



## Hibbett | City Gear ‘Kicks-up’ its Performance with RFID To Win with Customers and with Vendors

### **CUSTOMER FIRST FROM THE START**

Hibbett | City Gear, headquartered in Birmingham, Alabama, was founded in 1945. Nearly 80 years later, it has grown to a leading footwear and athleisure fashion retailer with over 1,100 Hibbett and City Gear specialty stores. Located in 36 states nationwide, Hibbett prides itself on a rich history of serving customers with convenient locations, superior personalized customer service and access to coveted footwear, apparel and accessories from top brands like Nike, Jordan, adidas, Under Armour, PUMA and New Balance. Hibbett’s “toe to head” strategy focuses on popular styles, new releases, and curated looks.

### **BACKGROUND**

To support its strategy, Hibbett saw the need to improve assortment accuracy and inventory details. In particular, Hibbett sought to leverage RFID technology to become more agile

and responsive by creating a seamless supply chain with greater on-hand transparency.



**HIBBETT®**  
**CITY GEAR®**  
ESTABLISHED 1945

## CREATING SYNERGY

Hibbett looked to Columbus Consulting to help deliver the results needed for their brand. Why Columbus? For over 20 years, Columbus Consulting has helped retailers just like Hibbett address their challenges and drive business growth. The consultants at Columbus were all at retailers themselves, holding senior level positions for leading brands. In addition, Columbus already had a successful track record with Hibbett, working with them to lead their Xstore and omni-channel implementation a few years back. As a result, the team was already familiar with Hibbett's systems, processes and people. The combination of internal experience + external expertise helped to create an effective synergy to deliver results.



## THE HALO EFFECT

Hibbett | City Gear looked to RFID technology to deliver more accurate cycle counts at the SKU level and to more easily locate items for omnichannel fulfillment. The Columbus consultants built a business case for Hibbett that fully evaluated their needs in order to successfully deliver an RFID system and process within a year. The team had a three-point plan:

1. Determine current processes to change in order to generate operational efficiencies, boost inventory productivity and elevate customer service.
2. Implement Checkpoint Halo RFID software and scanning in all Hibbett | City Gear stores by implementing new hardware and software in all locations.
3. Identify change management details and determine the optimal process for stores including necessary integrations, running a pilot program and train/deliver an RFID-in-a-box roll out.



## ESTABLISHING THE RIGHT KPIS

Columbus Consulting and the Hibbett team sought to elevate performance across Hibbett locations by shifting from weekly high-level counts on key product groups to conducting weekly top vendor merchandise counts at the SKU level in under 30 minutes. They further established compliance targets for all RFID tagged products and established goals to reduce order cancellations by providing faster product locators for ecommerce fulfillment.

Specifically, the team was driven to:

1. Improve inventory accuracy across all stores thereby increasing customer service.
2. Optimize operational processes to boost productivity and performance.
3. Increase revenue growth based on improved inventory accuracy and increased number of turns.
4. Reduce ecommerce order rejection rates due to inaccurate inventory.
5. Improve store fulfillment rates for ecommerce by enabling store associates to easily locate items on the order.

## TEST OF TIME

In eleven months, the project team achieved all milestones for the integration development, quality assurance, training, pilot and roll out of the Checkpoint Halo RFID solution to all stores.

## RESULTS

The RFID transition enabled every Hibbett | City Gear store to transform their capabilities to be faster, smarter, better at competing within the industry. Store managers could now use the RFID scanner to take cycle counts at greatly reduced times and with increased accuracy. Store associates can locate items in the stores much more effectively to fulfill ecommerce order requests. Store employees are also able to execute merchandising sets more completely and more accurately (shoppers can't purchase what they can't see). Overall, inventory and compliance became transparent, measurable and actionable.

Columbus Consulting Partner and Client Project Manager, Lynn Hughes, commented, "Hibbett's year over year growth is a proof statement for their continued innovations and investments in their business. Pivoting from a successful brick and mortar brand to a unified commerce brand presented many challenges, but the team at Hibbett met them head-on. Revisiting their tools and processes and transforming their inventory systems has not only allowed them to better serve their customers, but it has enabled them to be a stronger partner to their vendors."



## A MODEL FOR TRANSFORMATION

Systems alone will not transform a business, but insights, leadership and adaptive processes that allow for more transparency and agility will. Hibbett | City Gear was able to do just that. They put the customer at the center of their decision to invest in RFID technology which, in turn, provided stronger merchandising adherence, more accurate inventory placement. Checkpoint's Halo application also offers features and functionality that will continue to help scale the business and keep Hibbett at the forefront of its industry.



Hibbett's SVP of Store Operations Ben Knighten commented on the project and their partnership with Columbus Consulting as follows: "Hibbett | City Gear has always prided itself on putting the customer first. We look forward to being able to help customers find the products they want with the speed and accuracy that our new system provides. Being able to ensure a complete merchandising set showcasing our brands and products makes for a better shopping experience and enhanced customer service. We can't thank the team at Columbus enough for their expertise in helping us through this transformation."

**Find out how we can help you. Contact us below or email Lynn Hughes at [LHUGHES@COLUMBUSCONSULTING.COM](mailto:LHUGHES@COLUMBUSCONSULTING.COM)**



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Our approach is simple, if you do it, we do it. We are more than consultants, we are experienced practitioners who actually sat in our clients' seats. We understand the challenges, know what questions to ask and deliver the right solutions. Columbus offers a unique, consumer-centric approach with an end-to-end perspective that bridges functional & organization silos from strategy to execution. Our specialties include: unified commerce, planning & merchandising, sourcing & supply chain, inventory management, finance & operations, data & analytics, information technology and people & organization. Let us know how we can help you. To learn more, visit [ColumbusConsulting.com](http://ColumbusConsulting.com).