

NEW BUSINESS UPDATE

Superdrug rebrand their 900 stores



With over 900 stores, Superdrug is a well-known and well-loved high street brand. Over the last year the company has embarked on a major refurbishment and upgrade programme including a rebrand of their logo. This is a mammoth task and Superdrug needed sign companies with the skills, flexibility and expertise to deliver the project on time and within budget. Omega Signs were an obvious choice and were one of the successful companies to be chosen to complete the job.

With branches all over the UK Omega had to survey lots of different sites producing CAD drawings for each store. The work has involved both new LED illuminated external fascia signs and internal navigational signs, all manufactured in house. The internal signs are made from foam perimeter boards with Foamex letters for all the different categories in store and have resulted in much clearer wayfinding for customers. However it has required strong project management skills to ensure that each store gets the right install and, once again, demonstrates Omega's flexibility and can do attitude. With 30 stores completed and another 25 in the pipeline the rollout programme is likely to continue into 2015.

John Lewis opens its first-ever train store

This October John Lewis opened their first-ever train station store at London terminal St Pancras International. The new store offers an edited selection of home products, electronics, gifts, and beauty and fashion accessories. However customers can also take advantage of the retailer's Click and Collect service, ordering products for next day collection during their daily commute.

The new innovative format has been bought in to meet the evolving needs of customers, serving the station's travellers. As such it was a crucial development for the company and Omega were appointed to manufacture and install all the external signage.

Omega had to ensure that the whole project was in keeping with the historic Victorian heritage of St Pancras station so, whilst the signs met the John Lewis brand specifications, they also had to be fitted using brushed stainless steel rails to meet the Network rail guidelines. Working in a busy station with nearly a million visitors everyday was also a real challenge and as ever Omega's strong project management skills and ability to work closely with other contractors came to the fore.

Industry comment



“September was an exciting time for us with the introduction of the new ERP system software. This should make life at Omega much easier in the future by joining up systems throughout the business and various departments therefore cutting admin time in processing jobs. It is also a ‘real time’ system meaning that we can provide both ourselves and our customers with easy to digest reports on job progress, stock levels and resource. This is a real step change for Omega, and one that has seen a huge investment both in terms of financial and man hours to get it up and running – the team have worked really well alongside the guys from ECI to ensure a smooth transition at what is one of our busiest times. We are really excited by the flexibility and especially the efficiency that this should bring but not only that, the opportunities for reducing waste and cutting cost are endless! It is all part of our ongoing drive to meet the ever changing needs of the marketplace and deliver excellent customer service.

TECHNICAL NEWS

Omega launch ERP

Over the last 20 years Omega Signs has grown phenomenally and now boasts a turnover of over £14 million. One of the keys to Omega’s success has been its strong project management skills and to ensure that Omega manages the logistical challenge that goes with this it has always had in place robust administrative processes. However it was recognised by the Board that to keep ahead of the competition continued investment in this area was key. During 2014 the search was on for a state of the art ERP system and after extensive appraisal of the marketplace a package called M1 was selected. After a comprehensive trial period this has recently been installed across the whole business. This has been a significant investment but will provide the businesses with an integrated “real time” view of all of its core business processes including:

- Customer Relationship Management
- Marketing and Sales
- Product planning and costing
- Inventory and stock management
- Manufacturing and service delivery
- Installation and payment

The benefit is that the company will now be able to collect, store, manage and interpret data from many business activities and, as this is all automated, it has eliminated the need for any paperwork in the system. For example all of the production team now have Microsoft surface tablets and can view visuals; engineering documents and stock on screen. The entire workforce has been trained and this will be a continuous programmed activity to ensure that everyone is constantly kept up to date.

However the real benefit is what it will deliver to our customers. We recognise that everyone of our clients has different needs and the new ERP software has the flexibility in the system to ensure that we meet these enabling us to be even more customer focused.

A day in the life of Chris Norfolk



“I have been a Senior Project Manager for many years and the best bit about the job has always been the relationships you build with customers and managing their

requirements. We have always used a database system and whilst it was good certain aspects of it didn’t give the flexibility that the fast changing environment requires and, inevitably, it was then time consuming managing all the different elements of a project to ensure it went smoothly. This has sometimes been frustrating as it takes you away from time spent with the customer.

However all that has changed with our new ERP system M1. Everything is now computerised and all elements of the job are now coordinated from purchasing materials to producing engineering drawings. This means that it is easier to ensure consistency across a job, which is important when you are managing large corporate rollouts, but the real advantage is that it also has the flexibility within the system to add that tailor made approach should we need to.

Initially it was a bit daunting taking on a completely new way of working but everyone has been given training both in group and one on one sessions. We also set up a test database so that we could learn on the job and then review any issues we had with the new system. We are now running the database live and the difference is amazing. I have no doubt that it will allow me to be much more customer facing in the future and that can only be good for our customers.”