

## PSC Enterprise Solutions Case Study:

# Dealer and Distributor Super Portal

*Connecting with business partners for better quality service.*



It's all in the way we listen.®

### The Problem...

The selling of products not only involves providing a lot of information, but also keeping that information up-to-date, which means keeping your portal up-to-date as well. While you may be the first in your line of business, it is only a matter of time before your competition has duplicated or surpassed your efforts. Keeping ahead is always the challenge.

Here is a case study about a manufacturer that took a serious look at how it did business with its distributors, dealers and customers, while at the same time keeping an eye on reducing costs, eliminating paperwork, and providing easier and quicker access to product information. What they learned was that their distributors and dealers were spending most of their time on manual processes – retrieving product information and filling out warranty claims. They launched their first Dealer and Distributor warranty portal in 2002. The quantum leap in the quality of service was not only a huge success; it also saved them more than enough time and money to self-fund a major upgrade.

### The Situation...

The Client, an industry-leading manufacturer of lawn and garden power tools, was ready to take the next step in improving the administrative process associated with the selling and distributing of their products. Their first portal, launched in 2002, gave them the competitive advantage they were seeking by making it easier for their channel to do business and to provide an even better user experience in 2006. To keep the momentum and their market advantage, they decided a major upgrade was in order. They wanted to give the portal a fresh look, add some new features, and make it more open standards compatible.

### The Solution...

PSC built a secure state-of-the-art self-service portal that enables the dealers and distributors to perform most of their product-

related activities with their manufacturer (the client). Some of these activities are:

**Warranty Claims.** Dealers submit their warranty claims by logging into the website. The dealer's distributor is then notified that the claim is in the queue and ready for processing (Approve, Decline, Reject, or Incomplete). The approved claims are transferred nightly to the backend (DB2 on a System i) where they are processed by the Client's staff. Claim checks are issued weekly.

Various reporting options are available to dealers, distributors and the Client. An extensive security scheme that allows actions based on user roles was built into the application to control what can be seen, when and by whom.

*"From the outset, the portal has been a rousing success. This latest and major improvement, which included input from all users, has helped the client transition more and more dealers from the older system to the new one. Today there are about 4,500 dealers actively using the web-based solution and the number is increasing every month"*

**Product Registrations.** Dealers submit product registrations for the products they sell. Registrations are transferred into a backend database (DB2/System i) and referenced for matching with claims as they are submitted. Dealers can also submit registrations for stolen units, which helps identify them should a claim ever be submitted.

**Account Management.** Dealers, distributors and the client manage user accounts via this section of the portal. Upon adding a new user, a login is automatically created with a random password and e-mailed to the user. Passwords can be reset and names and addresses can be modified on-line. Distributors can also manage the dealer profile (type, discounts, pricing, etc), while the Client can manage all accounts from a single

access point. Various reporting options are also available.

**Technical Documentation/Downloads.** Users can search, sort and download documentation and other files as needed. Newsletter agents are used to send out notifications and alerts about the availability of new information.

**Single-point Access.** By integrating the security credentials, a linking mechanism was created enabling all users to connect with other related applications running on different websites.

### The Bottom Line...

Before the portal solution, all the claim processing and product registrations were done either using paper or directly on the System i (only distributors had access to System i applications). So, most of the work was done either by the client's support staff or the distributors themselves. With the portal, dealers can submit and track their own warranty claims, product registrations, etc. All the technical documentation and price files are now readily available to the dealers and distributors. By allowing the dealers to manage their own web site users (registering, deleting, updating, etc.), the dealers, distributors, and the Client's have reduced time and costs.

The real benefit has not been as much monetary as it has been to make it even easier to do business. From the outset, the portal has been a rousing success. This latest improvement, which included input from all users, has helped the client transition more and more dealers from the older system to the new one. Today there are about 4,500 dealers actively using the web-based solution and the number is increasing every month.

### For information contact:

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