

Retail Inventory Services A Case Study - Dunelm

When it comes to ensuring a profitable future, Dunelm start with knowing what and where their inventory is.

Dunelm are product obsessed; they love what they do and that transmits to the customer. With WIS International's help, the inventory counting process that ensure the product they love is available to all, is completed accurately, on time and efficiently.

Who are Dunelm?

Dunelm has one simple purpose, to help everyone create a home they love. They are the UK's No.1 Homewares retailer with 172 stores offering a wide range of products to enhance every room in their home. The growth of this key part of their business is securing future success and WIS are proud to play a part.

Recent History

WIS and Dunelm have worked closely together since initially testing in three stores in 2008, growing to 50% of the estate in 2009. And then, in 2010, WIS was awarded all store counts and have continued to be responsible for counting the entire estate since then.

In 2010 WIS commenced a pick accuracy programme in a cross-dock facility, helping to drive up delivery accuracy from suppliers – all important in ensuring that what is paid for is actually received. This programme has continued and flexed into more DC facilities for Dunelm, a fabulous example of a custom designed process working well.

Continuous improvement plays a huge part in the partnership. The ongoing training and certification of managers and counters is essential to WIS' success. Dedicated teams and the absence of any agency staff ensure a consistency in service delivery not found elsewhere.

The use of the latest technology enables data to flow seamlessly between the two companies ensuring not only a smooth count programme, but also a greater understanding of the post count data through analytical insights.

Both companies can dive in and understand what is really happening at count, manager, counter, category and SKU level, across several KPI's. We are always seeking continuous improvement and that can only happen with complete transparency.



Benefits for Dunelm

Accuracy – Dunelm benefits from our attention to detail, audit trail and customised process. Our WISard™ data collection terminal has built-in alerts to assist WIS auditors in providing accurate results and helps to eliminate common count errors.

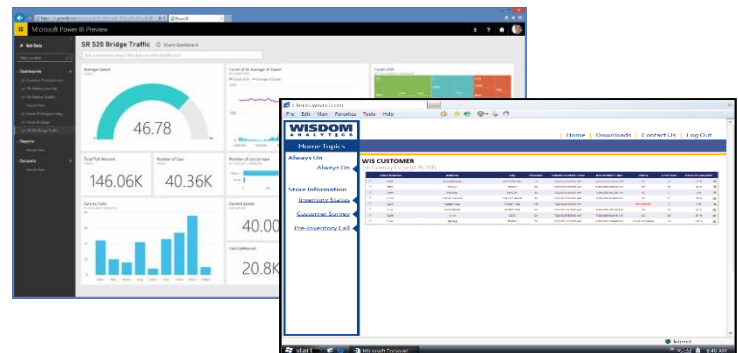
Trained Workforce – Trained, directly employed personnel provide the inventory expertise necessary to facilitate a smooth and accurate count. The use of R.F. technology provides real-time insight into an inventory's progress.

Project Management Expertise – Successful physical inventory takes planning to succeed. With over sixty years of project management expertise, we take care of all the details to ensure flawless execution.

Technology – Technology is an important component of any accurate stock count. WIS provides Dunelm with the latest, bespoke equipment and software to ensure the utmost data integrity.

Count Assurance – We interrogate the vast array of data available using the latest data tools. Data dashboards have been developed to enable Dunelm to view count progress in real time. Once the count is concluded, in-depth analysis of key performances by store, count manager, counter, SKU and category are also available. Absolute count assurance is guaranteed with total transparency.

Example generic dashboards.



The Service

WIS provides full-service inventory counts in all of Dunelm's 172 stores multiple times a year.

The frequency of counting is determined by the count results of each store as they are generated. Timings between counts are lengthened or shortened as required to ensure best on-shelf availability.

The comprehensive suite of management information that we provide means that any local issues are identified promptly and dealt with.

A full-service inventory count really does mean "full service." From the initial consultancy we then take time to understand in detail the specific needs of each client.

Then we develop software to technologically underpin the planned count which undergoes rigorous testing before being deployed.

The teams who will be working on the count undergo thorough training, so they properly understand the business, the objectives and the context in which the count will be undertaken. They also receive simulation training for the bespoke version of the software that they will be using.

At each count the WIS teams arrive in company mini-buses wearing full uniform. The scheduling of each team ensures that they are efficiently deployed and that each count will be undertaken calmly and professionally with speed and accuracy.

WIS provides all the equipment necessary to complete the count. All that we ask for is a table and a plug socket!

The store is involved throughout, first in the team brief and then continuously during the count. With the latest tablet technology, store management can observe and understand how the count is progressing whenever they wish.

The warehouse is counted before store closing and handed back promptly to the store for replenishment. The sales floor count starts at closing, once the warehouse count is finished, and is completed within a pre-defined run time.

Throughout the count, store staff can audit the counters using Wi-Fi and tablet technology, the days of paper audits are long gone - more accurate and environmentally friendly.

Using the latest on hand stock files, variance reporting on the night is carried out - another layer of checking to ensure the most accurate count possible.

Finally, the count is complete. The result is agreed. A client satisfaction survey is completed, and the files transmitted promptly to Dunelm for processing.

The next morning WIS' field management reviews each count for its performance against key performance indicators.

Continuous improvement is not something that we only think about after the count is completed. It is something that we plan-in from the very beginning before anyone has counted a single item!

At every step of the project we are looking for opportunities to improve.

The detailed, real-time count reporting and analysis, that is available for review by all stakeholders, enables us to work closely with the client to achieve this.

What are people saying

"Smooth run count, live variance handed in a timely manner. Very good interaction between WIS and Dunelm colleagues"

"Good overall count, well managed from all involved. Good interaction from both store and WIS teams."

"Excellent count, brilliant interaction from WIS and Dunelm colleagues. Very quick wrap up."

"Smooth count well executed by WIS management and crew. Good interaction between WIS and Dunelm with the Live variances"

"Excellent count, brilliant interaction and wrap up"

"Our relationship with Dunelm is a long one, we have partnered since 2008! Initially with three stores, then 50% and since 2010 we have been the proud vendor of stocktakes to the entire retail estate, in addition we provide delivery checking services in their DC's. Through partnership, striving to constantly improve and only wishing to be the best we lay the foundations for success with Dunelm"

*Geoff Chaplin, Managing Director, WIS International.
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WIS International

WIS International has been delivering accurate results to many of the biggest names in retailing and manufacturing for more than sixty years.

With more than 200,000 physical inventory counts taken every year, WIS has become one of the industry's largest and most trusted suppliers of Inventory Counting Services worldwide.

In addition, WIS also provide merchandising services such as new product placement, point-of-sale display services, fixture installations and product recall return services.

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