Flow:

Secure Merchant Account: Hamp Crafts utilizes a local secure merchant account to handle all their transactions. This account is responsible for collecting payments from customers who make in-store purchases. Payments are typically made through credit/debit cards or other electronic payment methods.

Funds Transfer: Once a customer makes a purchase in-store, the transaction funds are collected through the secure merchant account. These funds are then transferred to the company's primary business account within two business days. This process ensures that the revenue generated from in-store sales is securely deposited into the company's financial account.

Inventory Management: Employees at Hamp Crafts are responsible for managing the inventory of items available in the physical store. They regularly check the inventory system to monitor stock levels, track sales, and identify which items need restocking. This helps ensure that the store always has an adequate supply of products to meet customer demand.

Order Processing: Orders placed by customers in the brick-and-mortar store are processed in-house. This typically involves the employees retrieving the ordered items from the store shelves and preparing them for checkout. The order fulfillment team ensures that the correct items are packed and ready for the customer.

Inventory Shortages and Communication: If a potential shortage of a particular item occurs in the physical store, communication regarding this shortage is handled manually. Employees or inventory specialists may notify the management team or procurement personnel about the shortage so that they can take appropriate action, such as ordering more stock.

Order Status and Shipment Tracking: The inventory specialist and order fulfillment team are responsible for inputting information into the local database regarding the status of each order. This includes updating the database with information about which orders have been processed, which are pending, and which have been shipped. Tracking of shipments is also managed through this database, allowing the company to provide customers with delivery status updates.

Integrations:

Online Ordering and Payment Processing:

Online Catalog: Create a user-friendly online catalog that allows customers to browse and view products. This catalog should include detailed product descriptions, images, prices, and availability status.

Shopping Cart: Implement a shopping cart system that enables customers to add products to their cart, review their selections, and proceed to checkout.

Online Checkout: Develop a secure online checkout process where customers can enter their shipping information, payment details, and review their order before confirming the purchase.

Payment Gateway Integration: Integrate a payment gateway that securely processes online payments. This gateway should support various payment methods such as credit/debit cards, digital wallets, and possibly other local payment options.

Order Confirmation: Automatically generate order confirmation emails to customers once their orders are successfully placed. These emails should include order details and an estimated delivery date.

Inventory Management:

Real-Time Inventory Sync: Implement a real-time synchronization system between the online storefront and the physical store's inventory. This ensures that product availability is accurately reflected on the website, preventing overselling or displaying out-of-stock items.

Communication and Notifications:

Inventory Alerts: Set up automated alerts that notify staff when inventory levels for specific products fall below a certain threshold. This helps in timely reordering and preventing stockouts.

Order Status Updates: Provide customers with real-time order status updates through email notifications or a user account dashboard. This includes notifications for order confirmation, shipment tracking, and delivery status.

Administrative Backend:

Customer Support: Create an administrative backend that allows customer support representatives to access order information, resolve customer inquiries, and process returns or refunds.

Customer Data Management: Implement a customer database to store customer information securely. This includes names, addresses, contact details, order history, and preferences.

Website Management: Enable website administrators to update product listings, prices, and descriptions easily. This ensures that the online catalog remains up-to-date.

Order Processing: Provide a user-friendly interface for order processing and fulfillment, allowing employees to manage online orders efficiently alongside in-store purchases.

Reporting and Analytics:

Sales Reporting: Create a reporting system that tracks online sales performance, popular products, and customer behavior. This data can help in making informed business decisions.

Database Requirements:

Product Database: You will need a database to store detailed information about each product, including product ID, name, description, price, availability status, and images.

Inventory Database: To support real-time inventory synchronization, a separate database should track the current stock levels for each product.

Customer Database: Store customer information securely, including personal details and order history.

Order Database: Maintain a database to record order information, including order ID, product details, customer information, payment status, and shipping details.

Payment Transaction Database: Keep a record of all payment transactions for auditing and reconciliation purposes.

Recommendation:

I would recommend incorporating elements of the online storefront into the current process model rather than creating a completely separate new system.

Streamlined Operations: By integrating the online storefront with the current process model, you can streamline operations and reduce redundancy. This approach allows you to leverage existing processes and resources, such as inventory management and order fulfillment, which are already well-established in the brick-and-mortar store.

Consistency: Maintaining a consistent process model for both in-store and online sales ensures a unified customer experience. Customers should receive the same level of service, regardless of whether they shop in person or online. This consistency can help build trust and brand loyalty.