

# Sears Holdings Corp.

*Driving Home Delivery Excellence with Descartes*

Sears Holdings Corporation is a leading integrated retailer, delivering merchandise through an extensive distribution network across the U.S. The company's outdated in-house routing system was impacting its ability to meet its members' home delivery expectations. With the aim of increasing customer satisfaction in the last mile, Sears deployed the cloud-based Descartes route planning and execution solution to optimize logistics efficiencies, improve visibility into and control of delivery operations, and ensure delivery commitments are met.

## The Challenge: Delivering the 'WOW'

Driven by the goal of creating a 'WOW' home delivery experience for its members, Sears strives to ensure efficient, on-time delivery. But with complex routing demands and an outdated routing system, the company struggled to balance accurate delivery time commitments with operational efficiency in its distribution network. The retailer's traditional batch model of routing was compromising its flexibility, productivity, and responsiveness. To enhance the movement of high volumes of merchandise through a network of 106 delivery hubs across the U.S., Sears required modern route planning and execution software that optimized route scheduling to increase operational efficiency and improve the member experience.

## The Solution: Elevating the Customer Experience with Route Optimization

Sears tackled its operational inefficiencies and customer service challenges by moving to a centralized, cloud-based home delivery solution. The integrated system includes Descartes Reservations™ for delivery appointment scheduling; Descartes Route Planner™ for route optimization, dispatch and tracking; Descartes Mobile™ for wireless communications and mobile applications; and Descartes Notifications™ for automated call-outs.

In a rapid rollout over just 6 months, Sears deployed the Descartes solution across its network of 106 delivery hubs. The backbone of the company's delivery operations is Descartes Route Planner, a GPS-based fleet tracking and route optimization solution that improves Sears' operational efficiency through better route scheduling and greater visibility into its fleet activities during the day.

"Before Descartes, we had an outdated in-house routing system that used old mapping technology and had limited resource capability. The biggest problem was batch jobs. Every day our last orders came in at 3:30 p.m., and our team had to quickly develop the routing solutions before 6:00 p.m. It was a one-time shot at getting the routes right," explained Joe Macro, Director of Logistics and Planning, Sears.

## SEARS HOLDINGS

“ We were looking for a way to alleviate the pain points of our members. We chose the Descartes home delivery solution because of its innovative approach and comprehensive capabilities from delivery appointment scheduling right through to mobile-enabled proof-of-delivery. When you combine these with flexibility and ease of use, it's a pretty powerful statement. ”

– Kris Eyunni, VP Supply Chain,  
Home Delivery Distribution, Sears

## SEARS HOLDINGS CORPORATION

Sears Holdings Corporation is a leading integrated retailer focused on seamlessly connecting the digital and physical shopping experiences to serve its members—wherever, whenever, and however they want to shop. The company operates through its subsidiaries, including Sears, Roebuck and Co. and Kmart Corporation, with full-line and specialty retail stores across the U.S.

Replacing its traditional batch model with the 'always on' Descartes system, Sears' route optimization now begins immediately after the order is placed and continues through delivery. As each new order is received, the vehicle route planning schedule is updated in real-time to reallocate mobile fleet resources. The Descartes solution helps Sears increase operational efficiency and enables accurate delivery time commitments, while driving peak fleet performance with continuous optimization.

“ We chose Descartes at Sears because of the need for our customers to have very accurate promises as to when they get their deliveries, and our need to drive efficiency in our network in how we meet those commitments to our customers.”

– Bill Hutchinson, SVP Supply Chain, Sears.

Prior to choosing a software platform, Sears conducted a focus group to ascertain the pain points of its customers. “The biggest pain point of our members when it comes to home delivery is: ‘Where is my delivery driver?’” noted Kris Eyunni, VP Supply Chain at Sears. The Descartes solution addressed this by helping Sears communicate transparently with customers and provide consistent on-time delivery. When members request home delivery appointments, Descartes' optimized appointment booking engine matches available resources and delivery windows to customer requests. In addition to dynamic booking, automated notifications via e-mail, web, SMS, or phone ensure members are kept apprised of delivery details as they unfold.

“The main goal of the Member Experience Office is owning same-day resolution and ensuring our members receive a ‘WOW’ home delivery experience,” said Catherina Taylor, Manager of Sears' Member Experience Office, South Region.

With real-time updates and the flexibility to visually observe how delivery teams are performing on the road, the Descartes home delivery solution improves control of day-to-day route planning and execution. Dispatchers can see what's happening in real-time—the route, the sequence of stops, where each driver is on their route—and communicate with drivers to re-sequence deliveries based on current circumstances, such as a change to customer availability.

“Because we're working with a live real-time system, we're able to make adjustments and see those changes reflected in the routes right away. If needed, we can adjust to issues like weather, change dock departs, follow those responses, and have the routes updated immediately,” explained Christina Gross, Sacramento Routing Office Manager, Sears. “In utilizing the real-time data provided by the Descartes system, we are able to align customer expectations with our route planning; we can customize the routes to reflect the different quality types and merchandise types of customers.”

Macro added, “The software allows us to see in real-time the number of trucks we're using so we're able to better manage our capacity in each unit. Instead of having to guess if we've used up the capacity in a truck, we can go into the system and actually see how much time is left on each truck, and how many trucks are available. This allows us to make better promises, and more promises, to our members—which is our goal.”

## The Results

### 'Wow' Customer Experience



The Descartes home delivery solution empowers members with dynamic appointment booking and automated order notification. With centralized, efficient route planning and execution software that optimizes route scheduling, Sears can confidently make and keep delivery promises to its members.

### Greater Control



The Descartes solution helps Sears improve control over route planning and day-to-day route execution. Sears now easily manages the entire delivery lifecycle, from appointment scheduling to route planning, execution and dispatch to GPS-enabled mobile tracking, to delivery status notifications and gathering proof-of-delivery.

### Increased Productivity



With real-time incremental route optimization, a GPS-based fleet tracking system, and enhanced fleet capacity utilization, the Descartes solution dramatically increases driver productivity and the overall operational efficiency of Sears' home delivery service.

### Improved Visibility



The integrated route planning and mobility software ensures visibility throughout nationwide delivery operations. Sears monitors delivery status and driver movement in real-time to optimize route scheduling on-the-fly and evaluate drivers' on-road performance.