

# CompUSA

CompUSA Saves Money, Time,  
Increases Productivity with VSI-FAX

Case Study

CompUSA, with 74 computer stores located in 39 metropolitan areas across the country, claims that it saves in more than one way with VSI-FAX:

- On salespeople's time by letting them fax quotes to customer with just a few keystrokes, quickly and automatically
- On labour, since dedicated employees are no longer required to perform the faxing manually

"In sales alone, we average between 200 and 300 quotes daily perstore — and more during certain peak periods. At minimum, VSI-FAX saves each salesperson an hour a day in not having to prepare the faxes individually, walk them to the fax machine, and then have them faxed manually."

— Dan Pritchard,  
Project Supervisor, CompUSA

At corporate headquarters, to relieve an enormous burden on its AS/400 computers by offloading the faxing both to Unix-based computers at headquarters and via WANs to RS6000 computers at each superstore.

"CompUSA uses VSI-FAX extensively in each superstore and at headquarters. We use it primarily for three kinds of transactions, with faxes running from one page to as many as 150: to fax purchase orders to suppliers for up-to-the minute inventory control, to fax quotes to potential customers, and to fax invoices and, when necessary, dunning notices from Accounts Receivable at headquarters," explains Dan Pritchard, CompUSA's project supervisor.

Pritchard was in charge of integrating VSI-FAX with the RS6000s at each of the chain's superstores. He also helped set up the product's connections from the stores to corporate headquarters in Dallas over wide area networks.

"Implementing automatic faxing has enabled us to replenish our stores' inventories promptly. It is critical to our strong competitive stance in the marketplace that we maintain a full inventory. So you can see how urgent it is to get quick turnarounds on our orders," he says.

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It also saves CompUSA a great deal on labour costs since employees need no longer be dedicated to operating the fax machines, as they were previously. "Automated faxing has allowed us to curtail headcount growth at the very time the company has grown so rapidly," says Pritchard.

VSI-FAX is not the company's first faxing package. An AS/400-based fax system had been used earlier at the chain's headquarters, but that system taxed the CPU excessively.

Looking to ease the overhead burden in its large systems, CompUSA acquired VSI-FAX to run in headquarters' smaller Unix-based computers as well as on each superstore's RS6000. CompUSA developed a system transfer via SNA from the AS/400s to the smaller machines.

The results were excellent for the company and for its salespersons, easing the burden on both the AS/400s and the employees.

Today at corporate headquarters fax volumes have grown to between 2,000 and 6,000 documents per day, which would have been a significant load on any AS/400.

"The return on investment was almost immediate," says Pritchard. "The package integrated easily with our quote system, and has been totally reliable, and the clarity of the faxes is much better than when we manually faxed them. This not only gives our faxes a much more professional appearance, but also avoids time-consuming call-backs for clarification and retransmission." It's a win-win situation.



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