



Above: Naia Koobatian — interior designer & Susanna mgr.
 Right: Linda Morrell — design consultant and Naia Koobatian

Retail Store: Collure Studio 1106 & Susanna	Challenge: Manage over 8,000 inventory items in two stores
Location: Larkspur	

“It narrows the window for human error.” — Susan Wright, store owner

Two-Store Inventory of 8,000 Items Tamed with POS System

In 2003 Susan Wright, owner of a successful executive search firm in San Francisco, mustered up enough spare time to indulge her passion for interior design. She created Collure Studio 1106, at first a gift shop that stocked designer fabrics in a small shopping center near College of Marin.

Collure grew, taking on more staff and inventory, and soon they were bursting at the seams. So Susan split the business, making Collure the design studio, offering the services of interior designers and access to fabrics, wallpapers and trims from around the world. And in May 2007 she opened Susanna, the furniture, gallery and gift side of the company, in downtown Larkspur.

The company

Collure Studio 1106, interior design services, designer fabrics and trims at 1106 Magnolia in Larkspur. Susanna, gifts and home décor at 545 Magnolia, next to the Lark Theater in Larkspur

The challenge

- Install a multi-store POS system for a growing company that can't slow down during the process
- Manage 8,000 inventory items in three locations – two stores and off-site storage

The solution

- QuickBooks POS Pro Multi-Store software integrated with QuickBooks Pro accounting
- Touch-screen monitors with credit card scanners
- Barcode printers and scanners
- Remote access for accounting and troubleshooting
- Business Cents consulting, installation, training and support

The result

- Save time and money by being in control of a large inventory
- Purchase merchandise based on reports that identify best-selling items and preferred vendors
- Quickly and accurately report quarterly sales tax
- Stay in touch with customers through in-system customer mailing lists
- Improved security and theft control

Thousands of inventory items

After devoting countless tedious staff hours every year to tracking thousands of merchandise items, from plate chargers to throw pillows, Susan was ready to computerize it.

She talked to a few retailers, including the owner of Via Diva, a multi-location home furnishings store headquartered in San Rafael. “He had converted his operation to a point of sale system (POS),” says Susan, “and thought it was a great thing.”

Susan and her VP of operations, Priscilla Agricola, were looking for new financial software, and as Susan heard many times, “QuickBooks is the accounting software of choice to use with POS.” They decided to make the switch to QuickBooks and incorporate POS into the project.

Bringing Business Cents on board

So Susan went to the QuickBooks website to look for help. She found it with San Anselmo-based consultants Business Cents. POS specialist and Business Cents owner David Glantz came on board to install and adapt the software and train her staff on the system. David worked closely with Susan's technician, who put together the computer components.



But before the team could hit the ground running, they had to settle on which type of system would work best for the stores. Two standalone systems? A multi-store system linked through a network? Susan discussed the options with everyone involved – her computer technician, her accountant, David and her staff.

The conclusion? A multi-store network would support sales by allowing designers at Collure to see and recommend in-stock items at Susanna. Linking the stores would streamline financial information and save time for the back office people. And creating an integrated system would give Susan, as owner, centralized control over the two locations.

The team agreed on a system that includes:

- QuickBooks POS Pro Multi-Store software, integrated with QuickBooks Pro accounting
- Touch-screen monitors and cash drawers
- Barcode printers and scanners
- QuickBooks Merchant Services to process credit card sales
- A network server at Collure, the company headquarters
- Remote access for accounting functions

The road to smooth sailing

David customized the system for Collure and taught the employees to process sales, produce purchase orders, receive shipments into inventory and print tags for new merchandise. “It’s a really approachable system,” Susan says. “And David took us through it in stages, not overwhelming us with everything in the book.”

One of the big challenges was bringing the system up to date while business carried on at a hectic pace. Although many stores

pick a starting point, entering sales and inventory from that moment on, Susan wanted the system to contain a full year of history and inventory.

So as her staff entered new transactions, she and Priscilla recorded data from earlier events. David offered to bring in the Business Cents team to help with the inputting, but Susan thought she could make short work of it. What she didn’t know is that it would take a full year to catch up. “For a good portion of the time, we were only able to work on the backlog for one day a week,” she says.

The payoff

The POS system is paying off in organization, readily available information and accuracy. “It narrows the window for human error,” says Susan.

Inventory is under control, and can be updated or changed only by employees with the security password. And now the staff at Collure and Susanna can track the physical location of all 8,000 pieces of merchandise in inventory, as well as identify the best vendors and which merchandise sold well.

Another time-saver is the ease of sales tax reporting. The POS system cut out an entire step. They don’t miss entering sales data from receipt books into an Excel spreadsheet to get sales totals and tax figures by county. Now they simply print the report.

So did they do the right thing? Susan says yes. “I feel like this year we’ll really be able to reap the rewards.”