



Our Clients Say It Best



Auburn University Selects RMSA for Merchandise Planning

Auburn University, founded over 150 years ago, is a significant landmark not only in its hometown, but also in college football, where the Auburn Tigers are a major contender each fall. In addition to serving the university, the AU bookstore is a shopping destination for sports fans in search of all things supporting their beloved Tigers.

When it comes to offering a great selection of Tiger gear along with the varied merchandise needed by students and university faculty and staff, the bookstore buyers work hard to meet everyone's expectations and offer the best merchandise. However, with so much merchandise available, they struggled to offer a great selection without getting overstocked. Like many stores, they would find themselves in a position of simply having too much of a good thing.

"For several years, we'd been actively working to refine our inventory management practices," says Store Director Katie Lee. "However, just when we would get one department under control, we'd discover another one that had become a problem. We weren't performing badly, but we knew there was room for improvement." Having heard from other ICBA member bookstores that RMSA specializes in addressing exactly this problem, Katie sought to learn more at last year's ICBA Retail Conference.

What she discovered was a strategic merchandise planning process that helped buyers analyze each category of merchandise individually to determine key areas of risk and opportunity. The result is that they are able to confidently invest inventory dollars in the merchandise that customers demand. Katie says the results are visible at a first glance when walking through the store: "The styles on display are the best of the best. Working within the RMSA process, the buyers are more selective, and we can see by the sales results that shoppers are responding well to the improved merchandise selection."

Besides just helping with inventory investment, RMSA analyst Ken Bankson works with each of the buyers, identifying realistic goals and educating them on vital retail practices. What they have learned helps them make solid business decisions about their merchandise classifications, and focus their buying power on the merchandise that will have the best performance. In addition to the objective analysis, Ken also helps the buyers to look at the business from different perspectives and identify ways to continue to improve performance in their departments.

After just a few months working with RMSA, Auburn has realized dramatic results. Inventory is reduced over 30% year to date, and markdowns have been reduced by 10%. Instead of always struggling with one or two departments, improvements are evident in all the departments at the same time, ensuring that the whole store is operating with healthy levels of inventory.

Katie adds, "I would absolutely recommend RMSA to any college store, and I already have. The results we've seen in just a few months are amazing."

RMSA is the nation's oldest and largest company offering retail merchandising and inventory management services, and has been a partner of ICBA for more than 10 years. Using their unique planning strategy, RMSA helps stores reach sales and profit goals by maintaining appropriate inventory levels. To find out more about how RMSA can benefit your bookstore, please call 800-727-7672 or e-mail info@rmsa.com. Visit www.RMSA.com for additional information and more client success stories.



ICBA 2008 Retail Conference and Primetime

Representatives from RMSA will be presenting at the conference on February 14, 2008.