

Case study: Kawasaki

Kawasaki streamlines its transaction process with dealers

Background

Kawasaki Motors Europe N.V. is a subsidiary of Kawasaki Heavy Industries, Japan, and established its European headquarters in the Netherlands in 2000. Their business activities are the sales and distribution of motorcycles, all terrain vehicles, quads, jet skis, power products and industrial engines in Europe. Kawasaki Motors Europe have 7 fully owned branches, 3 main warehouses and 21 private distributors throughout Europe, and work with IBM and Experian Data Quality to effectively distribute products via their dealer network.

Situation

When Kawasaki dealers take an order from a customer for a new product or replacement part, or have a warranty claim, they need to relay the customer data including the warranty registration details to Kawasaki. This customer data is used for a variety of purposes, initially to send out a welcome pack to new customers. It is then used to up-sell to customers via direct mail when they have had their Kawasaki vehicle for a given amount of time. Most importantly, the customer data is retained on a database in case of product recalls.

Product recalls are a fact of modern day manufacturing life, and the regulatory authorities in each country will not allow a manufacturer to close off a recall until a specified percentage of the products involved have been recalled, and the problem fixed. It is therefore essential that Kawasaki holds accurate and up-to-date customer name and address details on file.

Up until 2002, every Kawasaki subsidiary in each European country had its own system for collecting customer data from Kawasaki dealers. Some subsidiaries enabled dealers to do this online. Elsewhere, the information had to be relayed to Kawasaki via phone or fax. Kawasaki also had no address validation

solution that covered the European countries in which it operates. As a result, the customer experience was inconsistent from one country to the next, and the customer database contained many inaccurate and incomplete addresses. With the establishment of a new European headquarters in the Netherlands in 2000, Kawasaki decided to create one B2B extranet for the whole of Europe to look after order placement, warranty registration, back-end production, order processing, invoicing and accounting. It turned to IBM for hardware and software support, and to Experian Data Quality for help in validating customer contact data at point of entry.

Solution implementation

For their hardware solution, Kawasaki use IBM iSeries complemented by Websphere software to deliver an IT infrastructure that integrates a variety of applications within a web environment. One of these applications is address capture which validates customer address details instantly as they are given to the dealer. By entering only the customer's house number and postcode (or European equivalent), the remaining address fields in the Kawasaki customer database are automatically populated.

Kawasaki

"There have been no issues at all with the Experian Data Quality software running on the IBM platform; it runs like clockwork."

Brian Haselgrove
Senior Manager, IS Department
Kawasaki Europe

Results

The B2B website that enables Kawasaki dealers to deliver customer data to Kawasaki over the internet went live across Europe on 1 January 2005. It is currently used by around 1,800 Kawasaki dealers. With the website in place, 85% of orders, 90% of product registrations, and almost 90% of warranty claims are relayed to Kawasaki by its dealers over the internet.

With the dealer website linked directly to Kawasaki's back-end system, every keystroke can be verified and checked. And since Experian Data Quality software validates addresses in real-time for almost all of the European countries in which Kawasaki operates, there has been a significant reduction in address errors on the Kawasaki customer database.

The deployment of the IBM/Experian Data Quality solution has also enabled Kawasaki to run its order, parts and warranty departments more efficiently, and staff are able to concentrate on the management of the system rather than having to deal with the data errors.

The amount of direct mail packs sent to customers no longer resident at the address registered has also been reduced, thanks to address capture. In its first two years of operation, the Experian Data Quality software has run on the IBM platform with no issues. Feedback from Kawasaki dealers who hold multiple franchises confirms that the reseller experience when dealing with Kawasaki is ahead of the competition.