



THE CHALLENGE

Hibbett Sports needed one system to capture all transportation and logistics data, and required better visibility for consolidating and optimizing its inbound shipments, with an end goal of also realizing cost reductions.

THE SOLUTION

Hibbett selected the MercuryGate TMS to provide the foundation for its transportation logistics management. Hibbett is also using MercuryGate's transportation optimization solution, Mojo, to analyze shipments, rates, and constraints to produce realistic load plans.

THE RESULTS

The MercuryGate TMS provides Hibbett with critical information and analytics to make informed decisions that affect the entire supply chain. The company has realized over \$1 million in savings, and has also been able to cut inbound freight costs by more than 30% in the last year by using the Bid Board option within the TMS.

HIBBETT

S P O R T S

"The MercuryGate TMS has become the foundation of all that we do from a transportation logistics perspective."

— Wanda Duvel, Director of Logistics

AMID RETAIL CHALLENGES, HIBBETT SPORTS RELIES ON TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT TECHNOLOGY TO SUPPORT CONSISTENT GROWTH

As more and more consumers turn to online shopping instead of the brick and mortar storefront, many traditional retailers have faced declining sales and massive store closings. Yet despite what many might call a bleak outlook for the industry, Hibbett Sports has continued to grow even as the company seeks innovative ways to stay competitive and deliver quality brands to its customers.

Hibbett Sports, Inc. is a full-line sporting goods retailer headquartered in Birmingham, AL., operating stores in small and mid-sized markets, predominantly in the South, Southwest, Mid-Atlantic, and Midwest. The retailer provides a broad assortment of quality branded athletic footwear, apparel and equipment with a high level of customer service. As of October 2017, the company operated a total of 1,082 retail stores comprised of Hibbett Sports stores and Sports Additions athletic shoe stores in 33 states.

DIFFERENT DATA SOURCES, MANUAL PROCESSES

Like many retailers, Hibbett works with a variety of vendors who supply its stores with the name-brand sporting goods apparel for which the company has become known. Managing the shipments of merchandise to stock its growing number of stores can be a complex and challenging task, which led Hibbett to begin researching a Transportation Management System (TMS) in 2012. As part of the research phase, Hibbett identified a need to capture all transportation and logistics data in one system. The company also required better visibility for consolidating and optimizing its inbound shipments, ultimately with a goal of realizing cost reductions. Additionally, as a result of a supply chain analysis Hibbett discovered how cumbersome it was to gather and evaluate data from different systems and realized that a TMS was necessary to simplify the process.

"Before we implemented the MercuryGate TMS, we were mostly relying on manual processes and a homegrown TMS to a small extent," said Wanda Duvel, Director of Logistics for Hibbett Sports. "We would direct vendors to a web site where they could request routing through our traffic department, and our IT department had created an interface between the web page and our merchandise management system. But that process – along with our reliance on Excel spreadsheets for much of our data – created a number of inefficiencies and challenges."

Without an integrated transportation system to manage its data and processes, Duvel recalls that much of Hibbett's knowledge base resided with long-term employees, and essentially one person was responsible for trying to manage all the critical components of Hibbett's transportation and logistics strategy.

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— Carol Black, Inbound Logistics Manager

HIBBETT
SPORTS

Hibbett has been on a growth trajectory since the early 90's – consistently opening several new stores every year. With that growth, the company's inbound shipments from a large list of vendors have also increased exponentially, as has its need for greater consolidation.

"We have always consolidated loads, but that consolidation was based on our experience and what shipments were available at the time," said Carol Black, Hibbett Sports' Inbound Logistics Manager. "It was inevitable that you would think you had the perfect load, go ahead and route it, and eight hours later there would be another shipment that would have fit beautifully on that load. We knew the right TMS would enable us to improve visibility, put more thought behind consolidation and not miss these opportunities."

TMS PROVIDES FOUNDATION FOR TRANSPORTATION STRATEGY

After evaluating five TMS solutions in 2012, Hibbett selected MercuryGate TMS. "The MercuryGate TMS has become the foundation of all that we do from a transportation logistics perspective," said Duvel. "The TMS provides us with the Information and analytics we need for making decisions. We can do very quick rate comparison, and do in-house audits on invoices. We used to have to rely on outside resources to pull our data from various places to make any kind of truly informed decision. We are much more comfortable making informed decisions on our own that affect the entire supply chain because we're more comfortable with the data."

With the recent opening of a California-based consolidation center, Hibbett is now keeping loads at various providers' warehouses for up to several days. The MercuryGate TMS provides Hibbett with critical information, including shipment dates, to give the company the

visibility they need to determine which loads will go best together. The increased visibility also enables Hibbett to create more backhaul opportunities with its own fleet drivers or its vendors, resulting in additional cost savings. Additionally, Hibbett has been able to add its suppliers into the TMS which makes scheduling of shipments much easier.

"We are working toward making the TMS our comprehensive library for any data we need, which is enabling us to more easily make informed decisions with the data all in one place," said Black. "With this visibility, we can proactively evaluate scenarios and say, 'we need to change this, why don't we do more with this lane, etc.' We are now able to get all the necessary detail to make these kinds of strategic decisions without going to different data sources."

Hibbett is also using MercuryGate's transportation optimization solution, Mojo, to analyze shipments, rates, and constraints to produce realistic load plans. The company plans to continue to increase its Mojo utilization for pulling reports into the system for additional optimization, including optimizing outbound fleet drivers to ensure routes are set up as efficiently as possible.

"In general retail can be a challenging environment for a supply chain and transportation management, with the need to constantly address fluctuating volume of shipments" said Duvel. "With our new consolidation center in California we are now bringing in less-than-truckload (LTL) shipments to facilities that hold them until we have enough merchandise to fill a container or truck. The MercuryGate TMS has greatly helped us manage and consolidate these LTL shipments, and has also given us the visibility to see where we did or didn't save money on our loads."

OVER \$1 MILLION IN SAVINGS, AND A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

While Hibbett is continually looking for new ways to make the TMS work for their business goals, the company estimates it has already realized over \$1 million in savings and expect that as they add more stores and volume increases they will consistently see overall savings. Additionally, in the last year Hibbett began using the Bid Board option within the TMS, enabling them to cut inbound freight costs by more than 30%.

As Hibbett continues its growth trajectory, the company is keeping an eye toward the future and the increased complexity they expect will come in managing their transportation and logistics strategies. The company is currently in the midst of implementing ezVision, MercuryGate's latest user interface that is designed to create an optimized workflow and put more critical information on one screen. For example, when disputing an invoice instead of getting out of the TMS, the Hibbett team will be able to click on the carrier information, email or call them directly, and capture any notes in the TMS.

"With ezVision everything is in one place, and on one screen," said Black. "For all the important data about a vendor or carrier to be included in one screen – showing everything overdue, just rated, etc. – we expect it's going to be a huge improvement to our workflow. As our transportation needs become more and more complex, we believe that ezVision is really going to enable us to be even more proactive with our decision-making and help us be even more efficient."

To learn more, email
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ABOUT MERCURYGATE MercuryGate provides powerful transportation management solutions proven to be a competitive advantage for today's most successful shippers, 3PLs, freight forwarders, brokers, and carriers. Through the continued release of innovative, results-driven technology and a commitment to making customers successful, MercuryGate delivers exceptional value for TMS users through improved productivity and operational efficiency.

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