



# *IBM Network Station rings up sales for leading furniture retailer.*

Value City Furniture is one of the country's largest furniture retailers, with stores throughout the Eastern U.S. and headquarters in Columbus, Ohio. The privately-held company prides itself on being an industry leader by offering one of the largest selections and best values on top-quality, name brand furniture and accessories at the guaranteed lowest prices. Value City is also a leader in heading the charge to establish network computing at the point-of-sale. The company recently switched from using in-store terminals to IBM Network Station™ Series 300 and Series 1000 network computers to handle retail and customer credit transactions at several of its stores.

The Network Stations, which are connected to in-store AS/400® servers, give users access to a wide range of applications for managing point-of-sale, inventory, general ledger, sales analysis, sales commissions, and more. Following its initial installations, Value City expects to place approximately 15 Network Stations in each of its 66 stores.

## **Design of the future**

Value City sees the Network Station as an important part of the evolution of its retail stores. Right now, Value City is rewriting many of its existing applications to make them more modular, graphical and easy

to use — something the company couldn't even consider with dumb terminals. Says Jerry Kerr, CIO at Value City Furniture: "The Network Station is perfect for us. It gives users access to all of our text-based applications today while accommodating the GUI and Java™ direction we are moving toward for tomorrow."

Beyond enhancing existing applications, Kerr says, the Network Station is likely to stimulate entirely new applications. "Image-based training is one area we are looking at," he says. "With the Network Station, we can develop computer-based

<b>Application</b>	Retail point-of-sale terminal
<b>Hardware</b>	IBM Network Station, IBM AS/400
<b>Software</b>	Custom-developed business applications, Network Station Manager, Lotus Notes and Domino





*The IBM Network Station helps Value City managers check sales information.*

training programs that let users learn on the same systems they will eventually use. Another possibility is an in-store customer satisfaction terminal "where customers can comment on our service."

Kerr also likes network computing because it provides convenient access to the company's intranet and vendor extranets, while opening the door to furniture sales via the Internet. Someday, perhaps, salespeople will walk around with handheld devices, communicating sales information to a Network Station POS terminal over a wireless in-store LAN.

"There are so many possibilities," Kerr says, "We just see the Network Station as a smart buy for the future."

### **Easy to live with**

As it updates its POS terminals to IBM Network Stations, Value City is also upgrading many in-store servers from an RS/6000™ to the latest IBM AS/400e business systems. The reason, according to Kerr, is to take advantage of the wealth of AS/400 business applications, and because the company's IT staff was more conversant with AS/400 technology.

Kerr says he decided against using PCs as POS terminals with the new servers because "PCs are a big problem to update and support." He points out that updating individual systems is a hassle because virtually all of Value City's software is custom-developed and is "tweaked"

several times a month. "With the Network Station," he says, "I do one software update at the server and everybody is up to the same level at once."

In addition, the Network Station will reduce support costs by providing a standardized hardware platform that's easier to maintain than numerous PCs, according to Kerr. "When you get a lot of units out there, serviceability is an issue," he says. "The Network Station is practically service-free and very easy to attach to the network."

### **Staying competitive**

Kerr says technology is important to keeping his business competitive. Along with the need for EDI, Web-based commerce and e-business, he notes that the stores' owners are always looking for ways to get more and better sales and marketing information. "Because the Network Station makes it so easy to capture sales information at the front end," Kerr says, "We can provide better business analysis and planning information at the back end."

Value City is also giving Lotus Notes® and Domino™ a central role in the business for everything from e-mail and in-store training to hosting product knowledge bases and planograms (graphic depictions of store layouts). "We plan to become paperless," Kerr says, "and the Network Station helps. You can design Notes applications for it easily, and it is extremely user friendly."

### **For more information**

To find out more about how network computing with the IBM Network Station and the IBM family of servers can help you make the most of your business opportunities, call 1 800 IBM-7080, in North America. Outside North America, call 416 383-5152. Or contact your IBM Business Partner or local IBM representative.

If you have access to the Internet, you can find additional Network Station information via the World Wide Web at [www.ibm.com/inc](http://www.ibm.com/inc).



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