

Department Store Chain Simplifies & Streamlines Graphics and Signage Process



BUSINESS SEGMENT

Retail

PRODUCT

Mono and Color Single and Multifunction Printers

CHALLENGE

- Improve operating efficiencies of mega-location store network
- Simplify and streamline the signage and graphics process
- Enhance employee productivity
- Expand distribution network without compromising graphics process and timely delivery of materials

SOLUTION

- Developed a customized signage and graphics management solutions system
- Achieved cost efficiencies through reduced training hours and on-demand print capabilities
- Implemented Managed Print Services programs to reduce output cost and increase workflow efficiencies

CUSTOMER PROFILE

The company is a national department store chain that offers current quality designer merchandise at discount prices. It features coats, apparel, shoes and accessories for the entire family, furniture, toys, home décor items and gifts. The national department store chain operates hundreds of stores across the United States and Puerto Rico, all requiring in-store promotional and pricing signage.

THE CHALLENGE

The company managed all of its store signage utilizing a proprietary web portal that was no longer meeting the needs of the marketing/merchandise group. With the continuing growth of the company and the increasing number of stores, it needed to upgrade to a more sophisticated system that could improve overall efficiencies in the retail stores and corporate center and would create a more simplified and streamlined graphics process.

On the corporate side, the graphics group was managing more than 1,000 sign files, with no easy way to limit availability based on timing or access. The group would create sign files but would often save them in incorrect formats and on individual PCs, which would eventually get lost or deleted. Since there was a lack of a system to organize these sign files, the libraries became very large and time consuming to sort through. Additionally, removal of the outdated sign files was a manual process for each of the graphics managers.

Printing at the store level was time consuming and often frustrating, with store personnel having to select and print each sign individually. This process caused delays, frequent errors and aggravation for store personnel and led to inaccurate promotional signs and a decrease in employee productivity. It was also very slow; primarily due to the way the system processed the TIFF files from the web portal to printable files on the local Linux PC.

There was too much time spent training employees on how to print various paper sizes and media settings, and store personnel had difficulty locating the proper sign files to print due to the open access to all the files and the lack of a logical file library from corporate. Quite often, store personnel would call corporate to ask where a specific sign file was located on the web portal.

THE SOLUTION

After evaluating and monitoring the company's day-to-day business, OKI was able to better understand its graphics needs. To address the gaps and operational concerns, OKI worked hand-in-hand with the company's graphics and IT teams to develop a customized, proprietary sign management tool solution to improve the overall graphics process. This final software solution addressed their specific needs and worked as its solution for three different sign sizes for all sale callouts, included the company's logo and minimized color usage which helped to reduce overall costs.

The company's in-store sign management tool and print capabilities helped transform the signage process into a more efficient one. The company can now act quickly to introduce new products or promotions, eliminate locally created, produced or handwritten signs, uphold brand integrity and ensure that everything is electronically distributed where it needs to go and printed properly. These solutions save the company time to make, retrieve and print signs, both at the corporate and store level.

Based on the success of the sign management tool, the company then consolidated its store printers and deployed a combination of OKI mono single and multifunction printers for its stores. Additionally, the company requested to change its service contract to Total Managed Print from OKI, a comprehensive Managed Print Services offering designed to significantly reduce annual document output cost and increase company's workflow efficiencies. OKI completed a total fleet takeover of all the company's retail stores and corporate printers for all OKI and competitive models providing service and consumables to all locations. The program includes custom service delivery, remote printer monitoring, support for first-line Help Desk service calls, cost-per-page options, consumables delivery and on-site service. In addition, OKI provides full IT support and engineering resources.



The MC573dn color multifunction printer is one of the many durable printers offered in OKI's retail packages, which include custom print solution software and capabilities tailored to the retail industry.

At the corporate level, the graphics group is able to continue its PDF workflow through Adobe® Illustrator®, which eliminates the need to convert files, leading to significantly smaller size files. Three features in particular – Time-based Promotions, Merchandising Categories and Store Groups – allow the graphics group to fully manage the large volume of sign files in the system.

At the store level, the printing process is now significantly improved and simplified. The sign management tool sends the files directly to the printer, which avoids any processing on the local PC. Additionally, driverless printing automatically handles print settings, such as custom paper size or heavy media, so there is no need for store personnel to learn how to set up special settings; they simply hit "print." As a result of the customized signage solution, employees spend more time being productive and less time printing.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the national retailer has been given the simple tools to effectively organize its sign files, save on printing costs and better manage the graphics process across its operation in order to achieve workflow flexibility and efficiency. The company now has the capability to direct promotions to a specific group of stores or regions, and whether regionally or nationally, implement these promotions in minutes. [LEARN MORE >](#)



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