



Headquartered in Richmond Hill, Ontario, Staples Canada and has more than 14,000 employees and over 330 stores nation-wide. The retailer makes it easy for businesses to make more happen through its world-class retail, online and delivery capabilities.

**Staples Canada's new traffic and conversion program is driving outcomes that are absolutely core to its operation.** The new program, recently launched with HeadCount, goes well beyond top-line sales. It is really an evolution of customer satisfaction according to Lindsay Gillians, Manager of Retail Customer Experience Solutions, Communications & Services Operations.



**Lindsay Gillians**

Manager, Retail Customer Experience Solutions, Communications & Services Operations

For years she had been looking for a credible way to correlate customer satisfaction to sales. Customer experience is at the center of Staples' conversion program and Gillians was looking for a partner who would be just as committed to understanding how the 'Voice of Customer' data supports sales conversion as Staples is. She was looking for a partner who would embrace the Staples culture, could adapt what she was training at store level and integrate into the Staples' system overall. "I needed my partner to be able to echo our business culture and really help me to teach," she says.

"I looked at a lot of options – and being just as engaged and committed to achieving results as we are, HeadCount is the right partner," Gillians says. "HeadCount works as an extension of Staples and that's been loud and clear from day one." Having a lean operation, Gillians says HeadCount offers something that has proven to be absolutely key to the success of her program, yet isn't available from any other vendors – it's called Talk Traffic®.

**What TalkTraffic has been able to do beyond a shadow of a doubt is re-establish trust in data integrity.** For Staples, data integrity is critical. Data issues create disbelief and cause field managers to doubt the entire program. "If you see huge swings in data, instead of asking questions, managers will disengage," says Gillians. "If that happened I knew I would lose buy-in and the entire program would lose traction." She says her field managers trust the data and that is a critical benefit of working with HeadCount.

For Gillians the quality of support she gets from her partnership with HeadCount is the biggest advantage. “I can’t emphasize enough that I wanted a real partnership with my vendor. When I roll a program out, I’m not looking to do it for only six months or even one year. I’m looking to ingrain that program into the culture of our organization, she says. “HeadCount was able to offer me that with TalkTraffic, and through their engagement with me and my field leaders on a day-to-day basis.”

**HeadCount not only helped overcome the stigma of a previous traffic and conversion program, but they helped ingrain it throughout the organization.** “They are helping me really shift the focus from conversion being considered just a number to making it an important part of our culture. That really is what HeadCount brought to the table for me,” she says. “I doubt I would be so far down our evolutionary track with traffic and conversion, without HeadCount,” says Gillians. “I believe in their



theories, their principles, and their research – and I believe in what Mark writes in his books. And now my leaders across the country believe in it too.”

She says when the team at HeadCount talks about what they believe the benefits to traffic and conversion are; you can’t help but get excited about it. “HeadCount is passionate about what they do and it’s infectious. And it wasn’t just for me, but also for my managers across the country.”

“When Staples leaders participate in Talk Traffic sessions they walk away thinking ‘this is something that could change my store, change my operation and this is something that will drive sales’. You get that from the people leading the show...truthfully,” she says.



**TalkTraffic**

**HeadCount’s traffic and conversion program had an immediate impact on store managers and topline sales.** Sustaining that impact is where Talk Traffic comes in.

Gillians says Talk Traffic really makes HeadCount stand out in the industry. It drives the right behavior and reinforces key messages. Talk Traffic’s coaching has been a big benefit for Gillians, for district and general managers, and the 21 conversion Program Champions across the country.

Accurate conversion data brings insight, says Gillians. “If you don’t share what you’ve tried, you’re not leveraging the knowledge.” She credits the power of these insights to half the program’s success – insights quickly and easily shared via Talk Traffic throughout the country. “Our stores have a very tangible view of how we can grow sales.”

**To help reinforce the importance of conversion as key to Staples’ success, Gillian recently launched the HeadCount Performance Awards.** In April 2014, four Staples general managers from across the country were rewarded for their performance improvement already demonstrated in just six weeks after launch.

Gillians credits their performance improvement to embracing their new tools, sharing best practices and the customized reporting – all received from the HeadCount program. “Showcasing these winners is something to celebrate and the awards, presented in person by HeadCount, were very well received by my team. It underscored that HeadCount and Staples really are in it together.” she says.

The awards measured sales conversion performance between the first six weeks of the fiscal year with the second six weeks after the HeadCount program was launched.

Gillians was impressed not only that there were performance improvements in such a short time, but that HeadCount could actually launch the program as fast as they did. “When I started speaking to HeadCount, we had very little time to spare and it was really important to me that I have this program rolled out within two months. HeadCount did that – in fact, with the majority of stores, we did it in six weeks.” The process was quick and painless even though all the equipment had to be switched out. “That was fabulous and not what we were used to,” she says. HeadCount handled all the logistics of the sensor installs directly which she says was fantastic. In short order, HeadCount also had a benchmark established from the data to help understand where the previous gaps were when data integrity was an issue. “They made sure that the data at every individual location was valid and that the reporting was captured in Staples’ voice,” she says.



Gillians says she would highly recommend HeadCount because they are passionate about what they do and are truly open and flexible in their approach to the partnership. She believes that their approach to traffic and conversion programs and the unique services the company offers will only become more important, even as the industry becomes more omni-channel centric and more customers shift from retail to buying online.

“While customer shopping preferences evolve, are you maximizing the traffic in your store today? How many opportunities are you missing? How many dollars are you allowing to walk out of your store?” she says. “Traffic counting is, in my opinion, going to be critical to understanding what’s happening in the store.” For Staples, she feels HeadCount has proven to be the ideal partner for tackling conversion challenges with data integrity and applauds their passion, leadership, and commitment to her program.

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HeadCount is the leading authority on retail traffic and 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](http://www.headcount.com).

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