

Macy's West

Extreme automation

Leading retailer streamlines advertising production while reducing IT costs and complexity using Adobe® InDesign® software



Creating everything from ads and direct-mail pieces to billboards and shopping bags for the 141 Macy's West stores is no small undertaking. During peak times, 200 designers, media buyers, and production personnel in the company's Advertising Sales Promotion group generate and distribute 250 to 300 advertisements alone each day, a task that requires extreme workflow efficiency.

To achieve high levels of productivity while keeping costs down, Macy's West automates its design and production workflow, using scripts to handle processes such as placing images within pages and setting page definitions for different magazines and newspapers. Whenever the advertising group updates its software, the IT development staff must also update all the scripts—a time-consuming and costly task. As a result, Macy's West must choose its page design and production software wisely.

When the Advertising Sales Promotion group upgraded to Mac OS X and needed to update its page design and production software accordingly, the decision was made to move to Adobe InDesign software. Macy's West made its choice based on the productivity and cost benefits InDesign provides. Scripting in InDesign is consistent across versions and across other Adobe applications, which enables the development group to be far more productive. Additionally, it was costly and took up to a year for Macy's West to upgrade its previous page layout solution because scripting tended to change with each new software version. With InDesign, Macy's West no longer incurs such IT costs or delays.

Keeping designers happy

Productivity is only part of the equation for Macy's West. Providing designers with the tools they need to work as creatively as possible is another major goal. The company believes that projecting a quality image and ensuring brand integrity are crucial to its success. Keeping its creative staff happy by giving them the tools they need to produce fresh, eye-catching promotional materials supports these endeavors. Using InDesign enables Macy's West designers to be productive while, at the same time, work with software they enjoy.

The creative staff was wary of moving to InDesign because of the time they had invested in learning and using the previous page layout solution. However, InDesign offered features they had been wanting for years, such as high-end typographical controls, transparency, and high-resolution page previews.

In the end, Macy's West found that InDesign provides more creativity-enhancing features than other page layout programs and that Adobe really listens and responds to its design and production needs.

Adobe InDesign helps Macy's West creative staff produce fresh, eye-catching promotional materials.

High volume, high quality

During peak times, Macy's West generates and distributes up to 300 advertisements daily. High-resolution previews in Adobe InDesign enable the designers to work faster and with greater precision. When the files are ready for distribution, the prepress staff uses the software's preflighting tools to check the fonts, color, and other variables.



Making the transition

Due to the complexity of the production environment and the size of the advertising staff at Macy's West, the conversion to InDesign involved detailed planning, organization, and training. The group rolled out Mac OS X and InDesign at the same time, which required testing every application, font, and script.

Macy's West provided everyone in the advertising group with an hour of Mac OS X training and 4 to 6 hours of InDesign training. Familiarity with other Adobe products made the transition quite seamless.

Since moving to InDesign, designers in the Macy's West advertising group have increased the number of creative options they can use to help make Macy's West's promotional materials more attractive. The company's designers say they never could have done certain projects using the previous page layout software. Additionally, they love the ability to create effects like transparency, and the typographical tools enable them to create more sophisticated-looking materials.

Working faster and smarter

The move to InDesign has also had a positive impact on productivity. The high-resolution previews in InDesign that enable designers to work with greater precision, allow them to work faster and avoid inadvertent errors.

The designers can create Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) files for internal electronic proofing in a few clicks. Once files are ready for distribution to newspapers and magazines, the prepress group uses the preflighting tools within InDesign to check fonts, color, and other variables.

As with the previous workflow, files output to Adobe PDF are distributed to regional printers such as RR Donnelly, Quad Graphics, and Quebecor World. Macy's West reports that its print vendors did not even have to know they had switched to InDesign and that, from an output perspective, everything went fine.

Company

Macy's West
San Francisco, California
www.macys.com

Challenges

- Reduce IT complexity by moving to a page layout solution with consistent scripting
- Keep designers happy and productive

Solution

Use Adobe InDesign software, which provides a consistent scripting environment and the creative tools designers need to produce sophisticated materials

Benefits

- Reduced the time required to upgrade software versions from up to one year to just a few weeks
- Increased productivity and designers' ability to create eye-catching promotional materials

Toolkit

- Adobe Acrobat®
- Adobe Illustrator®
- Adobe InDesign
- Adobe Photoshop®
- Apple Power Mac computers running Mac OS X

With Adobe InDesign software, Macy's West designers can use high-end typographical controls and creative options such as transparency to create sophisticated promotional materials.



Worth the effort

For Macy's West, the transition to InDesign software was a significant undertaking, but the payoff has been well worth the effort. Now, instead of taking a year to upgrade the entire production workflow each time a new version of page layout software is introduced, the process takes a matter of weeks. Designers and production staff can work with enhanced creativity and productivity. To further improve application performance and increase productivity, Macy's West rolled out the full Adobe Creative Suite in 2004.

Today, Macy's West appreciates the fact that Adobe is a responsive vendor. According to the company, Adobe and its third-party training vendors and value-added resellers helped make the InDesign rollout successful, from creating and testing scripts to providing comprehensive training and support.

Macy's West believes it can't praise Adobe and its third-party vendors enough for their attentive customer service. The company reports that both during its rollout of InDesign, as well as today, Adobe is always there when needed.

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