



**Ted Jackson**, Chief Information Officer

## Fast, Accurate Merchandising

Sport Chalet is a growing specialty chain that wanted to do a better job with assortments, pricing, promotions, space plans and allocations. SAS® Merchandise Intelligence Solutions makes that happen by churning through volumes of data quickly to create information the company's buyers and merchandisers need to drive revenue.

### Industry

Retail

### Business Issue

Sport Chalet needs to better allocate merchandise and track sales by category as it increases its store counts.

### Solution

SAS® Merchandise Intelligence Solutions help Sport Chalet stock its stores with the right mix appropriate for each region.

### Benefits

Reports that typically took a day or more to produce now take only minutes, saving time and money.

Need scuba gear, rental skis, a package of golf lessons or mountain climbing gear? For 45 years Sport Chalet has been Southern California's premier retailer of specialty sports equipment. In the past decade, the chain's growth has taken off as it has branched out to other parts of California, Nevada and Arizona. To accommodate growth and stave off competition from bigger sporting goods chains and niche sports retailers, Sport Chalet sought better ways to select and manage inventory.

In the past, Sport Chalet cobbled together numerous "best of breed" software packages to do everything from gauge customer demand to control inventory. Often, different people used different formulas to calculate results. There was no one version of the truth, it took too long to run reports and there was no fast, accurate way to customize product by store.

Like many retailers, Sport Chalet tended to send each store the same amount of goods in most merchandise categories and restocked with little view toward per-store sales trends. "If a store sold item A, they would get another item A sent to them," Gautereaux says. Now, the company looks at which stores sell what types of product in the greatest quantities and allocates that demand. Not only are customers more likely to find what they want in the right size or color, the presentations are more appealing. Stores receive a larger amount of their best selling products and can create a more visually dynamic display.

This has also freed the buyers to focus on finding the best and most desirable products. This is particularly critical for

Sport Chalet as some of their specialty sports gear has very long lead times for placing orders. SAS allows buyers to make strategic and product life cycle plans.

The company has also been able to make better decisions about what items to put on sale or put on clearance and when to do that. It is now much easier to spot trends in sales, especially as they relate to regional differences.

Another critical need for Sport Chalet was software that worked with legacy systems to achieve one version of the truth. "Historically, our data was available on canned reports or downloaded to spreadsheets," says Ted Jackson, Sport Chalet's Chief Information Officer. "But it is much better to have the data loaded and available on demand. We're getting better quality plans."

The standard data doesn't cramp what Jackson terms the "arty" side of a merchandiser's job. "It still leaves room for merchandisers to do different types of



analysis and approach problems differently based on their business experience. It is the best of both worlds."

It is also an experience that saves a tremendous amount of time. One report involved gathering detailed information from every store. It typically took a day or more to process. With SAS, the query was built and the answer received in eight minutes.



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