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## Solution Series: Retail

# REAL-TIME INVENTORY VISIBILITY

It's 11 a.m. Do you know where your merchandise is?

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**Your problem:** The dynamics of retail have changed. Some customers still walk into stores and shop on impulse, but others call ahead to ask if an item is on the shelves. Others research and purchase products online, never setting foot in a store unless they can pick up a purchase there instead of paying for home shipping. In each of these situations, however, one thing remains constant: To close the sale, you need to be able to provide your customer with the merchandise they want—when they want it and how they want to take possession of it. Yet many retailers have no accurate insight into the real-time status or location of their inventory. Without walking over to a shelf and looking, they can't say for sure whether an item is in a store or in a regional distribution center ready to be shipped. If your customer is asking and a sale depends on the answer to that question, that lack of real-time insight is a problem.

**Software AG solution:** With a real-time inventory visibility solution, powered by Software AG's Digital Business Platform, retailers can gain precisely the real-time insights required both to meet the demands of customers—through any channel—and the needs of planners in the head office. You can respond immediately and credibly to customer queries and orchestrate the movement of inventory among different locations in response to real-time dynamics, all of which positions you to close sales more consistently and successfully.

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## Problem details

How do you stand out in a world of retail that knows no bounds? Unless you're selling merchandise that is truly unique, your potential customers can turn to innumerable sources to acquire the goods they seek. One thing that can make a huge difference, though, is simply having the product that a customer wants and making it easy for them to take possession of that product in the manner that is most amenable to them. They may want to see it and buy it in a store; they may want to see it in a store and have it delivered to their vacation home; they may want to browse and order online but pick up the product in a store or have it shipped directly to the house or office.

The question is, do you have the merchandise customers want in the store? If not, where is it? In a distribution center? A warehouse? And how many items are in each location at this moment? If a customer phones in and asks whether the merchandise is on your shelf, can you answer the question accurately without visiting the shelf? If they're in the store itself and want to know if the merchandise can be delivered tomorrow to another location, can you provide an answer founded on real-time data and not just good intentions?

Unless you have real-time visibility into your inventory, visibility that extends to all the locations where merchandise might sit, then you're not in a position to answer these questions and meet this most fundamental of consumer demands. Potential sales will slip away as consumers go searching for other stores or websites that can confirm that the item they seek is on the shelf (or in the website fulfillment center or wherever it needs to be to meet that customer's need).

## What's the Software AG difference?

Real-time inventory visibility enabled by the Software AG Digital Business Platform:

- Inter-operability with multiple inventory source systems—internal and external—enabling multiple inventory sources, such as supplier or consignment inventory to be considered
- Rapid expansion capability to include new sources of inventory when they come available
- Real-time aggregation of dynamic inventory data from throughout the omni-channel retail environment
- Flexibility to meet the demands of a wide range of constituents, both inside and outside the enterprise
- Independent of ERP and other systems resulting in fast, flexible alternative to wholesale system replacement
- Continually updated inventory picture based on real-time increments and decrements across multiple channels and systems
- Underpinned by analyst-recognized leading technology for business data connectivity

## Software AG's solution

**Captures and aggregates inventory data in real time from all sources within the broader omni-channel environment**

- Connectivity tools can ingest data from a wide range of systems and sensors—in the store, distribution center, warehouse or elsewhere
- In-memory data management tools ensure that inventory information is up to date, readily accessible and actionable

**Meets the demands of a wide range of constituents, both inside and outside the enterprise**

- Provides answers—in real time—to the questions asked by internal planners, floor personnel and customers
- Delivers real-time insights to the inventory dynamics that matter—through dashboards, real-time alerts and more
- Facilitates access to accurate, up-to-date inventory information via smartphones, tablets, kiosks and more

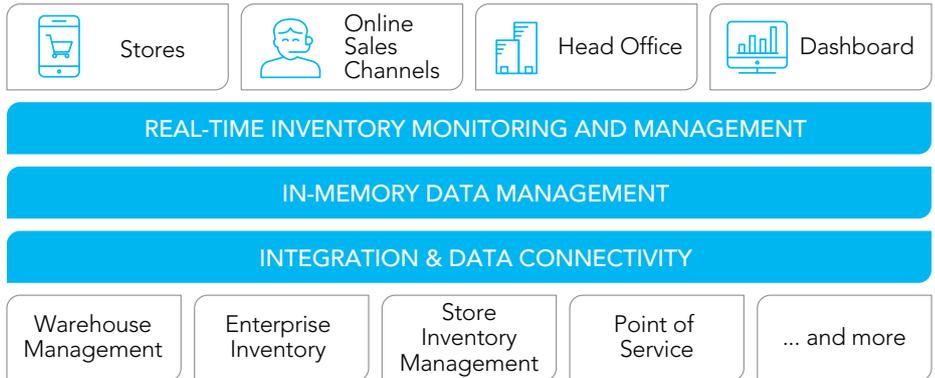
For a retail organization that has already embarked upon an omni-channel strategy, the difficulties associated with gaining real-time visibility into the state of your inventory are easy to understand. Your different channels may have different inventory storage locations and different inventory and site management solutions. Staying abreast of changing inventory levels, in real time, when multiple locations and systems are involved poses real challenges. You could build out a new end-to-end ERP solution and hope that such an effort would yield the insights you seek. But “hope” is the key word in that thought. Such an approach will be costly and time-consuming, and its outcome is not guaranteed.

Or you could build on the investments you’ve already made using Software AG’s real-time inventory visibility solution. Powered by Software AG’s Digital Business Platform, this solution brings together data from all the systems in your retail ecosystem, from enterprise inventory and warehouse management systems to point of service, e-commerce, m-commerce and other systems. It relies on powerful in-memory data management technologies to keep all the data about inventory—from

all the systems managing it, in all locations and across all channels—current and accessible. It can even accommodate new systems and newly acquired locations—far more flexibly and easily than an entire new ERP installation. And, it provides customizable presentation tools with which you can deliver the real-time inventory insight you need to whoever needs it. That could be planners in the head office, a sales associate answering the phone in a brick and mortar store, even a user on a Web page who wants to see if the item they want is in stock and could be shipped that day.

## Critical aspects of a real-time inventory visibility solution

- The ability to ingest, monitor, analyze and act upon inventory data, in real time, from any system in any location within your retail ecosystem—including the inventory systems that your suppliers use.
- The ability to provide accurate answers—in real time—to inventory-related questions asked by internal planners, customer-facing personnel and your customers themselves.



Real-Time Inventory Visibility Powered by Software AG's Digital Business Platform

### ABOUT SOFTWARE AG

Software AG offers the world's first Digital Business Platform. Recognized as a leader by the industry's top analyst firms, Software AG helps you combine existing systems on premises and in the cloud into a single platform to optimize your business and delight your customers. With Software AG, you can rapidly build and deploy digital business applications to exploit real-time market opportunities. Get maximum value from big data, make better decisions with streaming analytics, achieve more with the Internet of Things, and respond faster to shifting regulations and threats with intelligent governance, risk and compliance. The world's top brands trust Software AG to help them rapidly innovate, differentiate and win in the digital world. Learn more at [www.SoftwareAG.com](http://www.SoftwareAG.com).

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