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February 13, 2009

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By Doug Erickson, Executive Vice President of Global Sales and Marketing, Galleria

The retail industry is more competitive than ever. In order to create differentiation retailers must focus on the customer in order to provide shoppers with what they want, when they want it. This focus enables retailers to maintain a competitive advantage and secure customer loyalty. Synchronizing assortment and space planning is an essential move toward customer-centricity because it allows retailers to create localized merchandising plans that ensure the right products will be present at the right time and in the right capacity in every store.

Retailers who do not synchronize their assortment and space planning functions often find it difficult to create customer-centric merchandising plans and run into hurdles that can otherwise be avoided. When the processes are not aligned, retailers typically create an initial assortment for the most common size plan based on averaged performance data. For example, if the most common size fixture for the laundry category is 36 feet, a general assortment is created to include the right amount of facings and units for that particular fixture size based on average performance.

To achieve the benefits of synchronized assortment and space planning, retailers need to perform these processes at a store-specific level to create operational customer-centric merchandise plans. This can be done by utilizing a merchandising solution that combines store-specific fixture, space and product performance data to create customer-centric merchandising plans. Doing so will result in plans that optimize inventory to meet consumer demand and space requirements while maximizing return on investment.

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Doug Erickson is the executive vice president of global sales and marketing for Galleria. He has more than 15 years of retail technology industry sales experience. For more information, please visit www.galleria-rt.com.

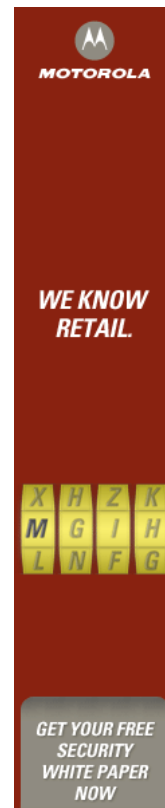
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