



**Affordable Blinds and Shutters Inc.
Efficient Window Fashion Sales with Motion Tablet PCs, Solatech Software**

Background: Custom Product Sales

Affordable Blinds and Shutters Inc., a custom window fashions company, set out in 2005 to increase its sales. To do this, it enlisted the help of Solatech, a software firm focused on the development and distribution of sales solutions for custom-made product industries. Solatech is a value-added reseller of Motion Computing tablet PCs, the leading pure slate tablets used by businesses to streamline operations and make field work more efficient.

Shortly before Affordable Blinds and Shutters enlisted the help of Solatech, its salespeople started using laser measuring devices on sales calls. Team members could measure windows more quickly and more accurately, which is critical when dealing with a custom-made product. The laser measuring tool was an eye-opener for salespeople – if one small tool could do so much to enhance efficiency, how much time could be saved if the entire sales process was automated?

Challenge: Need for Automation

Affordable Blinds and Shutters salespeople were spending two to three hours per home measuring windows, calculating prices by referencing hard-copy catalogues (some of which were not up-to-date), and filling out order forms by hand. The process was time consuming, awkward, and inefficient. After leaving the home, sales personnel spent hours each day on bookkeeping – double-checking orders, faxing order forms and filing client information.

Because Affordable Blinds and Shutters' salespeople are in the field for the majority of the day, they needed to have the ability to access customer data and use applications on-the-go – standing, walking, or in the car. Laptops require users to be seated, which wouldn't work when walking from room to room in a home. PDAs don't have enough processing power or a large enough screen to effectively run a sales solution. Tablet PCs provided an ideal balance of power, screen size, and mobility.

Solution: Tailored Software and Tablet PCs

Affordable Blinds and Shutters turned to Solatech and its SalesPro system, which combines Solatech Window Fashion software – order forms, pricing information and bookkeeping – with Motion Computing slate tablet PCs, portable printers, and Bluetooth laser measuring devices.

Now, capturing pertinent data on a sales visit is done electronically. Window measurements are transferred from the Bluetooth measuring device to a pen-enabled order form on the durable, lightweight Motion LS800 tablet. There, the software calculates prices using the latest product

information, and the salesperson can input order specifics – such as product number, color and discounts – with the tablet’s pen. When the order form is complete, the information is exported to Windows Journal, where a customer contract is made and the salesperson can handwrite notes with the pen and obtain a digital approval signature from the customer.

The paper catalogues, order books and assorted office supplies salespeople used to bring on customer calls have been replaced with the Motion LS800, a 2.2-pound, 8-inch ultra-mobile tablet PC that is about the size of a paperback book. Bluetooth and wireless features allow salespeople to update client files, send orders and check e-mail without having to go back to the office.

“Having your business with you all the time is vital,” said Michelle Wollmann, owner of Affordable Blinds and Shutters. “The ability to use the Motion tablet PC on the road is amazing. I can even use it in my car. It helps me get a lot more done during the day.”

Results: Time Savings, Accuracy, and Happy Customers

Since implementing the Motion tablet and Solatech SalesPro system, salespeople at Affordable Blinds and Shutters have seen the time they spend in customers’ homes cut in half. They can now measure, price and fill out order forms for an entire house in one hour, rather than two or three. Sales personnel also spend far less time bookkeeping at the end of the day. Because customer information is stored on the tablet, order forms are ready to be printed and faxed or submitted wirelessly.

The company has seen fewer ordering mistakes with the LS800 and SalesPro system, because the laser measuring device’s accuracy and the software’s automatic pricing calculation remove room for human error. In addition, the Motion tablet has proved to be a relationship-building tool. Clients are impressed with the efficiency the technology provides and more confident their orders will be accurate and on time.

“The most important thing is the system’s efficiency and accuracy – not making mistakes with measuring or pricing,” said Wollmann. “In addition, the Motion tablet enables me to be more flexible and have more personal time. It’s invaluable.”