

## Fashion Retailer Charlotte Russe Processes Record Online Sales with IBM Cloud and Watson Customer Engagement

### Achieves Double Digit Online Sales Growth and Records Over Peak Holiday Season

LAS VEGAS, March 20, 2017 [PRNewswire/](#) -- IBM (NYSE: [IBM](#)) today announced that [Charlotte Russe](#), a U.S. women's clothing retailer, is using [Watson Customer Engagement](#) solutions on IBM Cloud to help them fulfill record numbers of customer orders, improve profitability and maintain high-levels of customer satisfaction. Available now, IBM Watson Customer Engagement solutions are infused with cognitive technologies that today are enabling marketing, commerce and supply chain professionals put their customers' needs at the center of every transaction.

Last year, for the first time ever, American consumers surveyed made the majority of their purchases online rather than in stores<sup>1</sup>. With the online and mobile shopping communities growing ever larger and customer expectation for flawless services across all channels and experiences remaining high, under any circumstances, Charlotte Russe turned to IBM to help them prepare for the busy 2016, five-day holiday shopping season.

Charlotte Russe had the Watson Customer Engagement solutions up and running in seven months. Following deployment, the Charlotte Russe team realized that its initial sales and transactions projections for the holidays were significantly lower than what the latest data reflected—online sales would increase over 2015 and could cause potential disruptions in service and dissatisfaction among customer during the most critical period of the year.

Poor online performance can be costly—a simple two-second delay in the loading of the first page of the checkout process can result in a 60 percent drop in conversions<sup>2</sup>. To help ensure its success, Charlotte Russe turned to IBM's Holiday Readiness team, which quickly assessed if the retailer could handle this drastic spike in product demand. Based on results of the assessment, IBM recommended adding capacity to help meet the anticipated growth, fine-tuned the system and ran in depth performance tests ahead of peak holiday shopping time.

These efforts paid off—over the 2016 5-day holiday shopping peak, the IBM and Charlotte Russe teams worked side-by-side to ensure that all systems were performing at peak capacity. Despite record volumes of orders there were no performance issues and the volume was handled easily by the system.

"The always-on customer's relationship with a retailer lasts only as long as the business's ability to keep their unique needs and interests at the center of every interaction," said Harriet Green, General Manager, IBM Watson Customer Engagement.

"Cognitive solutions are critical to keeping the focus on the customer, under any circumstances. When it comes to cognitive, IBM has a significant lead over the competition and over this time we've seen firsthand how technologies like Watson allow businesses to understand customers on entirely new levels, adjust strategies as their interests change and new trends appear and ultimately maintain their loyalty to the business."

Now for example, a customer could order a dress on their smartphone and chose to pick it up from a location they pass on their way home from work. Without human intervention, the order management system (OMS) system can check inventory and, finding that it's out of stock in the person's size, identifies which location has the right item and can get it on the store most quickly to fulfill the order. The store associate then receives a mobile notification of the incoming item as well as recommendations on other accessories the customer may be interested in based on their unique profile. In the event the customer likes the accessory but prefers it in a different color the associate can find where else its available and have it shipped to their home.

Part of the Customer Engagement portfolio, IBM's Order Management helps retailers handle orders, integrate with financial processing systems, process shipping notifications, interface to customer email and settlement systems and update inventory systems. By using IBM's Order Management, retailers can make more informed decisions about how to fulfill customer orders, potentially resulting in improved profitability and customer satisfaction.

"Like all retailers, our business is judged by its ability to serve the needs of our customers. If we can't meet their expectations we can't compete," said Debra Jensen, CIO for Charlotte Russe. "IBM is a proven leader when it comes to retail transformation. Now we know that our backend systems -- the engine that keeps sales flowing, orders shipping and customers happy -- is solid, taking whatever our customers throw at it and automatically understanding the best way to meet their needs. We also know that as new trends emerge we are in step with each customer."

IBM Watson Customer Engagement powers a full spectrum of industry-tested solutions. These include cognitive engagement offerings delivered as a service and on premise that help businesses uncover insights hidden in their massive amounts of data to understand, reason and learn about their customers and important business processes. Today IBM is the only vendor that helps companies infuse cognitive technologies into their marketing, commerce and supply chain capabilities on their terms, when and how they need.

IBM currently is working with more than 17,000 companies around the world including customers such as [Amadori Group](#), [American Eagle Outfitters](#), [Boots](#), [Ermes](#), [Luxottica](#), [Moosejaw Mountaineering](#), [Office Brands](#), [Performance Bicycle](#), [REI](#), [Sherwin Williams](#), [The Clorox Company](#), [The North Face](#), [The Works UK](#), and [William Sonoma](#).

For more information follow us at [#IBMAmplify](#) and [#WatsonCE](#).

1. Wall Street Journal, Survey Shows Rapid Growth in Online Shopping <http://on.wsj.com/2kOOQI2>
2. Poor site speed costing you sales? Try these tips..., <http://bit.ly/2mWlbGe>

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