

# THE BEST SOLUTION - BY INTENT AND DESIGN

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## CASE STUDY

## BUSINESS SYSTEMS



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### top3 by design

With two high profile retail outlets - one each in the fashionable Sydney homewares precinct Crows Nest and in the high profile Bondi Junction - top3 by design is a great success story in the Australian retail industry. Established by Terri Winter and her husband in 2001, top3 brings together the top three products in a broad range of categories by merit of their design; from the classic Aalto wave vase to the latest award-winning bottle opener ring.

#### Business systems foundation

When Terri opened the first top3 store in 2001, it was Epson business systems that were chosen as the best available POS solution. Then, in 2004 with the new Bondi Junction store being fitted out for operations, she once again partnered with Epson, bringing in powerful MR-800 PC-based touch screen POS terminals for top3's Microsoft Retail Management Systems (RMS) retail software. Providing the receipt printing functionality for this solution are a number of Epson TM-88III thermal receipt printers, delivering consistently high levels of print quality, ease-of-use and, importantly, reliability.

"Reliability of equipment is crucial in our environment," Terri states. "Since we first brought in Epson equipment in 2001, it has not once been the cause of any system downtime. If all the technology we used was as reliable as our Epson gear, we would easily be able to boast 100 per cent uptime!"

#### Building on the foundation

With image playing an enormous part in top3's continued success, Terri made the decision in mid-2005 to implement a broader Epson business solution - one that would give her business a definite edge over competitors.

"In retail, drawing the customer's attention to your store *and* products is one of the most critical issues," Terri explains. "Point-of-sale displays and posters are typically the most often used means of achieving this, but our goal was to go beyond this and create a store environment that really stood out from the crowd."

Adding further to Terri's goal was that it be achieved cost-effectively. While high impact posters and displays can easily be created using design agencies and professional print houses, the costs to top3 would be such that any resulting revenue increase from use of the materials might well be totally wiped out. The real need, therefore, was for an in-house solution that would minimise ongoing outsourcing costs while simultaneously affording top3 the ability to create new signage in a fraction of the time it would otherwise take.



Situated in Crows Nest and Bondi Junction, top3 by design is a unique concept in retailing, carrying up to three products per category deemed the best in the world by merit of their design.

#### Challenge

To introduce a broad-based and single vendor business solution that would meet the company's in-store POS, printing and dynamic signage requirements.

#### Epson Solution

Based on positive experiences gained from using Epson POS technologies, top3 has implemented:

1. Epson MR-800 POS terminals
2. Epson TM-88III receipt printers
3. Epson multimedia projector
4. Epson M-VT101 card printer
5. Epson ProGraphics large format printer

#### Benefits

- On-demand, high quality signage and POS displays
- Single point of vendor contact for POS, projection and printing technologies.
- Major cost savings on in-store signage printing



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Terri Winter  
Managing Director  
top3 by design

"Our product line is constantly evolving as new innovations in design come through," Terri says. "Keeping our signage up to date with our products is an ever present requirement."

Having already established a strong relationship with the Epson Business Solutions team, Terri met with one of the team members to discuss top3's in-store display requirements. The result was a broad-based solution that brought together the very best from various Epson business disciplines.

Building on the Epson POS business systems foundation, Terri implemented an Epson multimedia projector for in-store multimedia and static product displays and an Epson ProGraphics large format printer to be used for all signage and POS displays.

"The most immediate advantage we saw was that we were dealing with the *same* people in Epson who look after our retail systems," Terri states. "So instead of having to explain our business to new people, just because they're in a different product area, we were able to work with a team that knew precisely what top3 is all about. We saved an enormous amount of time and effort as

a direct result of this new total business solutions approach introduced by Epson."

### Dynamic signage

With the introduction of the Epson projector, Terri believes she has given the Bondi Junction retail store a strong advantage over many other stores in the complex. "One of the most important features of any signage is that it be eye-catching," she explains. "This is definitely the case with the projector. We're able to create beautiful multimedia displays that are really making people stop and look - and that's precisely what we want.

"The projector is also proving itself to be one of the most effective marketing tools we've ever utilised," Terri continues. "It's like having an on-hand signboard that we can change on the spot, keeping it fresh and up to date."

In contrast to other projectors currently marketed as being suitable for in-store display purposes, the Epson multimedia projector has very high light output capabilities, which is essential in delivering high quality projection regardless of the ambient lighting conditions. "This feature is actually more important than many people may initially appreciate," Terri says. "If we were to have a





less powerful projector, we'd need to drop the in-store lighting just to make sure it didn't 'wash out' the projection.

"With the Epson projector, we have total freedom with our in-store lighting without the need to worry about the impact it will have on the projector's output."

### The Professional Touch

Giving an even greater edge to the top3 team's ability to create a unique retail environment is the ProGraphics large format colour printer. With the ability to print on a variety of media and at widths of up to 44-inches, the ProGraphics printer is being used extensively to create the entire range of top3's in-store, static signage.

According to Terri, the most immediate benefits of introducing an in-house signage solution are time and cost. "We've traditionally done all the artwork for our displays and signage in-house," she says, "so the major expense - and delay - has always

been in the printing. Where larger retail operations have the economy of scale that makes it cost-effective for them to outsource their signage printing, for smaller one-to-two store operations such as ours, having just a couple of posters or signs custom-printed tends to be cost-prohibitive."

By implementing the ProGraphics large format printer, Terri is now able to develop *and* print signage and posters at a bare minimum of the cost it would otherwise be. Added to this is the fact that with total control over the printing process, she has been able to slash the amount of time taken to get signs printed. "Instead of waiting days for a professional printing house to do the job, I can have signage go from file to finished printed product in a matter of minutes," she states.

"In the retail industry, this is very important. If you get to work one day and a competitor has bold signs proclaiming a special offer, it's great to be able to go one up on them within a very short amount of time."

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## BUSINESS SYSTEMS



### The Epson global advantage

As Terri and her team continue to explore the enormous potential of a comprehensive Epson business solution, she has even embarked upon an early adopter program with an Epson M-VT101 thermal card printer. Not yet released in Australia, the M-VT101 has been designed to deliver high resolution text and graphic printing for loyalty cards, tickets and coupons.

With the M-VT101, Terri is now able to quickly and easily create attractive and informative product pricing cards for her entire range of products. "This is something we've been after for a while," she says. "And because it is fully integrated with the rest of our business solution, it takes a matter of minutes to create new tags - a very handy thing if we need to change prices or alter the product description for greater impact.

"Again, it's a case of being able to do these things in-store, on demand and at a fraction of the cost.

"This is one of the very real advantages in partnering with Epson for our business solutions," Terri continues. "Even though the product hasn't been released to the Australian market, when we

outlined our needs the business solutions team was able to call on their overseas colleagues, get one sent over, then customise it for local conditions and requirements."

### Support and reliability

"top3 has been trading for around four years and during that time we have been running Epson retail technology virtually non-stop," Terri says. "During that time, we've been able to say what very, very few other retailers are able to say; and that is that we've never had *any* downtime arising from the Epson equipment.

"We haven't even had a technician need to come out and look at anything for us. If we've had any questions, we have always been able to get right through to the right people at Epson, whether sales or technical, and get the answers we need immediately.

"This, along with the fact that Epson products have proven themselves time and time again as being totally reliable and always of the best quality is precisely why Epson is one of our most crucial business solution providers."

