

D & S Liquors Indianapolis

High-Volume Beverage Retailer Controls Operations with Catapult



D&S Liquors, Inc. is a thriving beverage retailer in **Indianapolis, IN.** The store's president, **Howard Shorr**, took time out of his busy schedule to tell us the story of his company, and to explain how he's using **Catapult** to simplify the operational processes of his retail

enterprise.

ECRS : What's the history of D&S Liquors?

Shorr : My grandfather opened the store back in 1962. After ten years of running the business, he handed the reigns over to my father in 1972. I started working there as a young boy in 1978. My job was stocking the beer cooler. I took over the business in the mid 80s, just a few years after we built the free-standing location that is our current store.

ECRS : What sort of clientele do you serve?

Shorr : We sort of joke that our store is on the "**edge of the inner city.**" In one direction there are middle-class neighborhoods and various businesses, including grocery stores, hair salons, convenience stores, and the like. In the other direction there is government-subsidized housing and low-income neighborhoods. The clientele at D&S Liquors is primarily from the **blue-collar** sector. They are people who work very hard for their money.

ECRS : How did you arrive at Catapult as your store's retail automation solution?

Shorr : It's a very interesting story, but a long one. So I'll keep it short. We put in our **first scanning system** in 1980, just after we moved into our newly built store. It was a Sweda system that was **installed by our local dealer**, who is still our POS dealer with Catapult. It was a good system for its day, but our level of throughput maxed it out after about six years. Our dealer then put in a **polling system**, which was a capable solution as well. But the manufacturer went out of business. So to get us through the Y2K scare period, our dealer put in a software package to hold us until they found what we really needed.



One day I got a call from my representative at our local dealership who said, "I think we've found what you've been looking for." The next day he brought in Catapult to show me what the system could do. I was blown away by the level of inventory control it would achieve for my store. And when they explained the **automatic POS redundancy**, I was completely sold on Catapult. Two hours into the demo, I wrote the check.

ECRS : How does Catapult help you streamline activity at the point of sale?

Shorr : Let me start by saying that D&S Liquors processes **1,000-2,000 customer transactions on a daily basis**. We have three Catapult POS stations, and can't afford any complications at the registers. As any store owner will tell you, cashiers fear a change in process. They don't want to learn anything new as a general rule. So when I told them that Catapult was going to be installed, they panicked. Even I was initially worried about the speed issue with Catapult's touch screens, but we move customers through our checkout lines **faster and more accurately** than we ever did with cash registers.

ECRS : How do you use Catapult's reporting to guide your inventory control?



Shorr : More than anything, I use the data generated from **Catapult as a buying tool**. Every morning I run a **Sales Activity Report** to balance my books and to compare sales against deposits. Then I go over the **Department Net Sales** report so I can see how the various sections of the stores are performing. I then use Catapult's **Suggested Item Reordering** report to place my orders for the week. The data is so accurate, I

never end up with more inventory than I need, which happened frequently when I did it all manually. I used to spend all day Monday and Tuesday preparing and placing my orders. But with Catapult, I'm looking for stuff to do by 3:00 on Mondays. It's incredible how little paperwork there is. I now have time to spend face-to-face with my customers and employees. And I never miss an afternoon tee time either.

There's something else I should mention that relates directly to inventory control. In addition to having a backroom server and three POS terminals, we have a **laptop computer setup as a Catapult workstation** near the checkout lines. I have a girl who works full time as my **inventory maintenance person** who uses the laptop for all of her inventory tasks. She is also my third cashier for the day shift, moving back and forth between the laptop station and the point of sale as needed. The money I spend on her as my full-time inventory person is one of the smartest business expenditures I've ever made.

ECRS : In what other ways has Catapult helped D&S streamline its operations?

Shorr : I have a beverage product rep who has 45 other accounts in my area. He once told me, "**Nobody has things under control as much as you do.**" He was referring to the accuracy and timeliness of the orders I give him every week, which were disorganized and inaccurate before Catapult. This helps keep the delivery guys and the distributors on their

toes. Because they know I have a clear hold on my inventory, they work harder to make sure the orders they send me are correct. If they make a mistake, they know I'll catch it. The great thing is, I know I'm spending less time on my orders than any of my rep's other accounts. How's that for automated inventory control?

ECRS : What kind of transaction speed are you getting with credit cards?

Shorr : Funny you should ask. We didn't take credit cards for many years. Our customer throughput has always been so heavy that we didn't want to slow things down at the registers. But when we installed Catapult, we put in a **cable modem** and purchased the **credit card module** from our dealer. Our credit card transactions take about **three seconds to process**. To be honest, credit card customers get through checkout faster than cash customers. I'd never have thought it was possible.



ECRS : Would you recommend Catapult to other beverage retailers?

Shorr : I would recommend it to any retailer who wants to simplify their business processes. **Catapult has made my life so much easier**. Since I started using Catapult, I haven't missed a single one of my kids' ball games. It really handles my high-volume operation. **Catapult is greased lightning**.

ECRS : Can you comment on the quality of service provided by your local Catapult dealer?

Shorr : Their service is impeccable. They have a better response time than the police. That's why I never even considered another POS distributor along the way.