

## Case study

# Software as a Service: complete, cutting-edge, cost-effective IT

# eclipse

### Facts at a glance:

- Retail focus: Women's casual apparel
- Size: 59 stores and growing
- Locations: Six provinces throughout eastern Canada
- Headquarters: St. John's, Newfoundland
- NSB solutions: Connected Retailer Store, Merchandising, Sales Analytics, CRM, plus Microsoft Dynamics GP, delivered as Software as a Service

"The wealth of data we're getting from the new system, in real time, is a real advantage. The Connected Retailer solutions delivered through NSB's Software as a Service are providing us with so much good information in a timely manner that we're constantly figuring out new ways to use it to increase our efficiencies and margins. Month by month we're building upon our knowledge of the solutions, taking more advantage of all of the rich features and functionality within the Connected Retailer suite. Our ROI will continue to grow."

*Genevieve Bulgin,  
Director, Retail Operations, Eclipse Stores*

Using NSB's Connected Retailer® delivered through Software as a Service, Eclipse steps up affordably from one core solution to a fully integrated retail suite, frees itself from the burden and expense of IT management, and makes the last software migration it will ever need.

When Cyril and Pamela Bulgin opened the doors to their first clothing store in 1974, their vision did not extend much past the modest main street of Twillingate, Newfoundland. The town of 3,000 was just large enough to provide a market for the company's chosen product line, which was focused on jeans and all things denim, and a means to sustain their family-run business.

But the enterprising retailers soon recognized the demand for their offerings in many other communities throughout and beyond Canada's eastern-most province. By the early 1980s, their Eclipse chain was enjoying steady growth. As the business expanded, so too did their need for systems that could manage more diversified offerings, larger distributions, and higher volumes of sales.

### Outgrowing a great system

After running with a manual merchandising system for many years, the company adopted NSB's legacy R12 Merchandising in 1987. "We loved R12," says Genevieve Bulgin, Director of Retail Operations for Eclipse. "The system was very powerful, sophisticated, and ahead of its time in many ways. It was also comprehensive; it could handle almost everything we needed to do."

Eventually, however, the company's data requirements outgrew the system's storage capacity. "It just couldn't hold the amount of information we eventually came to need," says Bulgin. "The system kept the essential data for as long as we wanted it but other information was often lost at week end or month end, which caused problems with reporting and archives."



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Eclipse found another incentive to upgrade R12 in the form of their aging POS system. It too did not have the capacity the retailer came to need, and after the system's hardware was discontinued by the manufacturer it became difficult to repair and replace.

"Once we got talking about upgrading our POS we thought it would be more efficient to go ahead and upgrade everything at once," Bulgin says, "instead of having to interface a new POS system back to our old R12 and then changing that out a few years down the road."



## Searching the market

Initially, Eclipse looked at a variety of best-of-breed options for Merchandising and POS, but they soon became concerned about the level of resources they would require. "Since R12 was a stable, all-in-one system, we hadn't needed a dedicated IT department," says Bulgin, "just one part-time person who handled our network. Going to multiple, best-of-breed systems would have meant hiring people who could integrate things piece by piece then maintain them."

Bulgin was also concerned about the inconsistent quality and fit of various applications, as well as the prospect of dealing with multiple vendors. "One company would offer a good point of sale system, for example, while their merchandising system was not as strong or aligned with what we wanted," she says. "I wanted one company with a full suite of solid systems, including merchandising, POS, and sales audit."

## Finding the right fit

In light of her concerns, Bulgin says she was very pleased when NSB called to say their Connected Retailer solutions could be delivered through the Software as a Service (SaaS) approach. "We were attracted not only by the fact that it's a fully integrated system we could run without an IT infrastructure, but also because it came from NSB. NSB spoke our language," she says. "What's more, the structure of the Connected Retailer was similar to that of our tried-and-true R12, and therefore easy to understand."

Eclipse's prior experience with NSB gave them the confidence to become an early adopter of Software as a Service. "We had a very high level of confidence and trust, based on our excellent experience with R12 and our history with NSB," Bulgin says. "I don't think we would have been able to do that with any other company."

