

itim



Customer Story

## The Entertainer Toy Shop rolls out mobile devices and an industry-leading Click & Collect solution from itim



**The Entertainer, the rapidly expanding toy shop chain with over a hundred stores, was one of the first retailers to successfully introduce a market-leading “click and collect” service, available for pick-up within just 30 minutes of ordering.**

This, in addition to it rolling out mobile devices and other new technologies to help its staff improve customer service, has contributed to the company’s rapid growth says Sue Dorkin, IT Director at The Entertainer.

**“I believe this combination of innovation and world class customer service sets us apart from the competition.”**

Sue Dorkin,  
IT Director

The family-owned, independent toy retailer saw sales of £150m in 2014, up 12% from the previous year, with like-for-like sales up 5.5%. It has more than doubled its store count in the last few years, with an additional 15 stores planned in 2015. Around half of all online sales are made through external market places both in the UK and Europe - mainly Amazon, eBay and Tesco, with international fulfilment accounting for around 10% of all online sales - although Dorkin is quick to point out that the balance is shifting in favour of The Entertainer’s online platform thetoyshop.com.

After investing heavily in multiple channels - including online, mobile, store and international - a fifth of sales are now online and the company is paving the way for further overseas expansion. It currently has two franchised stores in Pakistan and one in Azerbaijan, with plans to at least double the overseas network this year.

### Click & Collect

The growth of a truly joined multi-channel infrastructure has been supported by UK technology partner itim and their Retail Suite solution. Since introducing “30 min click and collect” in 2012, click and collect has become increasingly important and now makes up 40% of total online sales, as many customers are seeking to avoid wasted journeys if they know exactly what they want.

The new integrated solution enables store stock to be visible online and orders routed (based on a set of sophisticated business rules in The Retail Suite) for despatch from a store that may have the last piece of a ‘must-have’ product that is no longer available in the warehouse. Or, if necessary and cost-effective, the system will route the orders to multiple locations. This is not only great customer service, but provides a way of clearing pockets of de-ranged stock.



### Going Mobile in Store

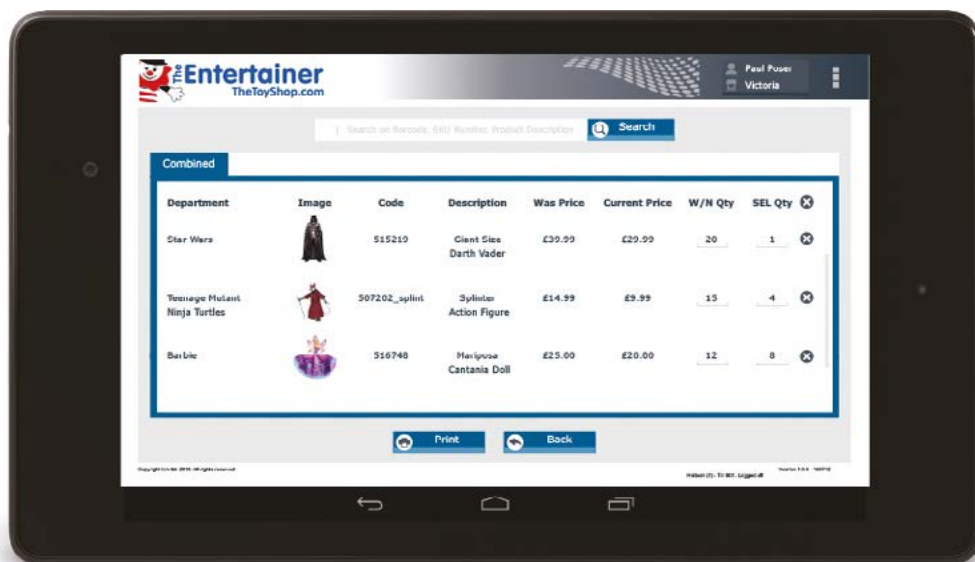
To support a drive towards better customer service and providing more accurate information on stocks and sales, the company is currently rolling out itim’s mobile solution which comprises Tablets, Bluetooth scanners, Bluetooth PEDs and Wi-Fi printers. This allows stores to place orders for delivery or collection of toys, taking the pressure away from the till points, says Dorkin - something that’s crucial during the busy run-up to Christmas, when 50% of the year’s sales are processed between 1st November and Christmas Eve.

After having worked with itim since 2007 (initially for its point-of-sale software, Chameleon, and then later adopting The Retail Suite (TRS) for multi-channel order and stock management), The Entertainer jointly developed and trialled a series of Android Apps in 2014 in 23 stores.

