

# WHITE ROCK SOAP GALLERY CASE STUDY



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## A FAMILY ENTREPRENEURSHIP

As Senior VP of Information Technology and Chief Information Officer (CIO) at PFSweb, Mark Fuentes works with leading brands to help them manage their inventory distribution, transportation, reverse logistics and additional omnichannel operations on a global scale. However, Mark's experience with omnichannel commerce extends to a more personal level as well.

In 2014, when his oldest son expressed a desire to be an entrepreneur, Mark gifted him a book on how to make soap. They dove in together and after mastering soaps, they expanded into making candles and lotions as well. They debuted their products at the local farmer's market where they made a few hundred dollars. Flash forward to today, White Rock Soap Gallery (WRSG) now has 2,300 UPCs, four stores in the Dallas area, and ships nationwide.



# OMNICHANNEL STRUGGLES

When WRSG began selling online in 2018, the business operated smoothly enough, that was until the peak holiday season kicked in. The stores struggled to keep up with busy foot traffic and handle orders accurately with the high order volume coming in through the website. Additionally, the process that the store assistants used to pull online orders was clunky and caused disruption to the in-store shopping experience. Luckily, Mark knew exactly how to fix the problem.

## RETAILCONNECT PILOT PROGRAM

The PFS team had recently begun development of RetailConnect, a new store fulfilment technology solution. RetailConnect equips stores to effectively support omnichannel operations by systematically directing store fulfilment activities in support of buy online, pickup-in-store (BOPIS), ship from store and curbside pick-up solutions.

The pilot program for RetailConnect was implemented at WRSG stores just ahead of the peak holiday season in 2019 with exceptional results:

- Supported BOPIS and ship-from-store activities
- WRSG cleared orders in 3 days vs 7 without RetailConnect
- Store assistants were able to process 10+ orders at once
- All orders fulfilled via RetailConnect were 100% accurate
- Orders were shipped to customers in 34 states
- Seamlessly integrated with WRSG's Shopify eCommerce platform

The streamlined process was well received by both the WRSG employees and their loyal customers. The customers raved about the new functionality and loved the flexibility offered through BOPIS. They could now take advantage of holiday sales online and avoid shipping charges, picking up orders when it was convenient. For employees, the system created more efficient order processing that did not disrupt store operations and made for quick work, freeing them up to focus on regular store tasks.



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## AUTOMATED STORE FULFILMENT OPERATIONS THAT BENEFIT EMPLOYEES AND CUSTOMERS

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"The goal of RetailConnect is to allow retailers to launch the technology and start processing orders within 15 minutes. We saw firsthand at WRSg that it works! With automated processes, quick training and minimal square footage requirement, RetailConnect allows retailers small and large to take advantage of all that omnichannel solutions have to offer."

**- Mark Fuentes**

Senior VP of Information Technology and CIO  
at PFSweb and owner at White Rock Soap Gallery

## COVID-19 RESPONSE

At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, WRSg were forced to shift from a brick-and-mortar focus to an entirely online operation overnight. The initial impact of store closures meant furloughing employees and the overwhelming challenge of figuring out how to keep up with rent when their main source of revenue was shut down. Mark and his family immediately shifted their focus to the website.

WRSg implemented free shipping nationwide as well as local delivery options and blasted customers with promotional emails. They essentially converted their stores into micro-fulfilment locations from which they fulfilled online orders using RetailConnect to manage the operation.

Customers responded immediately and emptied out three of WRSg's four stores within just four weeks. WRSg was able to rehire 17 of their furloughed employees and started producing products again.

