 2024. This major move not only cements The Entertainer's position as the largest toy retailer in the UK by retail locations, but also facilitates its expansion into Central European markets, further extending its footprint.

To manage this rapid growth, The Entertainer partnered with itim to launch **Project Marvel**, a transformative initiative designed to enhance operational efficiency, scalability, and data integrity. The project aimed to align IT systems, optimise business processes, and ensure a seamless integration with Tesco, preparing the company for sustainable future growth.

# The Challenge

# The Entertainer faced significant challenges in preparing for the scale of operations required to integrate 806 new stores and support future acquisitions.

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**These challenges included:**

### Scalability
- Existing IT systems and data processes were not designed to handle the complexities of managing over 1,200 stores.
- Legacy architecture needed to be upgraded to ensure seamless operations across an expanded estate

### Data Management
- The Entertainer's product catalogued contained over 73,000 SKUs, of which 46,000 were redundant.
- Misalignment of product statuses (e.g. discrepancies between status and SKU descriptions) led to inefficiencies in stock management and forecasting.

### Stock Reconciliation & Visibility
- Limited ability to track stock movements across multiple locations caused delays in resolving inventory discrepancies.
- Manual processes for managing stock adjustments and tracking led to time-intensive operations.

### Partner Integration
- The integration with Tesco required the ability to manage stock, sales and replenishment across an additional 806 stores while maintaining system accuracy and performance.
- Operational processes needed to be aligned with Tesco's systems without disrupting existing workflows.

# The Solution

itim collaborated with The Entertainer to deliver Project Marvel, a multi-phased initiative addressing immediate challenges while preparing the business for long-term growth.

## Phase 1: Data & Process Optimisation (2023)

Data Cleansing & Product Management
- Reviewed and corrected product statuses across the 73,000 SKU catalogue. Misaligned SKUs were reclassified, and the redundant "discontinued" status was replaced with a new 'End of Life' designation.
- Purged 46,000 redundant SKUs to streamline systems, reducing complexity for forecasting and replenishment.

Supplier & Ranging Optimisation
- Identified 756 unused suppliers and removed them from the system, simplifying procurement processes and improving supplier relationship management.
- Automated the cleansing of range modules to remove SKUs no longer replenished, reducing manual data handling.

Improved Interfaces for Forecasting
- Enhanced integrations by filtering out frozen and 'end of life' SKUs, improving nightly batch processing times and system performance.

## Phase 2: System Scalability Enhancements (2024)

Single Data Warehouse Implementation
- Consolidated various instances into a unified data warehouse, providing a single source of truth for all reporting and interfaces.
- Enabled real-time reporting and eliminated inefficiencies caused by syncing data between systems.
- Enhanced Stock Visibility
- Developed user-friendly UIs for tracking stock movements across locations, improving traceability and reconciliation accuracy.
- Added real-time data syncing for sales, stock adjustments and transfers to ensure operational transparency.
- Integration with Tesco systems
- Aligned product, stock and replenishment processes to support the integration of 806 new stores.
- Created an automated process for sales uploads, reducing errors and manual intervention during the transition period.

## Phase 3: Growth-Driven Innovation (2025)

Warehouse Integration for Tesco
- Implement a second warehouse interface to manage stock distribution for Tesco and partner stores.
- Establish a seamless process for cross-warehouse transfers, integrating with our Unify Pricing solution to optimise replenishment calculations.
- Purchase Order & Supplier Management Enhancements
- Introduce itim's Unify Supply solution for bulk amendments of purchase orders, including multi-currency supplier management.
- Streamline the creation of Pos for suppliers operating in different countries, reducing manual adjustments and errors.
- Scalable and Intuitive User Interfaces
- Redesign our system interfaces to accommodate over 1,200 stores, adding features like predictive text and location hierarchy filters for improved usability.
- Enhanced system performance to handle increased data loads without impacting batch processing times.
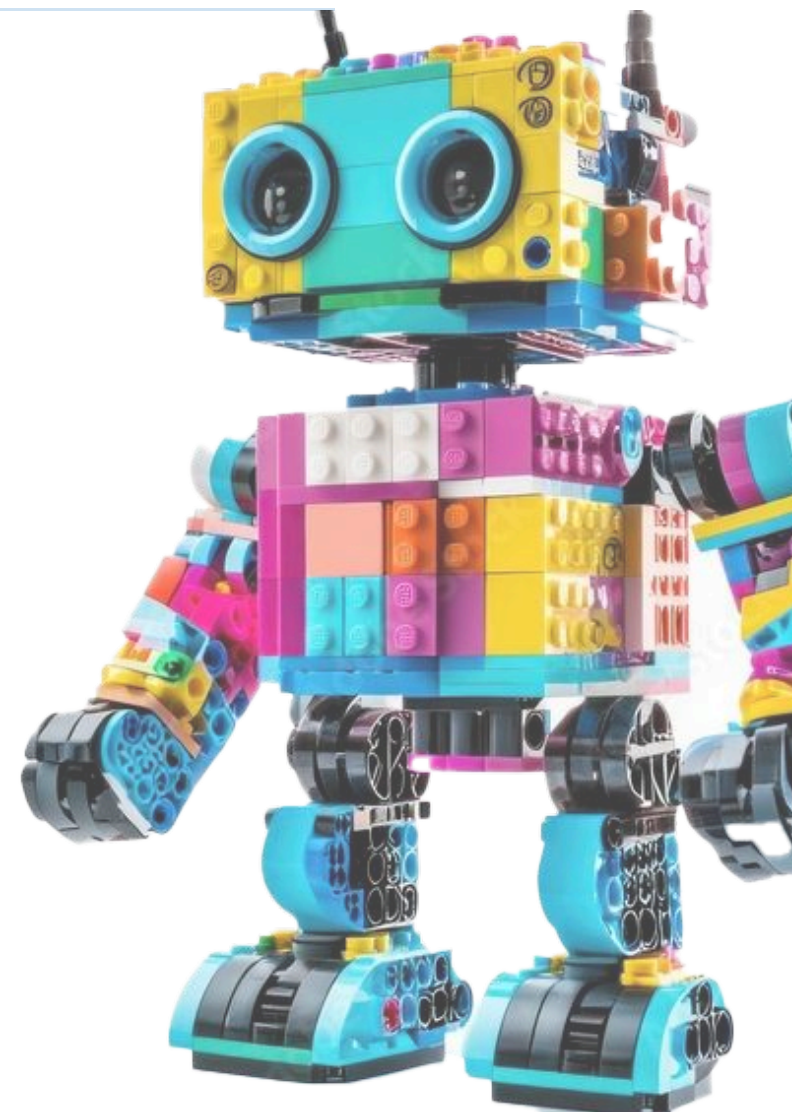
# The Results