## A well managed implementation

NSB assigned an experienced project manager to serve as point-person throughout the implementation. Bulgin describes her as a "truly excellent resource." "She knew how to bring everything together, was always very approachable, answered all questions quickly, and communicated well. She was also very quick to understand our business processes, which enabled her to overcome any problems with the right solutions."

But Bulgin praises the whole implementation team. "Since Software as a Service is a 'big bang' type of implementation," she says, "users of head office and store systems get trained at the same time, in some cases on completely new processes. NSB's project team helped us meet all those challenges and made the whole process easier. In short, they were there for us the whole way and in every way."

## Tangible benefits, up front and long term

SaaS delivered substantial benefits from day one. For example, the Connected Retailer Merchandising has enabled the retailer to make better buying decisions by identifying detailed selling patterns. "Our old R12 system would tell us when any given item was 100% sold, but not how it was selling by color and size," says Bulgin. "Connected Retailer does. Our buyers are using the richer historical data to

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analyze trends in more depth. This is particularly helpful as we continue to grow into new markets, since sales patterns vary greatly from region to region.”

“We’re continuing to learn how to leverage all the additional information we now have access to, as well as different methods of calculating our distributions,” Bulgin adds, “but already the improvement since we went live has been tremendous.”

With the new Merchandising solution, Bulgin says her company also quickly improved both the quality and efficiency of its **allocation and replenishment** processes. “That’s where we’ve made the greatest steps forward in the shortest time.”

“Two or three years before we went live with Software as a Service, our distribution system was almost falling apart,” Bulgin explains. “We couldn’t get the right units to the right stores because the selling patterns were so different. But the new system lets us send each store exactly what they need, and it’s giving us lots of new distribution and replenishment ideas that will continue to improve our merchandise mix.”

**Merchandising Analytics** is another tool within Merchandising that Eclipse is leveraging for great results. “We love Merchandising Analytics,” Bulgin says. “It’s especially great to quickly and easily generate reports that are customized to meet the needs of each individual user.”

Of the **Store** component, Bulgin says, “The POS is very easy to work with. Everyone has been very pleased with the sales functions and loves the fact that we’re now fully connected.”

Software as a Service has also improved the way the retailer manages transaction data. The offering’s **Sales Analytics** component ensures all data is consistent, correct, and properly tracked.

“Upgrading both Store and Sales Analytics has made us much more efficient, especially with the integrated debit / credit,” says Bulgin. “The Sales Audit module within Connected Retailer Sales Analytics is getting through everything so much more quickly than on our old system did. This has freed up time for our auditors to look at mining and applying our data in richer ways.”

“The real advantage we’re getting from the new system is the wealth of data, available to us in real time,” Bulgin concludes. “We’re constantly figuring out new ways to use it to increase our efficiencies and margins. Month by month we’re building on our knowledge and taking more advantage of the rich functionality. Our ROI will continue to grow.”

## A stable, streamlined infrastructure

Secure offsite hosting and system management are two other key aspects of the Software as a Service offering that are



perfectly aligned to Eclipse’s business needs. “NSB is able to do what we can’t,” says Bulgin. “Software as a Service allowed us to upgrade all our systems without having to build an IT infrastructure and hire a dedicated IT staff, which would have been beyond the scope of our resources. “We’re operating our business with the same people, and we’re running on a standard DSL line. In this respect it is even simpler than with our old reliable R12 system, which needed dedicated communication lines with our warehouse, located 1,500 miles away.”

“Even though NSB’s facilities are far away, the system is very reliable,” Bulgin continues. “NSB has more extensive backups and procedures than a company like ours can provide on our own. We used to have a lot of power outages, which would force us to bring down our old R12 server and disconnect from our remote warehouse. Now, thanks to NSB’s redundant systems, that’s just not a problem.”

## More options, bigger ideas

Asked whether having a full suite of core retail applications has changed her company’s plans, Bulgin says it is expanding their options and ideas. “Software as a Service has certainly improved our day-to-day operations, but it’s also got us thinking about new ways to do things, especially in terms of distributions and replenishment.”

For all these reasons, Bulgin suggests that other retailers might also want to consider Software as a Service. “It’s a real advantage not having to deal with the servers and the technical issues. Most newer retail systems don’t allow you to function properly without an IT department, but Software as a Service means you don’t have to build one. I would definitely recommend it for any retailer in a similar situation.”

