



How the Everglades Association manages their stores more than their paperwork

Park Locations:

Everglades National Park
Dry Tortugas National Park
Biscayne National Park
Big Cypress National Preserve

Stores:

8 gift shops across 4 park locations

Profile:

The Everglades Association is the official private, non-profit partner supporting educational, interpretive, historical and scientific research responsibilities for four Florida parks.

The parks comprise more than 2.5 million acres and form a vital network in preserving the South Florida ecosystem. Since its inception in 1951, the Association has provided more than 2.5 million dollars in aid to the National Park Service areas of South Florida.

Website:

www.evergladesassociation.org

When every dollar earned supports the important programs of four cash-strapped national parks, it's critical to be on top of the details. In 2010 Jim Sutton, Executive Director of the Everglades Association, and Nikki Gomez, Business Manager, found it hard to keep up. They had 8 stores to manage across a wide geographic area and had to rely on cash register tapes and sporadic inventory counts to stay afloat.

Drowning in paperwork

"It's hard to run a business when you spend the first two weeks of every month trying to figure out what happened in the last month," said Gomez.

The Everglades Association staff had to manually reconcile register receipts from each store, track voids and returns, and determine how much sales tax to pay.

"We had two people working on this for 40 to 60 hours a month, not including all the time they spent travelling to each store, and one of our stores can only be reached by boat," added Sutton. "An 8 hour boat ride - each way!"

No inventory visibility

With only cash registers, the Everglades Association had to rely on sporadic manual inventory counts to figure out what to order.

"We had frequent stock outs, which means we lost sales," said Gomez. "And then sometimes we ordered way too much and tied up our cash flow with excess inventory." Without a point of sale system, the Everglades Association could not see what was selling or how much inventory each store had, so inventory planning was truly guesswork.

Charting a course

With so much time and effort being spent reporting on what had happened versus proactively managing the stores, Sutton decided a change in course was overdue.

He researched point of sale solutions from a number of providers and researched how other park associations were managing their stores. Sutton found that most of the solutions were too complex, too expensive and required too much maintenance. Plus, there were no guarantees the solutions would work for the Everglades Association's unique business needs.

Enter Mendelson Consulting

With critical dollars at stake, Sutton received a recommendation from a board member to check out Mendelson Consulting.

"We used to spend the first two weeks of every month just trying figure out what happened in the previous month. Now we know instantly how we're doing."

Nikki Gomez, Business Manager, Everglades Association

The Mendelson team spent time listening to the Everglades Association's staff and discussing their unique business needs.

"Every other group I spoke with left me with an iffy feeling and when I'm investing association money, I need certainty," said Sutton. "Mendelson knew exactly what they were talking about and I felt completely confident choosing them. Plus, the bid they put together was by far the most affordable."

The perfect solution for any park association

The Mendelson Consulting team installed and networked Intuit QuickBooks Point of Sale in all 8 locations to form one seamless point of sale system that rings up sales and manages inventory in each store.

"It's been amazing. I can instantly see what's selling, what's not and how much inventory I have in each store with just a few clicks," said Gomez. "Instead of trying to decipher what happened, I can now plan for the business and be ahead of the curve."

Stock-outs are a thing of the past. With each sale, inventory counts are automatically adjusted and QuickBooks Point of Sale monitors re-order points so Gomez knows when to reorder and how much. She can even transfer inventory from one store to another quickly and easily.

Sales tax reporting used to involve staff spending days weeding through paper receipts and reports and now it's instant. QuickBooks Point of Sale applies the correct sales tax to each item and keeps a running total of taxes owed, so the

Association simply files a report and cuts a check in minutes.

Store management and accounting in a single solution

The solution Mendelson Consulting designed included Intuit QuickBooks Enterprise Solutions to add full accounting capabilities.

"We use QuickBooks Point of Sale to manage the stores and inventory, and Enterprise Solutions to pay bills and create financials statements and reports," said Sutton. "Mendelson set the whole thing up for us and it's perfectly integrated and easy to use."

All sales transactions automatically sync with Enterprise Solutions so the Association can monitor sales, expenses and the bottom line in one system.

Our highest Recommendation

"This was one of the best decisions we've ever made. I would recommend this system and Mendelson Consulting to any park association," said Sutton.

"We had three ladies with no computer experience and one didn't know what a mouse was—they all picked it up very quickly," added Gomez. "This system is amazing."

MENDELSON CONSULTING

A consultant's job is to ensure a good fit between vendor product and client need.

Mendelson Consulting was founded in January 1992 to help small and medium-sized businesses find the right computer information solutions.

The solutions started with accounting software training and support, and soon expanded to include the design, installation, and support of computer information network systems.

The Mendelson Consulting team is led by Mario Nowogrodzki, CPA/CITP, a leading figure in the national QuickBooks scene—a presenter and writer of technical material for consultants and end-users.

Mendelson Consulting is committed to and ready for the continuous challenges of today's information technology environment. Business continuity, security, and internal controls are paramount as we implement solutions.



Mendelson Consulting is a certified Intuit Solution Provider

Mendelson Consulting can design a custom solution for your park association anywhere in the U.S. Contact us today to learn more.