

H. samuel

Business



Company: HermstedtCustomer: H. SamuelSubmitted by: Lewis PRIn the highly competitive world of high-street retailing, the importance of the window display cannot be underestimated, especially during the January sales. It creates the first impression by which potential customers judge whether to enter a shop. At the same time, a window display has to convey messages about brand, quality and price. For major retailers with a large number of outlets all over the country, having a clear, consistent 'look' is vital.

To achieve this, displays are generally coordinated from a central location. Window displays in H. Samuel, and other stores in the Signet retail group, are the combined work of the buying and merchandising team – which 'commissions' the displays; the launch department – a team of people who create the design, including photography; and the print team – who produce the finished material to be sent to the various branches. Creating a new display used to be a long and labour intensive task. The design process started with Signet's in-house photographer taking a 35mm shot of the window display design to be recreated in selected retail outlets. The launch department (based in Birmingham) would then send a hard copy to the buying and merchandising team (located in London).

The two teams would then communicate by phone and fax to discuss changes to the design (often requiring more photos to be taken at each stage). Once finalised, the work was printed in Birmingham and then passed to Signet's distribution network. In order to be more responsive to rapid changes in high-street trends, Signet realised that it needed to make the design process quicker, easier and more flexible. The retailer wanted to

reduce the time and money spent producing photos and to improve the communication between the launch department and the buying and merchandising team. Signet realised that it needed to implement a digital solution, to link its offices in Birmingham and London.

The retailer stopped using traditional 35mm film and changed over to digital cameras. All photographs are now taken electronically and processed using a PowerMac. This has enabled Signet to significantly cut the time spent and cost involved in producing photography. Signet also invested in ISDN hardware and software from Hermstedt, for fast file transfer between its Birmingham and London offices. Kinetsys Ltd, the solution provider for Signet, recommended a Hermstedt Leonardo SP 2-channel ISDN card with Grand Central Pro software. This has enabled all the creative work to be carried out by the launch department in closer co-operation with buying and merchandising in London.

Any changes to the design can be made at either end and forwarded in a matter of minutes. The completed files can then be transferred digitally to the print site at Birmingham for output and distribution.” We used to have to drive backwards and forwards and constantly have rolls of film in our pockets. Using ISDN, the savings have been huge, both in time and money terms,” said Phil Donaldson, print manager at Signet. “ We couldn’t have gone digital without the Hermstedt ISDN system.” The digital solution allows Signet to ensure all its retail outlets have the most up-to-the-minute window displays.

Finally, window shopping becomes real shopping.