



"For the past seven months, more than 90% of our orders have been shipped on time. We won't settle for less, and we're working hard to make it 100%."

Debbie Rutledge,
Customer Service Manager

Ship Shape

Notes on Shipping

Can a Smith System dealer bet the ranch that a quick ship order will arrive on time? Given the on-time performance of the last seven months in this area, it would not be much of a gamble. According to Joe Johnson of Smith System, 95% of the quick ship orders have left on time during the past seven months.



Johnson attributed this industry-leading performance to internal improvements

"We've streamlined some processes here, we're more efficient in the way we handle the product, and we've reduced some paperwork," he noted. "It adds up to doing a better job of minding all the details."

Bulk Ship Update

Specifying the Bulk Ship option, Smith System dealers saved the hassle of disposing/recycling 225,000 lbs. of corrugated cardboard last year. And that was only the start, because they also saved time unpacking and assembling the furniture — an estimated 25% time savings. To participate in this win-win program, just specify Bulk Ship on the P.O.

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Plano, TX 75086

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These improvements are benefiting dealers with happy customers. It also opens up new possibilities for pleasing customers. For instance, if an order from another

supplier is delayed, a call to Smith System can ensure product will arrive to the customer in a timely way.

"We're looking at this as a unique thing that can help our dealers," Johnson added. "It's become a real source of pride to us."

Filling orders so quickly also opens up new shipping options, rail for example, that can potentially reduce costs for the customer without compromising delivery dates.

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Did we leave anything out?

We'd like to know how we can make the next issue of Smith Files more valuable for you. Is there a subject area that is of special interest to you? Do you have any specific questions about Smith System or our policies? Is there someone at Smith System you'd like to know more about?

If you'd like to receive this and future newsletters by email, please contact us at: feedback@smithsystem.com



Summer 2006

SMITH FILES



What About Bob

MEET SMITH SYSTEM'S
NEW V.P. OF SALES,
BOB REDDING



Something about Smith System's Bob Redding sets him apart from those working in a similar capacity at other school furniture manufacturers—Bob understands dealers.

Bob's eye-opening experience in a dealer's shoes has gone a long way shaping his dealer-centric approach to school furniture sales.

Today, as Smith System's new V.P. of Sales, Bob is taking his understanding with him on his mission to visit every dealer on the

"I'm finding out what each of our dealers wants, needs and expects from Smith System,"

company's roster. Whether renewing an acquaintance formed during his 30+ years in the school furniture industry or meeting for the first time, Bob has been supplying an ambitious agenda, with topics ranging from innovative new products to flexible new programs, but that's not to say it's a one-way conversation.

"I'm finding out what each of our dealers wants, needs and expects from Smith System," says Bob.

Information gathering of this kind is crucial if Smith System and its dealers are to move up to the next level.

"Our goal is to help our dealers succeed," Bob notes. "So I'm asking what

we can do to help them get more business." Bob also acknowledges there's a willingness on the part of Smith System to follow through on the requests dealers make, "It's an infectious attitude that starts with Charlie and Bill Risdall and has spread throughout the company."

"Our goal is to help our dealers succeed,"

That attitude has made flexibility a company policy in all things, especially when it comes to meeting specific dealers' needs. For example, if a dealer needs a program customized to their region or even state, Smith System can create one. Flexibility also applies to school districts. If a significant order hinges on customizing the furniture in a specific color scheme for the school district, Smith System is positioned to accommodate. The same goes for special-sized furniture, too.

Bob's Smith System attitude is complemented by both unique experience and expertise. In the past three years, Bob has gained valuable insight into educators' needs and wants through his involvement with schools at the district level. "I've seen the changes going on in the classroom," he says. "So when we work together with our dealers we have a better understanding of how the furniture needs to perform and this helps us better explain how Smith System furniture can be incorporated into the curricula."

Bob is well placed at Smith System when it comes to incorporating furniture into emerging curricula. "We're taking the lead in developing products that satisfy the school district's immediate and anticipated needs," he observes. "The Interchange line we're introducing is getting a great reception because its flexibility 'future proofs' the classroom. We also have a new line of seating on the way that should get schools and A&D firms very excited."

While Bob has had a lot to talk about in his meetings, he also makes it a point to listen, noting that "dealers are our eyes and ears in the marketplace. We have to pay very close attention to what they tell us." One of the things Bob hears again and

"I ask myself, what can I do today to grow the business?"

again is praise for the customer service people at Smith System. "Dealers are quick to say how helpful they are," says Bob. "I hear how much they appreciate how fast we come up with answers about products and how accurate we are."

At Smith System, Bob is enjoying getting up in the morning. "I ask myself, what can I do today to grow the business? And what more can we do?"

The answers usually start with finding a new way to help the dealers.

