Case Study

HALLOWEEN EXPRESS

Successfully Managing Inventory Using RICS

⚠ CHALLENGE

With over 200 franchised retail stores nationwide and an eight-week sales period, Halloween Express needed a real-time and flexible retail management solution to meet a complex set of challenges.

The corporate team needed a way to show franchise owners which products would be profitable in the peak selling week. The difference between getting it right or wrong could be the difference between staying in business and bankruptcy.

The Halloween Express buyers on the corporate team place an initial order for costumes and accessories almost 11 months before Halloween. They expand this initial order and buy more items as special events occur, such as a movie becoming an unexpected blockbuster or a celebrity dominating the news. In June and July, each franchisee purchases initial inventory from corporate and starts selling on September 1st. The buyers on the corporate team need accurate sales performance data from the first two days of the selling season to order more of the hottest selling items and stock them before the final week of the season, which accounts for 50% of sales.

HALLOWEEN EXPRESS

"Luckily with the help of RICS and everything we've developed together over the past couple years, we are at a huge advantage."

— Holly Bowling, COO Halloween Express

⚒ SOLUTION

Halloween Express uses RICS to run an efficient inventory management practice. With a business model that allows no room for error, it relies on accurate data collection and trend analysis in real-time. **The ability to use real-time data to make purchasing decisions empowers Halloween Express to differentiate itself from competitors and increase profit.** The company's competitive advantage relies on providing customers with a personalized experience, which is enabled by using RICS data to respond to customer demand.

RESULTS

Halloween Express now manages over 40,000 SKUs on its website and 8,000 SKUs in its stores using RICS. The corporate team can analyze sales by broad categories down to specific SKUs, then examine SKUs by vendor to determine what is profitable.

Using RICS to make purchasing decisions saves Halloween Express thousands of dollars every year. Specifically, the ability to perform balancing transfers based on set models for each store prevents store owners from losing money through reordering items other stores already have in abundance.

During the season, Halloween Express completes two to three reorders, a lightning fast turnaround within the span of eight weeks. Franchise owners rely on the reorder system within RICS, which allows them to be more cautious with the initial order, decreasing the risk of overstocking particular items. The corporate buying team bases its decisions on the Best Sellers and Worst Sellers reports, relying on RICS data to determine which products are profitable and worth stocking. They use this information to compile the Halloween Express "bible," which includes a suggested model buy based on the previous season's data for franchise owners to utilize and tailor to their specific needs.

Within the first few days of the sales season, the corporate team calls store owners telling them what to buy based on RICS reporting. They use this data to guide owners' decision-making and increase profit by limiting the guesswork. They have a small window of opportunity, so it's vital that they get it right. The difference between real-time data and two-weeks-old data could be the difference between staying in business and bankruptcy. Thanks to RICS, Halloween Express has experienced successful seasons over the last few years and continues to grow.

RICS offers a web-based, real-time solution that simplifies retail operations and provides the data retailers need to make profitable decisions.

ricssoftware.com
800.654.3123
@ricssoftware

RICS
software