



## *Camera retailer gets a clear picture of low-cost computing with IBM Network Station*

Wolf Camera & Video is one of the nation's largest and fastest-growing photo and video retailers. Headquartered in Atlanta, GA, the company owns and operates more than 300 retail stores in sixteen states, primarily in the South.

Despite the emergence of one-hour photo processing facilities in supermarkets and drugstores throughout the country, Wolf has maintained steadily increasing sales over its more than 23-year history. The company attributes its success to outstanding customer service, knowledgeable staff and fast turnaround times.

To keep pace with the larger inventory and shipping demands that have accompanied its growth, Wolf recently moved its corporate office and distribution center into a larger facility in North Atlanta. And to provide users at the new facility with fast access to a merchandise management application running on the AS/400 at Wolf's headquarters, the company is using the IBM Network Station network computer.

### **Financially attractive**

According to Stan Simpson, Systems Administrator at Wolf Camera, the Network Station met the company's needs precisely, offering an unbeatable combination of low cost, high performance and outstanding ease of use.

Previously, Wolf Camera ran its distribution operations on older PCs with 5250 emulation cards and twinaxial connections to the AS/400. But with the new facility, the company was moving to high-performance Ethernet over TCP/IP connections, and the existing computers were no longer worth upgrading.

"We knew we had to replace the PCs with something," Simpson says. "But our primary applications are 5250-based AS/400 screens, and we don't need new Pentiums to process that data."

<b>Application</b>	Desktop PC replacement, access to IBM AS/400 applications at a remote site, local print services
<b>Hardware</b>	IBM Network Station, IBM AS/400
<b>Software</b>	Third-party merchandise management application, IBM Network Station Manager, IBM Network Station Browser





After seeing a demonstration of the Network Station, Simpson and his manager, Chris Hutton, had found their solution. "The Network Station had everything we needed," he says. "It gave us 5250 sessions, it cost a lot less than PCs, its hardware was less likely to fail and it was easy to configure."

### **Network computing made easy**

Simpson says that setting up and configuring the first Network Station "took only minutes." And for users, it was just another sign-on. "The Network Station Manager software on the AS/400 lets us set up all the network session defaults, so there's nearly zero learning curve," Simpson states.

The Network Station's impressive response time running in a distributed environment was another competitive plus. As Simpson puts it: "We're moving merchandise to 300 stores. We need it in and out quickly, with receiving and shipping documents generated immediately. With the Network Station we're seeing less than one-second response times on average, which is what we're accustomed to."

### **One machine, many roles**

In addition to its role as an AS/400 terminal, Wolf Camera is also using the Network Station to replace several PC print servers at the company's headquarters. Besides being less expensive than PCs, the Network Station-attached laser printers can receive reports from the AS/400 directly, without going through a separate PC- or server-based print daemon.

Wolf is even considering the Network Station as a replacement for non Windows-based desktop PCs. "For users who require access to Windows as well as 5250 sessions, we can use products like Citrix's Winframe or NCD's WinCenter on our NT servers and deliver that capability through the Network Station," Simpson says.

Simpson believes that the Network Station's role will almost certainly expand as the company embraces new technologies. "We're looking at different options, from an NT-based point-of-sale application to ways of linking our retail stores and making greater use of our Web site," he says. "The point is, there are many capabilities available to us with the Network Station. It is a technology that is useful today and in the future."

### **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, priority code 6N7BK005, in North America. Outside North America, call 416 383-5152, priority code 6N7BK005. 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 <http://www.ibm.com/nc>



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