Large Format Specialty Retailer Launches Digital Signage to Boost Sales of Accessories and Services

A Cisco end-to-end customer, this retailer is handling content creation and management of their digital media system in-house and working closely with Cisco to address a variety of requirements.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
LARGE FORMAT SPECIALTY RETAILER • 1,100 stores in the U.S. and Canada • 40,000 employees
BUSINESS CHALLENGE • Enhance sales of accessories and services in stores • Pilot digital media system, creating content in-house in a variety of formats that can be customized for individual screens throughout each store and each city and region • Demonstrate a return on investment with digital signage
NETWORK SOLUTION • Cisco Digital Media System for Retail • Cisco Academy of Digital Signage Training
BUSINESS RESULTS • Launched Cisco digital signage pilot in five stores • Attended Cisco Academy of Digital Signage training to learn about the strategy, creation, deployment, and management of digital in-store media • Team using new content creation skills to create compelling digital signage in stores

Business Challenge

This large format specialty retailer has grown dramatically since the early 1990s by providing a range of products and services that are of high quality and competitively priced. The company has a network dominated by Cisco solutions that includes Cisco 6500 Series switches in the core and Cisco 3560 Series switches and Cisco 2811 Series Integrated Services Routers in each store, providing point of sale stations with Payment Card Industry (PCI) Data Security Standard (DSS) transaction compliance. The stores also have Cisco Aironet 1130 Series access points and wired and wireless Cisco IP Phones. Cisco Unified Communications Manager provides unified communications services to both the stores and the corporate offices.

With such a significant Cisco infrastructure, the company is committed, where possible, to adding applications that can be integrated into the IP network for greater efficiency and cost effectiveness. The Cisco Digital Media System (DMS) is therefore being evaluated as a digital signage solution for the stores. Digital signage is being tested because the company believes that by better educating customers about the range of products and services available in each store, sales will increase.

Network Solution

Five stores in different parts of the United States were selected for a Cisco DMS pilot that began in May 2009 and will end in October 2009. The deployment included a Cisco Digital Media Manager headend system in the corporate data center and in each store a Cisco Digital Media Player 4400G and five Cisco LCD digital media screens.

"The main goal is to see how effective digital signage can be in directing customers to certain high-end accessories and services," says the Cisco account manager, who notes that services are the company's highest growth area.

Unlike many other retailers today that use specialty advertising agencies to develop content and operate in-store digital media, the store chain is creating their own content. A team from the

marketing department attended the Cisco Academy of Digital Signage, a content strategy and design workshop that is presented by a special group of Cisco experts called the Cisco Digital Media Creative Services team. They help Cisco customers with the strategy, design, creation, and deployment of digital content.

How does Cisco define an engaging visual experience? We believe it must be:

- Intuitive (to appeal to the viewer's innate sensibilities)
- Intelligent (with messaging that is practical, relevant, and timely)
- Creative (to appeal to the viewer's imagination through its design and originality)

Along with guidelines for content, the training introduced the store marketing team to how to forge a strategy for using the designated displays, looking at factors such as size, resolution, aspect ratio, connectivity and audio needs, and control features. Additional training highlighted how to build a display schedule considering dayparting (dividing broadcasting into parts throughout the day), looping content requirements, and the sequence of the content.

Business Results

"The customer is working very closely with us with our ongoing development of Cisco DMS to ensure that they can smoothly use a variety of different formats, including Flash, video, and static content," says the account manager. "They also want the flexibility to customize what is played on each individual screen in each store, based on what is in each aisle and by city and region."

Although the pilot is still in progress, the Cisco account manager is confident that the Cisco DMS will deliver a significant return on investment compared to not having digital media in the stores and that it will beat competitive solutions not integrated into the IP network.

"The customer has a high degree of loyalty for and trust in Cisco," says the account manager. "They know they'll receive excellent support, great financing options, and fast shipping. But the biggest benefit is that Cisco DMS doesn't require a separate network. It's IP all the way, easily deployed, is easily supported, and can be used for additional applications in the future, such as video surveillance and training, with only incremental additional costs."

PRODUCT LIST

Digital Media
- Cisco Digital Media Player 4400G
- Cisco Digital Media Manager
- Cisco LCD 100 PRO 40N, 40-inch screens

Routing and Switching
- Cisco Catalyst 6500, 3560 Series switches
- Cisco 2811 Series Integrated Services Routers

Voice and Unified Communications
- Cisco wired and wireless IP Phones
- Cisco Unified Communications Manager Express
- Cisco Unified Communications Manager Enterprise

Wireless
- Cisco Aironet 1130 AG Series access points

For More Information

To find out more about Cisco Solutions for Retail, go to:
https://www.cisco.com/web/strategy/retail/index.html