



MagnaFlow Performance Exhaust

Capturing and automating inbound sales orders into IFS via Esker Deliveryware



MagnaFlow Performance Exhaust is an ISO-9001 certified global manufacturer that got its start as a natural extension of Car Sound Exhaust Systems, Inc., its parent company, which specializes in superior catalytic converter technology. Car Sound Exhaust Systems, Inc. has spent 25 years earning a reputation as a market leader around the world.

Today, the Car Sound/MagnaFlow team is extremely proud of this and stake their 25 years of experience and reputation on each and every one of their products. Each new product that they develop is field tested to ensure that these products meet stringent quality and performance standards. Mario Andretti confirms their conviction that Car Sound and MagnaFlow Performance Exhaust stand alone as a leader in the exhaust business.

MagnaFlow's corporate headquarters, research & development, manufacturing and a large distribution center are located in California, with other distribution centers located in several key regions worldwide.

Marc Mendez is the Senior Director of Information Technology leading an IT team of five individuals. The company runs an ERP system, Industrial and Financial Systems (IFS), on an Oracle database to manage its supply chain.

Challenge: Eliminating manual order entry for companies not integrated with EDI

As a large manufacturer, Car Sound/MagnaFlow must accommodate an assortment of customer ordering preferences, especially in terms of order size. Some customers request parts in bulk while others procure just a few items at a time. While the company was able to fulfill the orders as requested, the mostly manual processes in place to do so were prone to human-error and used personnel inefficiently.

Car Sound/MagnaFlow received most orders from its customers via fax. Once the faxed documents were received they were manually entered into IFS. When bulk orders arrived, employees were required to key-in as many as 500 items of products for a single transaction. Other times, companies placed individual orders for each item, which also required a tremendous amount of time for administrative tasks associated with manual order entry.

"Our business is constantly growing. We were receiving an increasing amount of fax orders a day. The customer service department was having a difficult time keeping up with the demand," said Mendez. "The IT team had already sat down with the executive committee to determine how we could make our sales order processing system more efficient. Implementing IFS was a significant step forward, but we were still experiencing a strain on resources. We needed to take it to the next level."

After this discussion Car Sound/MagnaFlow implemented an Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) system to automate delivery of inbound faxes directly into IFS. This allowed the accounting department to keep the data electronic, thus eliminating the need for manual entry. However, this still left dozens of customers out of the automation loop.

"While the roll out of EDI was successful, the process only helped for the organizations who had the ability to use EDI," said Mendez. "We had many other customers who were not EDI compatible. It was at that point we became interested in Optical Character Recognition (OCR) technology."

OCR technology would fill the translation gap between the inbound fax and the EDI system within IFS. The challenge remained to find a solution that satisfied their specific requirements.



As time goes by its easier to run"

Marc Mendez ■ MagnaFlow Performance Exhaust

“Esker DeliveryWare is so easy to run, the accounting department manages it on its own. IT has not been involved since implementation, other than the occasional routine maintenance.”

Marc Mendez ■ MagnaFlow Performance Exhaust

“After doing some research on automated fax servers with OCR and EDI capabilities, we narrowed it down to KoFax and Esker DeliveryWare,” said Mendez. “We saw a demonstration and everyone fell in love with Esker DeliveryWare – what the solution had to offer as well as the price was exactly what we were looking for.”

Solution: Esker DeliveryWare

The flexibility of the Esker DeliveryWare document automation platform allowed for seamless integration with Car Sound/MagnaFlow’s existing IT infrastructure. Esker provided hands-on support for the integration as well as in helping set up initial rules to govern the flow of faxes through Car Sound/MagnaFlow’s ERP system.

Now, when an inbound sales order arrives via fax, the information is automatically captured by Dynamic Document Capture (DDC) within Esker DeliveryWare, which uses OCR technology in combination with a patented Business Rules Engine to convert orders into an XML file. The information is then sent directly to IFS where the order is pulled into the system through the EDI technology. No manual intervention is necessary.

Benefits

“By automating the sales order transaction process we have reduced the amount of time spent each day on order entry. It has enabled us to dedicate more resources to customer service, which allows us to better care for our customers,” said Mendez. “In addition, we have been able to stay on top of and efficiently manage the increasing number of orders. Not only does Esker DeliveryWare provide the automation piece, it also archives each document creating an excellent document management system to find any document at any time from any location.”

Support

The IT and accounting departments at Car Sound/MagnaFlow worked very closely with Esker.

“At first the people involved with order entry were skeptical of any change. Understanding that, it was key to include them in the process from the very beginning. We asked for their ideas and encouraged them to be an active part of the implementation,” said Mendez. “At the same time, Esker was with us from day one. The team seemed to know exactly what we wanted and was always ready to help. The support was great.”

Future Plans

Up to this point, Car Sound/MagnaFlow has been using Esker DeliveryWare to automate the delivery of inbound documents. Moving forward, the company plans to roll out the Esker DeliveryWare platform globally, by providing a central number that will automatically route all inbound fax orders to the central system in California. Both the IT and management teams believe handling a worldwide call center at one location will improve customer service tremendously.