



*"The flexibility of FileMaker in our three locations, and now out in the field with FileMaker Go on our iPads, is key to our growth and success."*

*– Steven Meyer, Owner/C.I.O.*

## Jewelry Company Replaces Legacy Software with Flexible FileMaker Solution

### Background

Like most successful businesses, costume jewelry importer [Rainbow Sales](#) has had to evolve and adapt to some dramatic shifts in the business climate over its 30+ years of existence. Starting out as a wholesaler back in 1981, it morphed into a manufacturing operation for some time before settling into its current main focus as an importer. The Elkins Park, PA, company now procures its entire product line from Asia to a Rhode Island facility for distribution and shipping.

Changes in the business demanded frequent changes to the ways in which data were managed, so early on the company chose a database platform that could (1) work in a primarily Macintosh environment and (2) be easily customizable to keep up with changing processes and workflow. This original system stayed in place for almost 20 years, a remarkable track record given how the typical lifespan for such systems is between 5 and 10 years.

### Challenge

Rainbow was initially introduced to [IT Solutions](#) back in 2000 when they required some Mac setup and support work. Since that time, several conversations were had regarding ITS' custom programming capabilities. Because the original system was still highly familiar and accessible to the Rainbow team, and completely customized the way the company needed it, the benefits of ITS building a replacement solution were outweighed by the costs of such a project. In 2009, Rainbow learned that the software it was using was not going to work on the latest Mac operating system, so the company had no choice but to move ahead with a new system on a more modern platform.

While the decision to move away from the existing solution was straightforward, the obstacles for a smooth transition were rather complex. Aside from 20 years of customization and no code that could be repurposed, other hurdles included:

- The project would amount to close to one year of work for the chosen vendor. But because cutover from the previous system would have to be handled as a fully deployed application, the project couldn't be segmented into phases and introduced gradually into the company.
- The existing solution was fairly unique in that it was keyboard-centric, so that the primary users of the system could do "heads-down" data entry without looking at the screen. Therefore the system would have to be designed accordingly.
- Despite the knowledge that the end was inevitable for the previous system, learning a whole new platform and having trust that it would be available for the long haul was a viable concern that had to be overcome.
- The company's accounting software, QuickBooks, would continue to be used. Integrating with it was preferred to replacing it.

### Solution

With IT Solutions' 15 years of success building and supporting custom systems in FileMaker, and having worked with ITS on the network support side, Rainbow was familiar with capabilities and personnel. The fact that ITS had completed numerous similar projects, including QuickBooks integration, for other local companies was enough to convince Rainbow that they were moving forward with the right firm.

While the recommended solution involved over 900 hours of development and an extensive commitment in time and cost for Rainbow, it was clear from the up-front discovery process that, when completed, the system would give them everything the previous system had provided, plus a huge upside in new functionality, long-term stability, and customization capabilities. Through the Agile process that ITS uses for all development projects, Rainbow stakeholders were intimately involved in the planning and rollout of the entire system. This deep connection to the process ensured that the system covered every requirement and that the final product left no surprises or “loose ends.”

Integration with QuickBooks, bar code scanning, EDI, and an automated batch order process for one of Rainbow’s largest clients, Disney Parks, made for a comprehensive package that eliminated dual entry, improving the accuracy of data and the speed at which it could be entered and accessed. Since project completion, Rainbow has been able to do some integration with the Apple iPad via [FileMaker Go](#), allowing access to critical data for the owners from outside the office at any time.

“We needed a database that could grow and adapt to our customers’ ever-changing requirements,” said primary client contact Steven Meyer, Chief Information Officer for Rainbow Sales. “The flexibility of FileMaker in our three locations, and now out in the field with FileMaker Go on our iPads, is key to our growth and success.”

## **Return**

By choosing IT Solutions to design and develop its business management software on the highly flexible FileMaker platform, Rainbow expects to remain competitive through many more changes in the business climate in the years, or possibly decades, ahead.