## Connected Retailer Software as a Service

*The gold standard in hosted retail solutions*

NSB's Software as a Service (SaaS) is a turnkey retail solution that lets retailers acquire our core Connected Retailer solutions in a way that virtually eliminates the need for on-site IT infrastructure and provides substantial related advantages. SaaS enables you to:

- **Boost your performance** with state-of-the-art retail systems and advanced business functionality
- **Satisfy the need for speed** by getting you up and running fast — usually within four months
- **Dramatically lower TCO** by eliminating or reducing labor, time, and costs traditionally associated with implementation, integration, maintenance, upgrades, and amortization
- **Reduce risks** by supporting you with redundant systems, expertise from the same people who designed and built the system, and more extensive, dedicated resources than most retailers can provide in house
- **Strengthen your competitive advantage** by channeling fewer resources into IT overhead and more into improving your merchandise offering, customer service, and brand

NSB provides everything you require. For a fixed quarterly fee plus a one-time start-up charge, Software as a Service delivers our acclaimed Connected Retailer Store, Merchandising, Sales Analytics, CRM solutions, and Planning, plus Microsoft Dynamics GP, directly to your stores and head office via reliable, high-speed networks.

NSB hosts the software on fully secure servers, supplies and installs all hardware and infrastructure, and provides round-the-clock data security, backups, and complete system maintenance — all at a fraction of the cost of traditional software licensing and implementation.

SaaS also includes automatic upgrades to the latest Connected Retailer software releases — making it the last migration you will ever need (although the service can be efficiently converted to a traditional best-of-breed delivery model should the need arise).

Although NSB's Software as a Service can be scaled to serve retailers of almost any size, it is especially popular with enterprises like Eclipse who cannot or choose not to manage full-scale best-of-breed solutions in house, but who nevertheless want the advantages of "big retailer" IT.

## Who else is using Software as a Service from NSB?

In addition to Eclipse, the growing family of retailers using NSB's Software as a Service include...

### Twigland

After looking at a wide range of competing solutions, Texas-based specialty fashion retailer Twigland selected Software as a Service to upgrade its systems. President Jon Won says, "NSB has been a leader in retail for 35 years, and they can apply all that experience toward meeting our current and long-term needs. SaaS will give us all the technology we need to achieve our goals."

### Kellwood Retail Group

KRG, which includes the Koret and Sag Harbor banners, adopted NSB's Software as a Service to improve operational efficiency and customer service throughout its 60-store chain. SaaS is helping KRG fulfill its long-standing mission to deliver casual, comfortable, quality clothing for missy, women's, and petites.

### té casan

This innovative retailer of exclusive designer footwear might better be described as a gallery filled with wearable art. Commenting on their decision to implement Connected Retailer Software as a Service, té casan's President Yaniv Shirazi says, "Besides having the solution that best suited our needs, the level of integrity I saw and the positive recommendations I received from other retailers made NSB our obvious choice."

### Windsor Fashions

Longtime NSB client Windsor Fashions selected Software as a Service to support its growing chain of clothing stores for junior and contemporary women. According to CEO Leon Zakaria, "Windsor will become a better company through the use of this technology from NSB."

### Metropark

A recent creation of Orv Madden, founder of the Hot Topic chain, Metropark is a fusion of fashion, music, and art that's all about delivering what's new and now for image-conscious men and women in their 20s and 30s. As such, Connected Retailer Software as a Service was a natural fit: The all-in-one hosted solution will let them focus on their retail business instead of their IT.

### Molbaks

When this award-winning retailer and wholesaler of horticultural products decided to upgrade their systems, the company determined that Connected Retailer Software as a Service offered the best possible combination of value and functionality. CEO Jens Molbak says, "NSB's Software as a Service will provide everything we need to manage our products, please our customers, and sustain growth."

## Want to learn more about Software as a Service?

Microsoft, an NSB partner, has a number of useful resources available on their website. Go to [www.microsoft.com](http://www.microsoft.com), enter Software as a Service in the top right search bar, then click on the top links.

## Find out more today

Visit us online at [www.nsbgroup.com](http://www.nsbgroup.com) for additional product and professional services information as well as client case studies. Alternatively, call us at (514) 426-0822 to schedule a needs analysis and solution demonstration.

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