



Implementing Strategic Assortment Planning Capabilities

Providing comprehensive retail industry expertise and implementation guidance to select and deploy strategic assortment planning software with the objective of driving sales and margins



The Client

An American big box retail chain specializing in home décor products with a broad assortment of over 50,000 unique items including furniture, mirrors, rugs, art, housewares, patio and seasonal décor

The Challenge

The client was struggling to balance inventory needs by category and by store. They did not have a formal assortment planning process and did not differentiate, or tier, their assortment mix by location. This approach resulted in smaller volume stores holding excessive inventory, while larger volume stores were struggling to stay in stock on key programs.

This dichotomy caused a combination of both missed regular priced sales and excessive clearance inventory. There was also inconsistent use of product attribution which made it difficult to analyze and optimize product offerings. The client's existing item planning process was time consuming, performed in a cumbersome spreadsheet-based tool, and disconnected with the assortment and purchasing processes.

The Parker Avery Solution

Parker Avery provided expert direction and industry expertise during the entire assortment planning and item planning (APIP) solution assessment, selection and implementation. The project encompassed the following key activities:

- Reviewed existing assortment and item planning processes and guided workshops to outline future-state requirements
- Facilitated a detailed review of all attribution needs against current state process and created new process standards for attribution
- Facilitated a selection process, including review and scoring of multiple software options, to find the right system that would position the organization for long-term growth
- Documented detailed configuration design requirements based on review of selected tool capabilities and configuration options
- Supported functional testing of configured toolset to ensure requirements were being met and quality was to client's expectations
- Led comprehensive UAT for client to validate that the system functionality and configuration met their business needs
- Created detailed training materials to guide end-users through step-by-step system utilization and business thought processes
- Led train-the-trainer program to transfer knowledge and build mastery for selected super users to support long-term sustainment
- Facilitated end-user training, hands-on workshops, and one-on-one coaching to ensure adoption and to integrate the new assortment and item planning capabilities into their end-to-end business processes

The Result

The client successfully launched and adopted the new APIP system and processes which facilitated early learnings about their assortment mix and tiering opportunities. They were able to adjust both upstream and downstream processes to intersect this new capability to fully support a more cohesive assortment planning approach. The client expects greater sales opportunities and less markdown risk at the end of each season.