

Activant Vision : Success Story

SC plans growth around Vision integration

IF THE UK AFTERMARKET wants to see how integral a computer system is to the running of a successful aftermarket business, then it should look no further than SC Motor Factors of Kent.

A long-standing Activant customer, UK Parts Alliance member (UKPA) and winner of the ADF's Distributor of the Year award, SC Motor Factors will be the first UK company to integrate Activant's ground breaking Vision management system into the business.

The appointment of the new system is crucial to SC and a central reason as to where and when the company plans its next move, which will result in the opening of new branches.

Directors Russell Curtis and Jeremy Stopher are under no illusion that the hard work put in to looking after garage customers is key to the company's success. The straight talking SC directors know the market intimately – what customers want, where the opportunities lie and how to take the business forward.

Distribution

"For a market such as ours, distribution is vital," says Curtis. "Garages take the brand a factor offers. But, brands are not even in the top three criteria for a garage when buying from a factor, as they trust us to supply a quality product regardless. Instead, garages ask three things: 'Have you got the part, when can you deliver it and, how much is it.'"

This experience is commonplace for most factors, Curtis concedes, but what he believes sets SC Motor Factors apart from other motor factors is the company's ability to react to customer needs and quickly, with extensive stock holdings across his network, specialist product knowledge and leading customer service approach. "We offer a very quick service to garages because we



have the parts in stock. By doing this, garages increase productivity by getting cars back on the road quicker, leaving them to service and repair more vehicles."

SC Motor Factors comprises five branches – Maidstone, Forest Hill, Strood, Sidcup and Welling – covering Kent on a daily basis.

Stock management is an essential



"We've got to make stock work harder for us. If its not selling, then we need to know to be able to act quickly" – Jeremy Stopher

issue for SC and the company employs seven staff to manage all aspects of this on a daily basis. Threading this together will be the company's new Activant distributor system, Vision, which manages all aspects of the SC business, from stocking to purchasing and from invoicing to sales reports.

As Stopher explains: "We've got to

make stock work better for us – if it's not selling, then we need to know to be able to act quickly."

As an Activant customer, SC has previously used Series 12 and Prisme distributor management systems. And, in February 2007, Vision will go live across their entire business.

Curtis is upfront about the high impact that Vision will have on the business. "For SC, Activant Vision is the way forward and is a key ingredient in the company growing our branch network."

Technologies

"We liked working with Activant Series 12 and Prisme – as I'm sure so did a number of other factors – but technologies advanced so fast, we need to embrace change now. The market's moved on, our customer base has evolved and we must have the best possible tools at our disposal to service these customers effectively." Using the latest Microsoft .NET technology, Vision provides functionality not previously available in the UK aftermarket with unrivalled access to data and analytics to both drive through new efficiencies as well as raise customer service levels.

To SC, the launch of Vision marks



the completion of a cycle in the distribution aftermarket of customer service. In the beginning, the market was renowned for its customer service, then this was changed in favour of call centres and, now personal service is returning with Vision and its detailed CRM functions.

Activant Vision works by unlocking critical business data and information and presents it to every employee who needs it, when they need it, and so helping to streamline SC Motor Factors' business processes.

Personalise

With the integration of Activant Vision's new and radical Customer Relationship Management (CRM) functionality, Vision will alert SC's sales force to customer purchasing trends and provide the counter team with 'prompts' allowing them to personalise the service they provide. CRM also equips the marketing function within a company with the tools necessary to send regular automated communications to customers.

"Vision allows us to extract more information from customers and trace their sales history," says Curtis.

With the 'comment box' in Vision, we are able to successfully maintain strong relationships with customers."

Stopher admits that in 1997, the company was 'naïve' when changing from Series 12 to Prisme, viewing the



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change as an upgrade rather than a systems overhaul. But this time, SC Motor Factors is ready for the integration of Vision and is busy preparing staff with full training, conducted in conjunction with Activant.

"We're planning fully for the Vision launch," said Stopher. "The next people we employ at SC Motor Factors will be additional training specialists to help us exploit the benefits of the system from

Day One."

So, SC Motor Factors is ready to embark on the next decade of its history with the latest and best distributor management system available to them. Curtis and Stopher see the integration of Vision as an essential part in the factor's added value service offering to customers.

"Garages need a decent motor factor," Curtis says. "The number of factors in the market is fewer than 10 years ago, but the standard is certainly better."

And, although modest, there is no doubt that SC Motor Factors is certainly one of the companies leading this high standard of motor factoring. It's unwavering commitment to investing in the core areas of the business – stock, staff, vans and the computer system Vision – will ensure it remains at the forefront of the independent aftermarket, servicing garage customers to the highest standard possible. ■

SC Motor Factors Ltd
Branches: Five –
Maidstone, Forest Hill,
Stood, Sidcup & Welling
Website: www.scmf.co.uk