



GameStop Corp, a Fortune 500 and S&P 500 company headquartered in Texas, is a global, specialty retailer that makes customers' favorite technologies affordable and simple. GameStop operates more than 6,600 video game, wireless and consumer electronics stores across 14 countries. In March 2014, GameStop Launched the GameStop Technology Institute (GTI) with the aim of delivering technology advancements that drive positive customer experiences and cultivate innovation within the retail space.

HeadCount is a 'founding partner' in the technology incubator designed to drive GameStop growth. Jeff Donaldson heads up the company's innovation incubator as the Executive Director of GTI. Under his leadership, Jeff has continued to spear-head the discovery and expansion of innovation at GameStop.

Donaldson considers HeadCount a 'founding partner with GTI', providing the foundational measurement, inquisitive thinking, and expertise to Donaldson and his team as they evaluate and pursue the most important innovations designed to drive GameStop's growth. And so far, it's working extremely well.



Jeff Donaldson
Executive Director
GameStop Technology Institute



HeadCount's conversion approach drives net lift in GameStop stores. "You can easily see what happened after we made the change to a conversion culture with HeadCount," says Donaldson. "We can show a net lift in results in the stores where we tested the HeadCount traffic and conversion program. There's no question that we've improved our business where we have deployed this HeadCount conversion culture and approach."

Without the HeadCount traffic and conversion program, Donaldson says they'd have a lot of data to inform them about what was happening with the business but they would not be able to connect all the data to the ultimate measurement: when a customer converts to a purchase.

"At the end of the day, we are a retailer and we sell stuff. So as much as we want to deeply understand all of the data around how our customers engage with us, it all boils down to conversion," he says.

GameStop is evaluating costs, timelines and phasing for converting more stores to the use of traffic data.

“HeadCount has really put us on the right track and provides the basic metric that we use to measure most, if not all, of our innovation initiatives,” says Donaldson. He says GameStop is now focused on the right operational metric, crediting HeadCount for helping the company focus on true conversion metrics instead of transactions as a proxy for conversion.

“We used to use transactions but man have we ever seen the weakness in that approach now that we actually have HeadCount’s traffic and conversion data,” says Donaldson. “Transactions don’t work. I can’t even imagine running a retail operation without traffic and conversion data. It would be like driving down the street blind. I couldn’t even fathom it,” he says.

HeadCount’s Traffic Productivity is a single metric that advances conversion and average sale and gives GameStop stores full credit for improving their business. Donaldson recalls when Founder and CEO Mark Ryski brought Traffic Productivity to GameStop, explaining that the company was actually seeing benefits that went beyond conversion. Ryski wanted to include average sale improvement so he began to introduce and educate the GameStop team on Traffic Productivity as a new measure.

“My thought was ‘wow, this is cool’,” says Donaldson. “We can still focus on just one metric but that single metric is really good at assessing both average sale and conversion advancement.” Donaldson appreciates this unique approach because it means stores can get full credit for improving their business.

HeadCount’s approach to Traffic Productivity is a perfect example of how HeadCount has come to feel like an internal extension of GameStop. “HeadCount is truly an extension to our store managers and field management,” says Donaldson. “When HeadCount talks to our store managers, you just get this feeling of retail people talking to retail people....Retail people who have really put in practice the methods they’re presenting. We view that as extremely positive,” he says.

Working with HeadCount, GameStop now has an operational dashboard that allows leaders to better understand how their business really works. “We’re using the operational dashboard and the education and coaching we get from HeadCount to drive net lift in our stores. It’s as simple as that. That’s what everybody’s looking for,” says Donaldson.

The next level of analysis will focus on enriching the traffic and conversion data with all kinds of other data to further understand fulfillment options that GameStop provides through digital channels. “What that’s really about is expanding our operational dashboard so we better understand how our omnichannel practices are working in our business,” says Donaldson.

“We couldn’t do that if we didn’t have inquisitive people to work with who have ideas about how to pursue that. HeadCount, as our partner, has those ideas. So, when we sit down and talk about measuring omnichannel results we are establishing direction together,” says Donaldson.

Making brick and mortar a digital channel is what you want to do -- and HeadCount is instrumental in doing that. To bridge across omnichannel, Donaldson says it is critical to be expansive in your thinking and consider what customers may be preferring in terms of fulfillment options as well as considering future trends and how you might need to change in order to provide those option.



He cautions that as retailers become more expansive in their thinking, they will discover they need more data. To deal with this requirement, GameStop built a data hub that includes traffic and conversion data, as well as other attributes of how the company interacts with the customer. Doing so means GameStop can experiment with new customer fulfillment options and measure how they drive actual conversion. According to Donaldson, the bottom line for solving these questions is you need to get an optimal baseline in place and then experiment by giving customers new options for converting.

“I wouldn’t say that we’ve cracked the code to omnichannel, but I would say that we’re at the safe, we’re spinning the dial and we’re hearing the tumblers fall into place,” says Donaldson. “We really feel like we’re on the right track.”

He says innovation is really all about what you discover on the never-ending journey of learning how your business operates and how customers interface with you. “To take that journey, you really have to work with a company like HeadCount and start having those discussions and start getting yourself down the road so that you are on the track to crack the code.”

HeadCount’s expertise and ‘white glove service’ make for the perfect partner on GameStop’s conversion journey.

Donaldson says having innovative, expansive conversations is one of the best things about working with HeadCount.

What really differentiates HeadCount from everybody else is the expertise and what Donaldson calls “the white glove service” that is truly unique in a market of what he calls “commoditization of service”.

“When you look at services from other companies you see expertise that is solely focused on collection of data and delivery of reports,” he says. With HeadCount, you get all the knowledge you need about traffic counter technology but that’s just the table stakes. The real value is the expertise, coaching, and innovation that comes on top of it.

“What I really like is that as we explore the topic of conversion and what drives conversion we can go on the journey together with HeadCount. We can have a discussion with conversion experts about what might be productive in terms of driving conversion in new ways,” he says. Donaldson says the difference with HeadCount is that you spend your money to get the commodity service but then you get all the expertise on top of it.

“The journey we are on at GameStop will never end. We’ll constantly be having conversations about what the next step is and we want a partner who is inquisitive and wants to pursue that. That’s HeadCount. It’s who they are.”



HeadCount is the leading authority on retail traffic and customer conversion analysis and the company’s Founder and CEO Mark Ryski has written two definitive books on the topic, the latest “*Conversion: the Last Great Retail Metric*”. For more information, please visit www.headcount.com.

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