“The starting point for the project was a series of workshops to explore what our stores of the future would be like in terms of technology to support the customer experience, tasks and information. itim were the obvious partner as TRS (The Retail Suite) was core to the solution and they not only understood our business, they shared our vision for mobile in stores,” says Dorkin.

### The key drivers were to:

- Take orders - for collection or delivery - away from the till points.
- Improve product information on the sales floor to provide a fluid shopping experience empowering sales staff at every stage of the customer journey.
- Provide a seamless and paperless process for Click & Collect.
- Provide a simple app with single print media to support all product and shelf-edge labelling.
- Ensure real-time trading information and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are available where they are most effective.
- Replace obsolete hand-held stock control terminals.



## The Entertainer Customer Profile

Rapidly expanding independent toy shop chain with

# 100+ stores

and many more planned in the UK and overseas

# 20%

of sales are online

# £150 million

in revenue (2014)

## Challenge

To support growth across stores, online, mobile and international channels and improve the customer experience.

## Solution

Implement itim's Retail Suite for a truly multi-channel ERP backbone, including real-time stock, order management, POS and in-store mobile devices to improve the customer experience and increase efficiency.

## Results

Improvements to all processes, a more streamlined in-store experience and the ability to offer market-leading and paperless 30-Minute Click & Collect service which now makes up 40% of total online sales and has increased footfall in stores.

Across these 23 pilot stores, the new technology led to a doubling of orders generated for either delivery to the home, or for collection in-store. The company also increased sales opportunities by offering pertinent add-ons items as part of the customer collection process. All 101 stores will be fully equipped with the technology before the summer.

**“On the shop floor, it's all about creating a seamless conversation with the customer and never having to leave them to go and find out more information to complete the sale, meaning a more fluid shopping experience.”**

## A Paperless Trail

“Within the 30-minute click & collect operation now paperless, we can progress the order from pick to collection via the tablet triggering all communications and allowing the customer to sign on the screen as proof on collection,” says Dorkin.

Dorkin says that the itim technology has enabled The Entertainer to “improve all its processes and, above all, bring meaningful, accurate, real-time information to its staff, management and customers.”

She describes itim's TRS retail solution as the “ERP backbone” that's fine-tuned to the needs of a retailer: managing orders and stock across multiple channels (both physical and virtual); reporting and providing a history of all transactions on mobile devices; triggering event based emails and managing products, prices and promotions across all channels.

“It's the engine that provides a real-time stock picture for a particular product and whether it's available in a store, online, or in the warehouse. For example, once a customer selects a product and puts it into their online basket, the system will



reconfirm the stock position, delivery or collection options and any associated costs as part of the checkout process, then send email updates at every stage of order fulfilment."

Live performance reporting means that both store staff and field management see real-time sales and KPIs for every store during trading, which is a great motivational tool, she says.

## Scaling the Peaks

itim's TRS solution allowed us to successfully scale the peaks. Black Friday, as for many retailers, was The Entertainer's busiest trading day both in store and online and the infrastructure stood up to the challenge without a glitch. The following week the systems were tested again with 'Elsa Wednesday' when the number one must-have Christmas toy came back into stock with three thousand pieces sold in just two hours, peaking at 40 Elsa dolls a minute. 2014 also saw sales of Lego double during the three months following the Lego Movie film's release and it sold 7m packs of loom bands, last year's global craze.

## Future Plans

In 2015, The Entertainer will be making its biggest ever single investment in opening a new distribution centre in June in Banbury. The 225,000 square feet warehouse will treble the capacity of the current distribution centre and will create hundreds of new jobs as it grows to operating capacity.

The company is investigating beacon technology, so it knows when a customer visits a store, alongside real-time predictive recommendations for a more personal shopping experience.

Looking forward to predicting the next must-have toy or children's craze, Dorkin says that the buyers have an amazing knowledge of the global toy market and almost instinctively know what customers will want. This, together with its information systems, means that The Entertainer is faster to react than many competitors.

And that all comes together in The Entertainer's mission to be the best loved toyshop.

**"We're delighted with this year's results. We have continued to invest in integrating all channels of our business so we can provide the service our customers demand and deserve. We have managed to successfully drive customers to thetoyshop.com whilst also increasing footfall in-store through our 30 minute click and collect service, demonstrating that the website is an integral part of the experience but the high street still has a vital role to play"**

Gary Grant,  
Founder of The Entertainer

