

MOVING INTO TECHNOLOGY

“I wonder what it would be like to travel back in time?” pondered Sanjeev P., who incidentally is an assistant store manager of a Longs Drugs. Sanjeev then realized that probably the most interesting changes would not be his parents as children, but how radically different some of the most ubiquitous things from today would be. Probably the most interesting change for a dedicated employee of Longs would be something as simple as, say, merchandise sale signs! Obviously before computers were commonplace tools, employees like Sanjeev were perfectly content with creating sale signs by hand or by using a plain pricing gun to put price tags onto merchandise. As the times changed, the requirements for running a store became more complicated and computer proficiency became a standard for employees. But before computers were as common as they are now, Sanjeev remembers doing everything by hand. As Sanjeev recalled:

“...during the first few months of my employment, I remember having to create sales signs by hand and to use a pricing gun[.] ... I quickly realized how annoying this method was, and certainly would find it extremely tedious if it were still in place. ... Consider that [today,] every week about 200 items go on sale and...there are daily price changes[.],.. to have to handwrite ad signs...every day is just utterly impossible.”

One-by-one, retail businesses began to realize that in order for them to move forward and stay viable, they would need to, among other things, switch from handwriting sale signs and using simplistic pricing guns to using computers to fulfill their needs. Eventually Longs Drugs had to face the task of finding a new computer-based system that would not only be able to quickly create a great number of consistent-looking sale signs easily, but also have a price tag printing system that can do much more than what any pricing gun can provide. But out of many choices in the sea of applications, one program stood out above the rest: the dSign Make-A-Sign application suite.

dSIGN: EASIER THAN SLICING BREAD!

However, it wasn't enough for the top brass at Longs Drugs to choose a new system and implement it. Employees needed to be trained, the system needed to get a foothold to take root, and most importantly, the system would need to have staying power so that Longs wouldn't need to replace it for a very long time. Fortunately, dSign ended up proving itself worthy to remain a part of Longs' infrastructure. Sanjeev certainly knew a good thing when he saw it:

“...the system is SO simple to use, ...[it] sometimes catches those technologically-impaired employees off guard[!] ... [It's] also a very reliable system. ... [Everyone] here really takes the system for granted. [dSign] has never crashed, never lost anyone's labels..., never stopped printing labels in the middle... we've just generally never had any problems with it before[.]”

COMPETITION? WHAT COMPETITION?

Obviously if Sanjeev can see the facts about dSign Make-A-Sign with his own eyes, it's certainly something that most everyone else at Longs Drugs has seen as well. It's even more obvious that the alternative choices to dSign just did not stand up to Longs' standards. Sanjeev himself, while working a second job as a liquor rep visiting other non-Longs Drugs retail stores, encountered the various different alternatives to dSign that Longs Drugs could have ended up with:

“...in this day and age it's rare to see something with a 100% success rate! ... I've worked at other places that had their own shelf label and sign printing system that had all sorts of problems and bugs. ... For example, this one grocery chain's application would crash if you hit the tab button to move between text fields. With another chain's application, you couldn't print straight from the application for some reason—either the program would crash or the function wasn't even implemented.”

It's easy to imagine seeing the people in charge of implementing the new system at Longs Drugs being unconvinced by the promises of “these bugs will be fixed in the next version!” It's a good thing too seeing that they chose dSign and stuck with it for all these years.