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Keeping the Focus on Weekend Warriors at Northern Tool + Equipment

Executive Summary: Like many growth companies, Northern Tool + Equipment (NTE) was having trouble managing their inventory across multiple store formats while integrating new technology systems. With leadership and guidance from Delaney Consulting, NTE successfully implemented new inventory and space management processes and systems that enabled automation, control and visibility that the organization did not have previously.

The Challenge: Chaos

Northern Tool + Equipment (NTE) was growing rapidly- but growth was coming at a steep price. Their stores had numerous formats and sizes which made centralized merchandising management difficult. Inventory transitions were lumpy – leaving gaping holes in some stores and too much inventory in others. Category shelf space allocation varied greatly from format to format. Often, too much space was dedicated to under-performing categories and not enough space was given to emerging businesses. While NTE had leading edge inventory and space management systems, they lacked the processes necessary to be successful with them.

The Journey

Mapping the current processes, integrating timelines and interviewing many involved parties. Delaney Consulting identified a number of gaps that could be filled to increase visibility to inventory needs and streamline transitions.

The Solution: Clarity

Delaney Consulting focused on space utilization within the stores while simultaneously creating a streamlined planogram transition process to smooth out inventory lumps from season to season. Through work with with buyers, inventory and store operations they helped Northern craft a flexible yet reliable schedule and process.

The Results

With guidance, Northern Tool + Equipment's buying staff could manage vendor model changes to coincide with peak seasonal consumer demand. Inventory management gained earlier visibility to assortment changes which enabled them to maintain a steady flow of product to the stores. Store management was able to reliably schedule labor around planogram changes to limit disruption to customer service while improving merchandising execution.

Most importantly, the merchandising team embraced the new processes and the changes yielded benefits that the technology systems alone would not have been able to produce.



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