

PRESS RELEASE



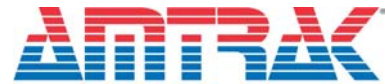
Amtrak takes Laura Ashley home

01 April 2005 - Laura Ashley has awarded Amtrak Express Parcels a multi-million pound home delivery contract. Amtrak will be providing express deliveries of Laura Ashley Home Furnishings to homes across the country. Goods are collected from Laura Ashley's distribution centre in Wales and also from suppliers and the company's 185 stores. Laura Ashley selected Amtrak on proven track record, value, and a willingness to adapt services to Laura Ashley's special requirements.

Laura Ashley first switched to Amtrak as their preferred parcel carrier two years ago and the boom in catalogue and online sales has seen a big increase in the demand of home deliveries. Laura Ashley's award winning 300-page catalogue and its web site (www.lauraashley.com) has helped to more than double internet sales within two years and now generates close to £5million. Laura Ashley is seeing a boom in online ordering with around 200,000 registered Internet Customers which supplements the more traditional telesales ordering.

"Catalogue and internet sales are key growth areas for Laura Ashley at present. Getting home delivery services right is absolutely crucial. Since we cannot service home customers face to face as we do in our stores, the delivery promise becomes one of the most important aspect of customer service. Amtrak is continually adapting its services to meet the needs of home deliveries and with their strong commitment to helping us improve our services, we feel we have a winning team." Says Mike Long, Senior Furnishings Warehouse Manager of Laura Ashley Distribution.

For Laura Ashley, Amtrak has developed a special unattended delivery service which has seen first time delivery failure reduced from 15% to as little as 2%. Cards are left if the courier cannot leave the delivery with a neighbour or decides it is not safe to leave it unattended. A second attempt is then made the next day.



For Laura Ashley, the unattended service works well. There is a high level of customer loyalty with regular re-ordering from existing customers, of which a high percentage are Laura Ashley Account card holders.

"Amtrak delivery staff know our customers very well and this is very important for unattended deliveries where a safe place is needed to leave goods if customers are out" says Mike Long. "The key is convenience and Amtrak is quick to pick up on any problems as it is in everyones interest to achieve first time delivery. The fact that some carded deliveries remain is actually positive as it shows the courier is deciding on a safe option if in doubt."

Laura Ashley has sales of around £230 million in the UK and around the world with Franchise operations in Europe, the Middle East and Asia. The company's home furnishings are proving to be particularly popular, with catalogue and online selling expected to continue fast growth. Laura Ashley recently won the European Catalogue and Mail Order Days (ECMOD)'s award for the 'Best all round catalogue business' with annual sales of £25 million to £50 million.

For more information contact:

Jane Hart, Marketing Manager of Amtrak Express Parcels on 0117 933 7725

Please fax any colour sep requests to Robert Peel on fax 01666 824668