Flexibility a sales tool

If your customer is thinking outside the box don't hesitate to ask us.

A nimble partner can help you make sales and please customers. The experience Contrax Furnishings had with a recent sale to the Liberty Magnet School in Vero Beach, Fla. bears this out. "The entire school, except for seating, was going to Smith System," John Crawford of Contrax explains. "The 800-student school was divided into three pods, each with a different color scheme. One presented a challenge."

Navy blue was the key color. Wilsonart laminate tops in a custom Navy color were chosen for the Interchange Activity Tables, as were Navy edge bands. Navy legs were desired to complete the look—and the request was made.

"Smith System came through," Crawford reports. "Their flexibility in this detail improved the look of the installation and helped make our customer happy."

PRESENTING THE INTERCHANGE SERIES, THE NEXT GENERATION OF COOPERATIVE LEARNING DESKS

This new line of furniture is adaptable to a broad range of curricula and allows maximum flexibility in classroom layouts. Key features:

- Finishes and colors to complement any design scheme
- Legs that don't use braces that can pinch students' fingers
- Assembly and height adjustment that are fast and easy

Interchange Diamond Student Desk

Six of these desks form a circle for group work. Pairs, semi-circles and back-to-back rows are just a few of the other possible layouts, making Interchange Diamond Student Desks applicable in the widest variety of curricula and helps "future-proof" the classroom.



3-2-1 Student Desk



The distinctive shape of the new 3-2-1 Desk allows the 3-2-1 Desk to be arranged to fit the day's lesson plan. Available in two sizes, pre-K through 2 and 3 to Adult.

Interchange Student Desk



Our new Interchange Student Desk offers a large, stable work surface and the flexibility to be clustered in groups up to four.

Roundabout Student Desk



A group of four Roundabout Desks can efficiently seat up to eight students.

(Boardroom) Student Desk



Our new Boardroom Table comes together to accommodate groups as large as 16. The unique shapes of the tables allow everyone at the table to have eye contact with all others.

Interchange Activity Table



Sturdy, stable, and available in five shapes and a number of sizes, our new Interchange Activity Table offers great functionality and versatility.

Learn more. Go to:
www.smithsystem.com

NEW REPS ANNOUNCED

Eisaman Contract Associates and Judy Sjoberg have agreed to act as Smith System Manufacturer representatives, according to Bob Redding, V.P. of sales. "We're pleased to have a firm with the reputation and resources of Eisaman Associates serving Pennsylvania, Upstate New York and West Virginia," Bob says. "We also feel that dealers in Colorado, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming will be well served by Judy Sjoberg of Denver, because she's spent the past nine years in the educational marketplace working with dealers, architects and schools."

Responsibilities for the new manufacturer's reps will include working with sales people, calling on end users specifying the Smith System products and assuring that their dealers have the support in the field needed on a daily basis.

In both cases, quotes and bids will continue to be handled by Lorrie at the Smith System office.

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Better than ever!

Planner Activity Tables Redesigned

To better meet the demands of today's classrooms, Planner Activity Tables are now more rugged and can be more mobile than ever before.

For added strength, the new Planner Activity Tables now feature a beefy steel center keel that supports weight on the desktop. While adding strength, this improvement also frees up knee space for the student. New Planner Activity Tables also have a stronger leg design.

Smith System engineers created two optional caster packs to make these durable tables more mobile. Choose the set of four (3" soft-tread dual-wheel casters, two of which are locking) for maximum mobility or choose a single pair of locking casters (dual wheel casters, both locking) for wheelbarrow style mobility.

Steel components on the Planner Activity Table still have a tough powdercoat finish and their lower legs are chrome plated to resist

scuffing. The standard table height can be adjusted from 24" to 34" in 1" increments. With the optional set of four casters, the height can be adjusted from 27-3/4" to 30-3/4". With the optional wheelbarrow casters, the height can range from 25" to 34".

Like all Smith System classroom tables, the new Planner Activity Tables offer our tough 3/8" thick bumper edge molding with horizontal radius for comfort. Unlike competitive offerings, it's stapled in place every 8". The tabletop measures 1-1/4" thick with a Wilsonart high-pressure laminate surface and radius corners. It also offers a 45-lb. high density particle board core with backer sheet for balance.

New for 2006, Smith System offers any standard Wilsonart -60 finish laminate with any standard edge band color at no up charge for projects with minimum of 20 tables.

Try LearnScape 2.0



How would you like to show your prospects an instant look at a classroom design? Do it with LearnScape. This unique interactive classroom design tool now offers 29 preconfigured classrooms that display and arrange nine different styles of Smith Systems student desks, three different teacher desks and several classroom accessories. Chairs can now be viewed in five different colors. Desks and tables can be viewed with five different work surfaces. See the upgrade at www.smithsystem.com