



RETAIL FURNITURE

One of the largest home furnishings retailers in the United States ran into a problem with creating and displaying in-store signage designed to highlight product feature, announce sales and special pricing, and make customers aware of inventory items that complement on-the-floor merchandise. The problem stemmed from a poor information flow from the corporate office to the 128 stores around the country.

In the past, the furniture outlets printed their signs from a batch sent once a day. This process caused problems because the store associates were unable to print only the signs they needed. Instead, they had to print the entire batch of signs when they only needed one or two. In addition, the content and price data were kept separately from the item master file, often causing discrepancies between the price on the sign and the price that rang up at the cash register. And, finally, the process delayed the timely display of signs, leaving shoppers without the most current information about prices and feature. Because batches were sent to stores only once per day, often after the stores were closed, a two-day lag between a decision to change prices and the display of new signage was not uncommon.

The solution was a combination of a software product that delivers on-demand sign printing capabilities to each of the stores via the Web, and a Cognitive Blaster Advantage 4" direct thermal printer. With these two items, store associates were able to use any Internet-connected PC to print product and tabletop signs, fact tags, and other kinds of promotional signage. Since design consistency and sign accuracy were two of the most important considerations for the home furniture store, corporate-branded templates, autoformatting features, and real-time connections to the company's database of price and product information ensured that affiliates communicate with customers in a uniform way, while editing capabilities allow some content choices at each store location. Now the entire network of stores can be outfitted with consistent, always-accurate, great-looking signage.