



CASE STUDY

Consumer Electronics Launches at Retail

Overview

A consumer electronics powerhouse was planning the U.S. launch of a highly anticipated new product through its retail stores nationwide. The launch would require the installation of large, custom product displays in the company's 300 retail stores. The consumer electronics company contracted with Red Arrow Logistics to project manage the inbound airfreight from Europe and U.S. domestic warehousing and transportation of the display components to ensure their installation was completed on time for the product launch. Because of the project's complexity, Red Arrow began mapping out the details a full year in advance.

The product displays were absolutely critical to the launch, and delivering them on time to meet the in-store install time was essential. The display's two main components: a 14-foot wood table weighing 900 pounds, and a glass insert handmade in Italy. The company had to transport these components from plants in the U.S. and Italy to stores in all 50 states. Last mile delivery had to be done at night after the retail stores and malls closed leaving just a few hours to time the delivery, set up, install, and debris removal, just a few hours before the launch.

Project Management

Leveraging its extensive network of service providers in the U.S. and Italy, Red Arrow designed transportation and distribution solutions to orchestrate the project's numerous and continuously moving parts, and calibrated the plan to meet the client's specific needs. Central to the task was shepherding the pick-up and delivery of 555 product display tables to the retail locations, which were spread across all 50 states. Red Arrow selected service providers for every step of the logistics and shipping process, and coordinated with the manufacturer, trucking companies, warehouses and other service providers it brought in, to oversee the transport of the tables -- by ground -- to 95 strategically located warehouses across the country, and via ocean to Alaska and Hawaii.

Hauled and Protected Over Dimensional Display Components through Installation

To deliver the custom-made glass inserts, Red Arrow tapped its agent in Italy. Together, they arranged to air freight 240 crates containing glass inserts, which had to be moved from a plant in Italy to gateway airports across the U.S., including LAX, ATL, JFK, SEA, and ORD. Red Arrow facilitated Customs clearance and directed the transport of the glass from the airports to the warehouses, where the tables were waiting for them. Once the materials reached the warehouses, the materials were inventoried, bar code labeled and were aggregated and staged ready for retail delivery.

On the eve of the product launch, Red Arrow arranged to uncrate the materials at the warehouses and prepare them for last-mile delivery to the retail store. The cargo was blanket wrapped and loaded into padded vans, straight trucks, and 53-foot dry vans depending on the final delivery location and access points.

The process involved close synchronization between Red Arrow and warehouse staff at each location, and local installation crews at each store, to coordinate delivery meeting times, permit requirements needed in dense metropolitan areas and any special needs a store might have. The shipment-by-shipment planning and delivery extended to special circumstances. For example, in one instance, Red Arrow had to help a store figure out a way to unload a component that was too big for its freight elevator and without direct unloading access; the solution was to hire a crane and operator to lift the materials to a second-floor landing that allowed access to the mall.

Project Planning and Reliability Contributes to Huge Payoff

Once all of the display materials were handed off to installers for in-store assembly, Red Arrow was responsible for picking up the old product displays, carting them away and transporting them to a recycler.

By delivering the massive volume of materials on schedule, Red Arrow enabled the installers in 300 stores to assemble the product displays on time for its consumer electronics customer to release its new product to all of its markets across the nation. Once installed, the displays showcased the customer's latest innovation and the retail launch was a huge success.

"An absolutely critical piece to the successful launch of our product was the display pieces, which is why we turned to Red Arrow Logistics. As a result of their meticulous planning and precise execution, the product release was a huge success!"

Patrick Owens, Cupertino, CA | Confidential Client



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