

HIBBETT

S P O R T S

Industry: Retail

Solution: Brand Training

“You have a consumer who comes in who's really into the new Jordans, or an equipment customer looking for baseball gear. You have to provide them something that they're not getting online. Something as simple as not having the item in stock can lose the customer forever.”



Bill Woodall

Director of Retail Experience and CX

Everyone should be having a good time in a Hibbett Sports store.

That's the simple premise that their customer experience team started with when they began looking for new communication tools that would help them better connect with their retail store employees.

If they started by improving the way their employees receive and retain information, that would provide customers with the engagement they were looking for, and would attract more all-star employees in the future.

Fortunately, they found Rallyware, the sales performance enablement platform that helps retailers and wholesalers work together to sell better.

To better understand how Hibbett Sports used Rallyware to improve in-store experiences for both employees and customers, we spoke to Bill Woodall, (now former) Director of Retail Experience and CX at Hibbett Sports about 21st century customers, the future of retail technology, and the positive feedback loop that happens when you invest in your employees.

At Rallyware, we know that maximizing personal experiences with customers is key to finding success in retail. When you're caught between easy e-commerce on one side and bargain basement big box stores on the other, the best retailers emphasize a connection between shoppers and the expert sales associates who help them.

At Hibbett, Bill found the same thing. He knew that the system worked best when customers were able to come in and have a conversation about the products they were interested in.



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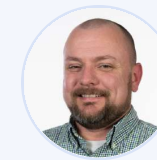
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But that conversation didn't just happen spontaneously. You had to find the right person for your store, give them the information they needed to speak knowledgeably about the product, and provide them the support they needed to do their job well.

Bill explained that the process starts by finding the right people. To do that, you need to make your store is an attractive place to work. That means more than throwing around money and benefits.

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“In retail as a whole, the competition for really talented retail staff has never been higher. I’m talking about competing to hire the individuals who have the skills necessary to perform at a high level ... To draw those individuals who have the raw skills we need to maximize customer experiences, we have to be modern, we have to provide them with an environment where they feel like they matter, like they're part of something really big, and that they're doing something that's modern and cutting edge.”



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At Hibbett, Bill knew there were a few hurdles between him and the place he wanted customer experiences and employee experiences to be. The first comes from increasing competition in the retail space and also increasing expectations from customers.

“Especially over the last five years, the competition has heated up online and amongst other national vendors. Because everyone now has the world in their pockets, the consumer is sometimes more savvy than our in-store employees.”



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“The technology is just not there in most of our markets so, for most of the last twenty years, we've still been pushing a lot of paper. Because most of the training is being led by store management teams and monitored by them as well, we have very low visibility into how the material is being taught and how effective it is. We still do a lot of video training, but we do it on DVDs and literally send them out to the stores. It takes a lot of time to make those and to send them out. That's why we have to plan as much as 8 to 10 weeks ahead.”



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That's a common problem for most retailers, but Hibbett Sports also faced a unique challenge because of the markets their stores tend to operate in. Unlike many other retailers, who make a beeline for major coastal cities and never leave, Hibbett Sports prides itself on serving smaller communities around the United States. That gives them a unique perspective, a unique purpose, and a unique clientele.

But it also means that they face some technological challenges that make communicating difficult.

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“The Rallyware platform is so easy to use and so self-sufficient. We have an LMS, but it's a proprietary one. Very simple.

Very basic. We need something that's fairly simple to operate that we can run with fairly quickly and be able to change with some of the trends that are happening in our industry - from product trends to new acquisitions ... The flexibility, the functionality of Rallyware, and the real world applicability of it were the difference makers. I can tell that Rallyware is looking at the problem from a user's standpoint in the real world. how quickly can we get this stuff out, how quickly can we look at it.”



Bill Woodall

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To find a solution to these problems, Hibbett let Rallyware get up to bat. By using Rallyware's sales enablement solutions, the Hibbett Sports retail experience team could transfer content to any of the company's associates instantly. On top of that, Rallyware made it simple for Hibbett Sports to collaborate with their wholesalers, like New Balance and Asics, to educate their frontline.

Plus, because Rallyware strongly emphasizes the mobile experience, Hibbett's in-store employees could access knowledge from their personal devices at any time to do their jobs better.

Bill also highlighted the flexibility of the Rallyware platform:

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Last, Bill knew that by choosing Rallyware, he was also working with a team that would be there to support Hibbett.

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In many ways, Rallyware solved a problem of today for Hibbett Sports. It became easier than ever for them to unify communications across the company, and to do it instantly rather than waiting for the mail carrier to arrive.



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“That's exactly why we're always looking for the best of the best retail talent to make every store as great as it can be. We care about employee experience so that when we find that fantastic retail employee, they're kind of like a unicorn after all, we can keep them around ... We've been lucky that we attract that kind of person. We want a customer to come into one of our stores and see how the store is being run and how people are having fun, and then apply for a job. If they don't get that feeling, then they might not apply. Especially when competition for retail talent is very very tough.”



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But it also solved a future problem. For Bill, maintaining a positive employee experience wasn't just about maximizing the performance of today's sales associates, it was about attracting the best talent in the future.

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Fortunately for Bill, Rallyware will be there to help keep lines of communication clear and accountable—for the Hibbetteers of today and tomorrow.

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