

FTL Corporation Liquors Automates 14-Store Chain with Catapult

Based outside of Minneapolis, MN, FTL Corporation Liquors is a beverage retail chain that uses Catapult to automate its 14-store enterprise. FTL Corporation has been providing the greater Minneapolis area with quality wine and liquor for twenty-three years. ECRS recently had the chance to talk with FTL Corporation Liquors Director of IT, Gina McCuen
ECRS: Tell us about your clientele.

McCuen: FTL Corporation's clientele is quite varied. We pretty much attract all types. I think people shop here because we have a great selection, and our stores are always clean and well lit. FTL Corporation is especially well-versed in wines, and we run a lot of promotions. Our big one is called WineSIT, which is a VIP frequent shopper program we use to track sales history, and which has a rather large customer draw.

ECRS: How does Catapult perform in your fast-paced environment?

McCuen: The POS terminals have really been running smoothly since we installed Catapult. Its credit card processing is just phenomenal. Cashiers and customers love it! It's now much easier to manage, and there are a lot fewer mistakes on the cashier level, which really increases accuracy. Catapult's ability to automate our "backdoor/frontdoor" inventory system has really helped us manage our bottom line.

ECRS: How did you decide on Catapult as the automation solution for your store?

McCuen: I have worked with over ten different POS systems in my career, so I have seen my share of dog-and-pony shows. On the presentation level we were very impressed with Catapult. I liked the fact that it was compatible with Windows-based programs such as Excel and Word, which is really useful when it comes to producing reports for the various people that need them.

ECRS: How does Catapult's POS touch screen simplify activity at FTL Corporation's front end?

McCuen: We love Catapult's POS Speed Keys and the touch screen interface. We never have sticky key problems anymore like we used to with keyboard-based registers. Catapult lets us make the keys bigger and easier to recognize, which is particularly important for highlighting specials and promotions for cashiers. Catapult's multistore interface gives us the power to change POS keys and key layouts for each of our 14 stores from a single centralized headquarters location.

ECRS: Have you ever had to run your checkout terminals when your network connection was down? How did that work for you?



McCuen: Yes, we have. The cashiers were able to continue checking out customers without any complications and without any lost sales. Thumbs up to Automatic POS Redundancy.

ECRS: Do you use Catapult's prompts functionality?

McCuen: The state requires that we provide tracking for all keg sales with a number unique to the store. Catapult has made this compliance simple. We also track all gift certificates by serial number.

ECRS: How will Catapult's Remote Inventory Query help answer customer questions regarding inventory at the point of sale?

McCuen: We are really excited about using the Remote Inventory Query function. Being able to instantly access the inventory of other stores from a POS screen will cut down on checkout times and increase sales. Depending on the customer's preference, items found through Remote Query can be held for pick-up or transferred. Catapult's ability to access multiple store inventories at the point of sale is truly awesome, and will help FTL Corporation deliver an additional level of service and convenience to our customers.

ECRS: Which Catapult reports do you run on a regular basis?

McCuen: At the headquarters office we receive a number of reports each day for every store in the chain, including Activity Summary, Paid In/Out, House Charges, and Text Entry reports. Catapult reports are easily accessible, and come in easily readable formats. The store managers also review the Item Net Optimized report every day and run the Zero Movement report quarterly. Other reports vary by store. Our company president reviews the Department Net Optimized report for each store daily from his home or office.

ECRS: How does Catapult's reporting help you manage your inventory?

McCuen: The Zero Movement report speaks for itself. We also use "back door" receiving, so the Variance report on quarterly inventory helps us to maintain and monitor the database and identify issues such as theft and errors. Our accounting department uses the Cash and Retail On-Hand summary to prepare store budgets.

ECRS: Would you recommend Catapult to other retailers?

McCuen: Yes. In fact, I have already recommended Catapult to other liquor store owners. I start by telling them how Catapult is very easy to use. If a person can read, they can be a cashier. Very little training is necessary with the touch screen terminals. Catapult's user-friendliness makes training store managers hassle free for me and less stressful for them. Being able to access Catapult's real-time data at any moment provides a superb level of control over the chain's activities. Catapult terminals can be switched back and forth from workstation to POS to accommodate traffic extremes, which is something we rely on from time to time. Another important factor for our store is Catapult's ability to easily integrate customer loyalty and frequent shopper programs.

ECRS: Can you comment on the quality of technical support you've received with Catapult?

McCuen: Our local Catapult dealer is always very responsive to our needs. ECRS's help desk has been friendly and responsive to our inquiries as well. Response time has been great and the software issues are always resolved to our total satisfaction.

