



Case Study: Pumpkin Patch

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Infinity provides Pumpkin Patch with a global expansion solution



About Pumpkin Patch



- + **Founded:** In 1990 as a premium children's fashion label; began retailing in 1993
- + **Turnover:** NZ\$376 million (2007 estimated)
- + **Employees:** 3,100 people including part timers
- + **Retail Chain:** Pumpkin Patch operates more than 200 of its own stores in The United States, United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand. Franchised stores in South Africa also use Infinity.

Children's fashion label Pumpkin Patch started retailing in 1991 with one store. Now there are 200-plus outlets in the United States, United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand, with more on the way. As it expands globally, Pumpkin Patch relies on just one point of sale software – Triquestra International's Infinity Retail Management System.

The requirement: grow with us, go with us



With its innovative design and quality clothing Pumpkin Patch is a retailing success story, which has become established as an international premium children's fashion brand.

Its expansion into a number of global markets means Pumpkin Patch requires POS software that includes different tax regimes, currencies, promotions and gift card solutions, Pumpkin Patch's General Manager of IT Zarina Thesing says. At the same time Pumpkin Patch wants software that offers proven simplicity and reliability that will not become rapidly outdated. "I don't want to be in the position of some companies which are always in a cycle of investing heavily in upgrading their software at the POS."

Having POS software that is easy for sales staff to pick up and use was also an important consideration. "We don't want to have to spend a lot of time training staff how to use POS," Zarina says.



The Solution: Triquestra International's Infinity Retail Management System



As it expands globally Pumpkin Patch trusts Triquestra International's Infinity Retail Management System to be its POS software.

Infinity is deployed in all Pumpkin Patch's new stores, in its UK and US stores, and is being rolled out in the Australian and New Zealand stores that are using Triquestra's legacy product, POS2000.

Each Pumpkin Patch store has two POS lanes that use a standard PC-based terminals that run Infinity. The POS terminals are thick client PCs linked to their store's back office and to the head office.

When a new store is opened the software is loaded into the store PCs and configured remotely from head office. "Each store has a set of parameters that flag all the taxes, promotions, discounts and gift solutions.

These are downloaded from head office along with the product files," Zarina says. "Infinity is very easy to configure. When we go into new markets around the world we can easily load in the local the tax requirements, local promotions, gift card solutions and staff discounts. This enables us to keep it quite simple at the front end with store staff not having to worry about any of these differentials," Zarina says. "When we went into the United Kingdom in 2000 we had never dealt with VAT, but Infinity made it an easy transition. And Infinity really helped in the USA where we had different tax rates in every state, and differing regulations covering retailing. "For instance, in California it's now a legal requirement that a POS screen faces the customer as well as the operator. We were able to comply by purchasing extra screens for the terminals and simply configuring Infinity to show sales details on two screens," Zarina says.

Because Infinity is so scalable, Pumpkin Patch's rapid growth has not increased the complexity of installing or managing the software. "Our processes are little different now to what they were ten years ago," Zarina says. And the simplicity at the back end is matched by its ease of operation for sales staff. "Infinity is very easy to learn, very intuitive. Store staff pick it up very quickly," Zarina says.

The Benefits: Reliability, Resilience, Reporting and Control

Infinity has proved itself to be reliable software that is able to handle very high sales volumes and keep working, Zarina says.

"We have customers queued up when we have a sale. It can be more like a supermarket than a fashion brand," Zarina says. "Infinity never causes us any trouble. It's very reliable. Across 200 sites we have a limited number of support issues, which our internal IT Support team can easily resolve."

Infinity offers the peace of mind of full redundancy because it enables each POS terminal to keep trading in the event of a network outage or LAN failure. Sales data is retained at POS until the network is restored.

Infinity then synchronises the sales files into the Pumpkin Patch data warehouse at head office and the back office PC.

"When our insurers' risk analysts talked to us they were very concerned about how we kept the operation running in the event of a network failure. However, once we discussed it with them and explained how Infinity worked they were much happier," Zarina says.

At a company level, Pumpkin Patch uses Microsoft CRM software as its reporting tool as part of the company's best-of-breed policy. Infinity is suited to this environment because it interfaces easily with the CRM software and other software packages.

Infinity's advanced reporting functionality is used at store level where it offers managers the capability to monitor their sales performance. The managers are able to work off the latest sales information because Infinity synchronises all sales files across the Pumpkin Patch Network in close to real time ensuring that sales reporting is up to the minute.

"Having on-the-button information is critical for making decisions in retailing, which is all about today. If you have to wait until the next day for sales information, you cannot make crucial decisions about product mix and replenishments," Zarina says.

Store and regional managers in the highly competitive US market especially make use of Infinity's reporting capability. "In the US they are looking at their sales every hour on the hour to see what things they might have to do differently if the sales are down, and to make sure they have the right level of staffing to meet sales demand," Zarina says. "Getting staffing levels right is important for maintaining margin. If you have too few staff rostered on in a busy period, you lose sales. If you have too many staff on, you cut into your margin," Zarina says.

While helping local managers track sales, Infinity enables all product, pricing and promotion information to be downloaded to the stores from head office. Files are loaded and synchronised in near real time with all stores. "Infinity synchs all key files across the network as quickly as you can set them up," Zarina says.

Central control makes it easier to ensure all stores receive timely information on changes to prices, products and promotions, which is critical for a company whose in-house design team creates

2,000 styles per season.

This ability to control prices centrally is also important in maintaining profitability. It reduces the risk that stores will discount the best product in a bid to boost sales at the expense of margin, Zarina says.

Infinity also boosts the bottom line by being a cost effective solution that requires little support. Because Infinity has been developed from the proven POS2000 it has not required constant upgrading so the company avoids having to invest in regular upgrades, Zarina says.

"We need software that works no matter how fast we grow, is reliable and that we can take anywhere. Infinity has proven itself to be that system," Zarina says.



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