

Holley boosts dealer service with Web access to BPCS



Holley Performance Products, Inc., headquartered in Bowling Green, Kentucky, USA, is one of the world's leading makers of high-octane aftermarket automotive components. Holley is also the parent company of Lunati, Weiand, FlowTech, Hooker, Earls and NOS, top brand products for street performance, race and marine applications. Holley uses LANSA Commerce Edition for BPCS to give dealers direct Web access to inventory, orders and accounts information from its BPCS ERP.

Mike Bullard, customer service manager at Holley, says, "The aim of our B2B site was to improve customer service, but due to improved accuracy, fewer inquiry calls and streamlined procedures, we see internal efficiencies as well. This helps keep our prices competitive and we expect the system to pay for itself in seven months. We will always offer one-on-one customer service, but dealers now have a choice."

The Need for Better Dealer Service

Holley was founded in 1903 and soon had its first major customer, Henry Ford, who asked Holley to produce a carburetor for his Ford Model T. So, it is no overstatement to say that Holley has been the undisputed leader in fuel systems for over 100 years.

Today, Holley specializes in the automotive performance aftermarket. Holley's customers are specialized retail automotive stores, such as AutoZone, O'Reiley and Advance and mail order companies like Summit Racing and JEG'S Equipment.

Some dealers use EDI, but until recently, most dealers would fax or phone in orders which customer service representatives would enter into BPCS manually. There were also a large number of stock availability, pricing, delivery dates and account inquiry calls.

"In peak periods the number of calls to our call center would easily amount to 200-300 calls a day," explains Bullard. "We could not always deal with the calls as quickly as we would have liked and customers might have had to wait or leave a message."

"Plus we could not provide customer service during the weekend. Most of our retail dealers are open on Saturdays, while we are only open on weekdays. Dealers would often get inquiries about product availability during the weekend, which they could not answer until Monday. By then the customer might have purchased the product elsewhere."

"We realized that an interactive Web site would improve our customer service and started to look around for a solution," continues **John Lippert**, manager of business systems at Holley.

"We are a fairly small, agile IT organization. Rather than writing solutions, we try to find the best-of-breed packaged solutions that we can integrate with our existing solutions."

"We evaluated several solutions and used a rated response system to compare vendor offerings. In the end, it came down to LANSA because we wanted a solution with native integration to BPCS. We also looked at writing it in-house."

"LANSA Commerce Edition for BPCS was the better deal, because it provided a solution that gave us complete control, without having to develop from scratch," says Lippert.

"We expect the system to pay for itself in seven months."

Concept to Pilot in Four Weeks

Holley's B2B site integrates directly with BPCS. Functions include inventory inquiry, order checking, order entry, delivery tracing, account inquiries and invoice reprinting. For items that are out of stock or made-to-order, the delivery date is calculated by a BPCS MRP module. Dealers can also get shipping status information from UPS and other shippers via direct links from the site.

Holley's project team consisted of Bullard, the project manager on the business side and John Law, a business analyst on the IT side. A LANSA Services consultant made the few customizations that Holley required and the project took four weeks, from concept to the first pilot test.

"We didn't have to re-write a lot," says Lippert. "Most of the tailoring was for our pricing and promotions. Having the majority of the logic out-of-the-box in the LANSA Commerce Edition framework and using LANSA Services expertise for implementation and customization worked well."

"The site gets its information directly and in real time from BPCS. The dealer sees exactly the same information over the Web as our customer service representatives do here at our call center. There is no data duplication and only one version of the truth." →



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"We had a small group of eight dealers using the site for a few months and used their feedback to fine-tune the solution and make sure it met their requirements."

After this initial period, Holley launched the site at the SEMA Show in Las Vegas and signed up more dealers on the spot.

Benefits of an Integrated Solution

"Dealers can now get an answer to most of their queries instantly, without having to wait on the phone for a customer service representative," continues Bullard.

"They can check inventory, place an order, trace the delivery of an order or view their account details. We will always continue to offer one-on-one customer service, but dealers now have a choice of using our Web site."

The Web self-service order status tracking, account inquiry and re-printing of invoices is especially popular, even among the dealers that use EDI.

"We expect to see a 30 to 40 percent drop in phone calls over the coming year," says Bullard. "This will allow our service representatives to provide a better one-on-one service."

"We are looking at a labor savings of two to three hours per day for each representative and we won't need to increase manpower as our business grows."

"Looking into the next year we expect to have little or no wait times when our customers call," says Bullard.

According to Lippert, because the order goes straight into the BPCS system, the site has shortened the normal order processing cycle by at least one day. "But for exceptions, such as out of stock situations, the reduction in processing time is far more dramatic."

"Because the customer is notified immediately, they can now adjust the order instantly. With fax orders, customer service would have to call that customer back."

Holley's customers in Europe and Asia can now check stock levels and place orders during their business hours, instead of waiting for a reply to an email or fax. Holley's local customers also benefit from the 24x7 availability of the site. "Our retailers can now inform their customers with certainty about product availability and delivery, whether it is a weekday or weekend, without having to make a lengthy phone call," explains Bullard.



From left to right: Mike Bullard customer service manager, John Law business analyst and John Lippert manager of business systems at Holley Performance Products.

"Improving the level of service to our dealers means our dealers can provide a better service to their customers as well."

"Very few of our competitors offer a Web site to their dealers. According to our dealers, the few that do have sites that are less advanced and harder to use than ours."

"This is a very competitive market, so customer service is important. We are now easier to do business with, which ultimately translates into better sales."

"The main aim of our B2B site was to improve customer service. Because of the improved accuracy, fewer inquiry calls and invoice reprint requests, plus more streamlined procedures, we have also seen internal efficiencies. This helps us to keep our prices competitive. We expect the system to pay for itself in seven months," says Bullard.

Plans for Continuous Improvement

"We have been using BPCS since 1995 and we are very comfortable with that environment," says Lippert.

"BPCS works extremely well for our business, so finding products like LANSAs that have a native integration with something we already use effectively increases the return on our existing investment and infrastructure."

"LANSAs Commerce Edition gave us complete control, without developing from scratch."

"LANSAs Commerce Edition for BPCS was fast to implement and is easy to maintain. LANSAs works well for us."

"We put this LANSAs Web extension project in ahead of schedule and a few thousand dollars under budget."

"We will continue to improve the site by adding areas for product recommendation and technical assistance."

"For example, when a dealer orders a particular part, the site will pop-up advice that it is best used in combination with another part, then offer a direct link to it. By grouping products logically and advising dealers of complementary products, we expect to drive better sales."

"We are also investigating ways to make it easier for our dealers to electronically transmit their orders directly from their system to ours using LANSAs Integrator."

"Some larger dealers use EDI, but we want to offer our smaller dealers formats, such as XML, CSV and XLS, that are affordable and easy to implement," concludes Lippert. ■

COMPANY AND SYSTEM INFORMATION

- Holley Performance Products, Inc., headquartered in Bowling Green, Kentucky, USA, is the parent company of Holley, Lunati, Weiand, FlowTech, Hooker, Earls and NOS – top brands for street performance, race and marine applications. Holley has been the undisputed leader in fuel systems for over 100 years and Holley carburetors power every NASCAR® team and every NHRA® Pro-Stock champion. The Holley line also includes fuel pumps, fuel injection, intake manifolds, superchargers, cylinder heads, exhaust parts, camshafts and engine dress-up products. For more information visit: www.holley.com
- Holley uses BPCS version 8.03 3.2 and runs both its operational systems and the LANSAs B2B site on a single IBM System i model 825.