



The redesigned store. Note the oak floors, light blue walls, and clean look.

Business & Marketing

30 Minute makeover

By Bonnie Gretzner

Based in Irvine, Calif., **30 Minute Photos Etc.** (www.30minphotos.com), has long been a leading retailer in terms of product offerings and marketing savvy. Now the 16-year-old store itself is on the leading edge, thanks to a new, modern look designed to appeal to its main customer base – women.

Owners **Mitch Goldstone** and **Carl Berman** remodeled their 1,200-square-foot store in two weekends this spring, making the store not just a shop, but a destination.

“We wanted to create a coffee shop-type environment where people wanted to stay and play,” says Goldstone. “The feedback we’re getting is extraordinary. Some people think they’re in the wrong store. Customers are bringing in their friends, like they have found a new chic restaurant.” Customers stay, on average, 45 minutes to an hour.

Goldstone got the idea to remodel the store after seeing *The Complete Picture* inspiration center at **PMA 2006**, held earlier this year in Orlando, Fla. “I saw

Retailer 30 Minute Photos Etc. debuts new look, services

it, and I immediately understood the concept,” Goldstone says.

In addition to a new look, the store offers many new services, including a Luci scrapbooking kiosk from **Lucidiom Inc.** (www.lucidiom.com), Vienna, Va.

Redecorating the store

After the **PMA 2006** trip, Goldstone and Berman got to work, turning to **Lucidiom** for assistance, as well as hiring contractors. The **Independent Photo Imagers** (www.iphphoto.com), Charleston, W.V.,



The Luci scrapbook kiosk is perfect for families to create unique gifts.

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retail group was also helpful in terms of vendor assistance, says Goldstone.

A black sofa was replaced by red leather chairs; and a black counter, tile floors and yellow wall were removed. Now the store features an oak floor, white counter, and light blue walls. Much of the décor was removed from the walls, and the store features a cleaner, streamlined look.

“Lucidiom was very helpful, all the way to recommending frame manufacturers and even what paint color to use,” Goldstone says. “With nearly 80 percent of the

customer base being female, we wanted to create an environment that was appealing to them.”

To encourage women to wait in the store for services, Goldstone added new reading material. “We got rid of the *Popular Science* magazines, and got *Oprah* and *Vogue* instead,” he says.

The owners were up against a deadline to complete the work. *The Orange County Register* was scheduled to come in at 1 p.m. on May 1 to take photos for an article.

“It was like an episode from [the TV show] ‘Extreme Makeover.’ At 10 minutes to 1 p.m., I didn’t know how we were going to do it,” recalls Goldstone. “But at 1 p.m., the photographer was there, and somehow we were done.”

Expanding its services

In addition to a brand-new look, 30 Minute Photos also added new services, including a Luci scrapbooking kiosk, high-speed scanning, photo books, and complimentary snacks to make the stay more enjoyable.

“It’s like the restaurant industry,” says Goldstone. “When you dine, you typically don’t just get an entrée; you get an appetizer, dessert, and the extra services that other industries just don’t replicate. That’s what I wanted to do. We start by giving them the complimentary water and chocolate/granola bars, which is just like a restaurant giving complimentary bread.

The Complete Picture inspiration center

The PMA 2006 International Convention and Trade Show, held this winter in Orlando, Fla., featured The Complete Picture inspiration center, a showcase of hands-on lifestyle experiences designed specifically for the most powerful target market, Jennifer, the Generation-X Mom. (“Jennifer” is the name PMA is using to describe this target market.)

The concept store provided retail solutions, organized into five comprehensive collections called “inspiration centers.” The centers address preserving memories, doing more with pictures, connecting with friends and families, celebrating, and high-end products and services. Visit www.pmai.org/complete_picture for more information, and watch for more details on The Complete Picture at PMA 07.

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“During the redesign, I became re-educated into an industry in which I had moved more toward the technology side and away from the customer side. Now I am a staunch supporter of all the ancillary products.”

Continuing with the restaurant analogy, Goldstone likens photos to the appetizer, where in the past they were the entrée. “Now photos are only one component of the total sale,” he says. “We have picture frames, scrapbooking and embellishments, and a high-speed photo scanner. It’s a great business now.”

The store features five Lucidiom APM kiosks, including the Luci, which creates scrapbook pages in about 30 seconds. Goldstone says the Luci is a natural fit for selling 8-by-8 and 12-by-12 frames, and they carry many scrapbooking supplies, such as glue sticks, scissors, etc.

“We have room to expand,” with more kiosks says Goldstone, but he wants to retain the busy atmosphere. “I like it when it’s crowded and people wait. They start to interact and talk about their pictures and meet new people.”

The owners invested in a \$60,000 Kodak high-speed scanner, which they use to

In the courts

Irvine, Calif.-based **30 Minute Photos Etc.** is the lead plaintiff and class representative in the antitrust litigation against **Visa**, **MasterCard**, and member banks for their merchant interchange fees. The company founders also co-edit **WayTooHigh.com: The Credit Card Interchange Report**. The suit was filed in federal court in Connecticut in June 2005 with four other businesses. As of this printing, the suit may have been resolved. Check out www.30minphotos.com for the latest updates.

promote its shoebox scanning service. For \$49.95, 30 Minute Photos will scan up to 1,000 photos while the customer waits.

“That’s the whole secret. We want people to stay, enjoy, and relax,” says Goldstone. “Even with a shoebox full, in about 5 minutes, it’s all going to be scanned and archived digitally on a CD. Then we bring the customer over to the Lucidiom or Luci where they can review all their pictures. That’s where all the magic starts, because as people start viewing their pictures, they start reminiscing, getting emotional, and then they order reprints and enlargements.”

The store also offers online sharing via the **Graphx** Photogize system and uses the **Unibind** system to create 8.5-by-11 custom photo books.

“The companies we’ve partnered with are new to the industry but are true leaders,” he says. All the products, however, are

output on a system 30 Minute Photos has a long-established relationship – **Noritsu**. 30 Minute Photos sends all orders to its Noritsu processor 3213 DLS.

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Promoting the business

Goldstone has always been a tireless marketer, so it’s no surprise he actively promoted the new look and services.

He has launched various promotions throughout Orange County and is sponsoring a photo contest for **OCfamily.com**, geared to scrapbookers, soccer moms, etc.

He also contacted *The Orange County Register* a month in advance about his redesign. “The pitch wasn’t so much for the photo industry,” says Goldstone, “but the fact all retailers need to freshen up their stores.”

Goldstone says retailers can get a new look relatively inexpensively by simply pulling out old fixtures and putting on a new coat of paint.

“The cost will vary, depending on what the retailer wants to do,” says Goldstone. “But it’s something every retailer should do. Retailers see their store every day, and they often don’t see it as the customer sees it. They need to look at their businesses from the outside in.” ■



A look at 30 Minute Photos before the redesign. Note the many framed articles on the walls, which were removed after the remodel.