# The Entertainer saw significant, measurable improvements across its operations, setting the stage for continued growth and success:

### Enhanced Operational Efficiency
- Dramatically reduced overnight batch processing times by streamlining SKU management, resulting in improved system performance and faster updates.
- Automated SKU and range module maintenance, reducing manual intervention, saving time, and significantly boosting accuracy.

### Scalable Infrastructure
- IT systems now seamlessly support operations across 1,288 stores, with built-in flexibility to accommodate future acquisitions and strategic partnerships.
- This scalability enables The Entertainer to respond to expanding retail needs and enter new markets with ease.

### Optimised Data Integrity
- Consolidated data management into a single, unified warehouse, ensuring real-time, accurate reporting and enhancing operational insights.
- Improved product lifecycle management by standardising status definitions and streamlining SKUs, allowing for more effective product tracking and management.

### Seamless Integration for Growth
- Achieved flawless integration with Tesco's systems, fostering more effective stock management and replenishment processes across the network.
- Facilitated the smooth transition of 806 new stores into The Entertainer's estate, ensuring business continuity and minimal operational disruption.

# Client Testimonial

*Project Marvel has been transformative for our business. By partnering with ITIM, we've not only scaled our operations but also laid a foundation for future growth. Their solutions have enabled us to operate efficiently while maintaining exceptional stock visibility and operational control.*

Senior Executive, The Entertainer

*By partnering with itim, we've not only streamlined our operations but also set the stage for accelerated growth. The seamless integration with Tesco's systems has been a game-changer, enabling us to manage 1,288 stores effortlessly. Project Marvel has truly empowered us to scale up without sacrificing operational efficiency.*

CEO of The Entertainer

*The IT infrastructure overhaul through Project Marvel was crucial to our success. itim's solutions provided us with the necessary tools to optimise stock management and forecasting across our expanded network. We now have a clear, unified view of our data, empowering smarter decision-making.*

Head of IT at The Entertainer

*The partnership with The Entertainer has enabled us to offer an enhanced customer experience. By integrating their curated toy zones across our stores, we've added more value to our shoppers' journey. The collaboration with itim ensured that our systems were aligned and that operations were streamlined during the transition.*

Operations Director at Tesco

# About itim

# Transforming Retail Businesses for Operational Excellence and Profit Growth

itim is Europe's leading retail engineer, committed to "Maximising Performance and Doubling Profits" by transforming retail businesses through a strategic approach known as **Unified Retailing**. As experts in both technology and consultancy, itim works to re-engineer retail operations, delivering substantial improvements in both financial and operational performance.

## Key Offerings and Solutions

itim's **UNIFY** platform is central to its transformation approach, seamlessly integrating critical retail functions—**Customer, Price, Stock, and Supply**—into one cohesive system. This integration leads to unprecedented operational efficiency, enhanced profitability, and improved customer experiences. Through **UNIFY**, retailers achieve:

**UNIFY Sales:**
Boost sales by up to 30%, optimise customer journeys, and deliver a seamless, personalised experience across all channels.

**UNIFY Stock:**
Increase sales with less stock, reduce inventory by 10-20%, and improve GMROI (Gross Margin Return on Investment).

**UNIFY Pricing:**
Optimise pricing strategies to improve margins by 1-3%, boost supplier funding, and maximise cash margin contributions.

**UNIFY Supply:**
Enhance collaboration with suppliers, reduce costs by 2%, and accelerate speed to market, improving the overall supply chain.

**Empowering Retailers with Advanced Technology and Expertise**

As retail engineers, itim uses its deep industry expertise to help clients optimise every aspect of their operations, from merchandising to customer experience, driving performance improvements and delivering sustainable, measurable results.

# itim

**Europe's Leading Retail Engineers**

*"Maximising Performance, Doubling Profits"*
*by Transforming Your Business;*
*Unifying Customer, Price,*
*Stock & Supply.*

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