



RETAIL DISTRIBUTION AND WAREHOUSING



Let's get IT on.

Value City Furniture is an expert in manufacturing quality furniture offshore. But what about information technology?

American Signature Inc., which owns and operates Value City Furniture and American Signature Home™ stores, is America's top independently owned furniture retailer as well as a designer and manufacturer of fine home furnishings. Through its private-label brand, American Signature, Value City Furniture offers exclusive, high-quality, fully coordinated furniture collections in a variety of styles. American Signature Home™ is more than a furniture store, it designs and manufactures fine quality home furnishings that fit every lifestyle.

Founded in 1948, Value City Furniture has become one of the most respected names in the furniture industry. It currently employs more than 4,900 associates and operates 95 plus furniture superstores with sales approaching nearly \$1.0 billion. The company supplies all its stores, which are located largely in the Mid-West and East Coast states, from distribution centers in Columbus, Ohio and Ruther Glen, Virginia.

According to Ed Helmuth, Senior Vice President and CIO, "We are much more than a furniture manufacturer and retailer- we're a company that designs, manufactures and moves furniture better and faster than anyone else."

"Moving furniture better and faster than the competitor depends on developing and managing better Information Systems and that is where Digitek helps us tremendously by providing better and cost effective IT solutions faster than anyone else." adds Ed Helmuth.



Ed Helmuth, CIO, American Signature, Inc. (parent Company of Value City Furniture), shown with Chetan Bhuta, President of Digitek Software, Inc. at Value City's Columbus, Ohio distribution facility.



One of Value City Furniture superstore in Columbus, Ohio.





American Signature, Inc.'s IT department maintains numerous systems to support the stores, distribution centers, and manufactures. The majority of American Signature systems are developed in-house and run on the IBM AS/400.

After joining the company as Chief Information Officer, Helmuth was challenged by management to do for information what the company had successfully done for furniture - move the large portion of its software development activity offshore.

Currently the company manufactures a large percentage of its goods offshore so the challenge was to discern whether increased economies of scale could be achieved by leveraging offshore resources for IT projects as well.

The first project Digitek carried out for Value City allowed it to get familiar with the company by providing a clear analysis of the company's database and application code. It involved the design and development of a Data Warehouse to incorporate company-wide sales information system to consolidate retail sales figures of various locations. The Data Warehousing project is a high-visibility project that is having a direct impact on the company. Said Helmuth, "Digitek hit a home run with the Data Warehousing project."

This getting-to-know-them stage resulted in Digitek team working on several critical projects. One such project was updating their Scanner System for Warehouse Management. The existing system could not determine the exact location of an item. Rather than changing millions of tags, a workaround was designed to minimize discrepancies. Digitek team is now involved in re-designing the Purchase Order System and enhancing Inventory and Warehouse Management Systems.

These areas and related systems will be the primary focus areas for Value City as it begins its offshore development efforts.

"Digitek professionals have spent the time getting to know our company and culture. They have responded well by providing cost effective IT solutions and being proactive from the beginning. They have built a relationship that will serve us well into the future," concludes Helmuth.



Value City Furniture's distribution warehouse in Columbus, Ohio.



Let's get *IT* on.

Technology Platform
IBM AS/400, ILE/RPG, DB2/400, ErWin,
Microstrategy 7.2.2

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