



Gifts • Collectibles • Home Decor

Parsons Gift Stores

An NCR Counterpoint Case Study
Specialty Retail – Gift

“NCR Counterpoint systems are the lifeblood of our retail business. We use them for almost everything we do.”

– Gary Willis and Cristina Willis, Owners,
Parsons Gift Stores



Run Your Business

Parsons Gift Stores, a high-end gift and collectibles chain based in the Atlanta, Georgia area, is totally dependent on the NCR Counterpoint retail management system, and Owner Gary Willis wouldn't have it any other way. “NCR Counterpoint is the lifeblood of our retail business,” says Mr. Willis, stating that he uses NCR Counterpoint tools to optimize every aspect of the chain's operations, from receiving and ticketing inventory, to marketing and selling merchandising, to making critical purchasing and operational decisions. Since the chain offers more than 56,000 items from nearly 500 vendors, having instant access to real-time data is absolutely critical. “I can get a complete picture of the entire company, with NCR Counterpoint tools,” states Mr. Willis.

Parsons Gift Stores, which became a customer in 2005, made the switch from a competitive solution because Mr. Willis was looking for a “full-featured retail system

Solution Features

NCR Counterpoint Retail Management Systems

- Provide gift registries
- Validate returns to ensure items are returned at the purchase price
- Provide integrated email marketing capabilities
- Maintain detailed customer information
- Offer customer loyalty programs
- Analyze vendor performance
- Provide layaways
- Reduce fraud by monitoring item images at checkout
- Up-sell goods
- See which items sell together
- Pre-plan your promotions

with SQL open architecture. We've been in business since 1925, so we didn't want to change our processes; we wanted something that was highly customizable to the way we do business." Mr. Willis says his staff used NCR Counterpoint configuration options to change screen layouts and the POS touchscreen interface and terminology to meet their requirements. Of his 65-person operation, 62 use NCR Counterpoint tools every single day for critical retail operations. The company currently uses the NCR Counterpoint retail management solution, payment services, integrated email marketing tool and mobile alerting.

Connect with Customers

Parsons Gifts used to spend most of its marketing dollars on traditional advertising, until it purchased NCR Customer Connect. Now Cristina Willis, Owner, is a true believer in the power of email marketing. Ms. Willis harnesses the NCR Customer Connect email marketing tool to send out a twice-monthly e-newsletter with special offers to the more than 21,000 customers in her company's database.

"NCR Customer Connect enables us to connect regularly with our customer base, which is 90 percent female. By letting our customers know about new products and events, we create reasons for them to visit our stores. And many of them will bring their friends," says Ms. Willis, who dubs her approach "girlfriend marketing."

The Willis management team also uses NCR loyalty and gift card functionality. "They're very effective," says Mr. Willis, who says he appreciates the tools' accuracy and reliability. "When you're offering gift cards, you want 100% system credibility. You don't want a customer to say they have cash remaining on a card that doesn't work."

Email Marketing that Delivers

Parsons Gift Stores shared the results of a recent July 2012 email marketing campaign. Here's success by the numbers:

- Ten-day sales promotion
- 21,714 emails sent
- 25% open rate
- 1,265 customer visits resulting in purchases
- \$59,391 in in-store sales

Sell Anywhere

As a traditional brick-and-mortar operation, Parsons Gift Stores doesn't currently leverage mobile POS tools or sell online because of vendor restrictions. However, its executives do rely on NCR Smart Alerts to keep a finger on the pulse of the business when they're away from their stores. "I can easily scan the numbers and see what type of day we've had," says Mr. Willis. "NCR Smart Alerts provides everything from sales profits, number of tickets, and average ticket refund each day." The tool also sends him alerts when managers are working late or if there are any network issues to attend to. "Wherever we are, we know how the business is running."



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