

# Maximize Your POS, ERP Expertise

Providing POS (point of sale) and ERP (enterprise resource planning) integration services helped a VAR earn a \$5.5 million install with a specialty retailer.

BY JAY MCCALL

Dalcom Consulting Inc. is not your typical POS VAR. Even though the VAR has just 34 employees, it's able to bid on jobs that typically are reserved for much larger resellers. One reason for this is that Dalcom has added complementary tech-

nologies and services over the years. For example, the VAR sells Microsoft Dynamics NAV ERP, which enables it to integrate financial, distribution, customer management, supply chain, analytic, and e-commerce data into one solution. Also,

it sells 3Com VoIP (voice over Internet Protocol) phone systems, plus PC, server, and network support devices.

Having this diverse skill set paid off recently with the Alabama Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) Board, which controls the sale of distilled spirits in the state of Alabama and operates 162 liquor stores as well as a 1 million-square-foot warehouse at its headquarters in Montgomery. The Alabama ABC Board was using dial-up in its stores to process credit card transactions and to poll its sales data each evening. Also, the specialty retailer was using a paper-based system at its stores to receive and transfer merchandise. At its headquarters, the Alabama ABC Board was using a 15-year-old mainframe system for inventory tracking and reporting. "Because of the nature of dial-up, as many as 30 stores per night didn't poll properly," says Tim Lindsay, VP of sales and marketing at Dalcom Consulting. "This made it difficult to keep accurate records of its daily sales, and it made it difficult for the retailer to generate mandated reports to NABCA [National Alcohol Beverage Control Association] in a timely fashion."

The Alabama ABC Board submitted an RFP to 100 VARs. Because of the nature of the request – an installation that required POS, networking, and ERP expertise – only Dalcom Consulting and one other VAR responded. Thanks to multiple similar, but much smaller-scale installations Dalcom Consulting had completed for the North Carolina ABC Board, it already had a customized inventory control software solution ready to go. "Not having to develop software from scratch gave us a price advantage over our competitor, and we ended up winning the bid, which became a \$5.5 million deal," says Lindsay.

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### Complement ERP, POS With Wireless

Dalcom Consulting focused its initial implementation efforts on the Alabama ABC Board's headquarters before making any upgrades to the retail stores. The VAR installed Dell servers with Windows 2003 Server software and replaced the customer's mainframe inventory and reporting system with a Microsoft Dynamics NAV ERP solution. In the warehouse, the VAR installed a Cisco wireless LAN (WLAN) and Intermec CK30 handhelds, which include wireless bar code scanners. "The biggest challenge with the first phase of the implemen-

tation was setting up the new Windows PC-based system to receive data in both mainframe and Windows environments," says John Greene, president of Dalcom Consulting. "This required significant custom programming and was a big reason the first phase took 120 days to complete."

Dalcom Consulting began the second phase by pilot testing the POS and data collection solution at five retail stores. Each store was outfitted with NCR RealPOS 70 all-in-one POS workstations; Cherry keyboards; NCR printers, scanners, and cash drawers; Ingenico enTOUCH 1000 signature capture devices; and an Intermec CK30 handheld. Most of the hardware was sourced through value-added distributor ScanSource. Also, the pilot stores were upgraded from dial-up to DSL or T1 data lines and Cisco WLANs.

Having broadband connectivity at its stores enables the Alabama ABC Board



NCR REALPOS 70 ALL-IN-ONE POS WORKSTATIONS ARE A KEY COMPONENT OF DALCOM CONSULTING'S POS AND ERP SOLUTION FOR THE ALABAMA ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL BOARD.

to keep its inventory and sales data updated in real time and increases throughput at the POS terminals. Also, using the handhelds to receive and transfer merchandise has virtually eliminated inventory errors.

Following the success of the pilot project, Dalcom Consulting put together two training teams to conduct weekly store training classes and four installation teams to roll out the POS and wireless data collection solutions at the remaining stores. To date, the VAR has completed 60 stores, and it expects to finish the implementation by the end of the year. Even before completing the project, Dalcom Consulting is receiving a lot of recognition from its vendor partners. Lindsay was hesitant to state any specific new business opportunities that will follow, but it's highly likely this VAR will be netting additional large deals in the near future. ●

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