

ACTIVANT
FAST

SOLUTIONS SUPPORT
GROWTH FOR UNITED AUTO SUPPLY



PROFILE

Headquarters: Syracuse, NY

Annual Sales: \$30 million

Sales breakdown: 100% installers

Number of employees: 275

Number of locations: 15

Year Founded: 1941

Affiliations: PRONTO/RPM

“Activant Solutions have helped us improve across every department, resulting in a 3% margin gain. With Activant, we focus on profitably growing the business.”

JIM RANALLI

OWNER

UNITED AUTO SUPPLY, INC.

DISTRIBUTOR

Executive Summary

United Auto Supply, a large high-growth wholesale distributor, relies on Activant Ultimate™, The Paperless Warehouse® (TPW) from Activant, and Activant Document Imaging to deliver efficiencies throughout the company. Picking productivity has improved 50%, customers are impressed with fast delivery, inventory is more accurate, office staff saves time, and less paper is consumed—all

culminating in an additional 3% to the bottom line.

Rapid Business Growth Demands Efficiency Gains

United Auto Supply, established in 1946, is a leading ACDelco warehouse distributor selling exclusively to installers. United Auto Supply services over 3,500 accounts on a daily basis, with 100 delivery vehicles and a sales force of 30. Since 2000, the business has grown from a single warehouse to 15 locations. Rapid growth like this, however, did not come without significant challenges. Overall productivity had to be improved at every level in the organization. Management needed a greater range of accounting and management reporting. “I firmly believe that technology solutions will help United Auto Supply achieve its growth goals,” asserts Jim Ranalli, owner, United Auto Supply.

In November 2002, United Auto Supply made the transition to Activant Ultimate, a centralized solution for multi-store business management. For seamless ordering and inventory management via the internet, United Auto Supply locations and business trading partners were linked with Activant AConneX® and WebConneX™.

TPW Dramatically Improves Warehouse Efficiency

United Auto Supply has also implemented TPW for warehouse picking, receiving and inventory management. Almost immediately, the warehouse manager noticed a sharp reduction in the time required to train pickers. “Instead of one month, we are training someone how to use the scanning gun in an hour and fully train them in two days,” says Jay Baker, warehouse manager, United Auto Supply. “I no longer have people walking around the warehouse with pieces of paper in their hand looking for parts. The gun tells them where the part is located.”

Improvements permeate the warehouse. Employees looking for parts no longer interrupt floor managers hundreds of times each day. There are fewer clerical errors and it's easier to catch and correct shipment errors. Physical inventory takes about 30% less time and is more accurate. Picking productivity increased 50%. Customer service is improved because parts can be picked and out the door in minutes. “With TPW, parts are out the door before they would have been picked with the previous system. Speed matters in our business and TPW enables us to deliver much more quickly,” continues Jay.



Activant Cross-docking Propels Increases in Productivity to Even Higher Levels

United Auto Supply implemented Activant's latest TPW module, Cross-docking, in March 2005. This solution identifies incoming freight that needs to be shipped on customer back-orders. Cross-docking, eliminates the steps of putting parts away and immediately picking them. In addition to the timesavings, shelves are less crowded making it easier for staff to find product for other orders. "Up to 25% of every order we receive is Cross-docked. The efficiency gain by not handling this product three times is enormous. We gain many hours in employee productivity every day," asserts Chip Raven, general manager, United Auto Supply. "Cross-docking is an essential TPW module."

Activant Document Imaging Streamlines Paperwork

At 40,000 invoices each month, small savings in paper and processing time add up to big results for United Auto Supply. The company tried a stand-alone document imaging solution, but without integration with Ultimate, it didn't generate the desired savings. With Activant Document Imaging, original customer invoices are automatically stored electronically and after delivery, the signed invoice copy is scanned into the system and the two documents are stored together. The high-speed scanner scans dozens of documents in seconds. If a customer requests a copy of the signed invoice, it takes less than one minute to retrieve it and fax it directly from the computer. "We have a room full of historical paper files, largely the result of printing at least one and one-half boxes of paper each night. With Document Imaging we will nearly eliminate paper and reduce the manual resources required to copy and file paper records. We're already saving \$6,000 annually in paper costs," explains Kim Discenza, controller, United Auto Supply.

Savings and productivity gains from the Document Imaging system come in other ways. Auditors no longer receive boxes of audit documents. Instead, the required documents are scanned into the Document Imaging system and sent via email. Prior to Document Imaging, approximately 50 pages of specific reports were printed and faxed daily to United Auto Supply's lender. Now the reports are automatically stored in the system and reports are e-mailed.

Better Decisions with Data

Jim and his management team use Ultimate and TPW reporting capabilities to track operations throughout the day. They use information as a tool to assess productivity and gain improvements. Managers analyze customer purchase behavior to assess discount levels and determine which customers are critical and should receive more attention. "We use operations reports all day long. We have receive reports about our business including up-to-the-minute inventory levels, customer purchase patterns and even which employee pulled which part at what time," states owner Jim Ranalli. "Activant solutions have helped us improve across every department, resulting in a 3% margin gain. With Activant, we focus on profitably growing the business."



For United Auto Supply, Activant's solutions have delivered solid benefits at warehouse, administrative, and management levels.

ABOUT ACTIVANT

Activant, a leading technology provider of business management solutions serving small and medium-sized businesses, offers customers tailored proprietary software, professional services, content, supply chain connectivity, and analytics. Activant's systems are designed to help customers increase sales, boost productivity, operate more cost-efficiently, improve inventory turns and enhance trading partner relationships.

To learn more about this or other Activant products and services, please call 888.463.4700.



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