

AIMS BENEFITS FROM EACH INNOVATIVE ACTIVANT PRISM RELEASE



Prism Helps AIMS Win Customers

Bob Duxler, owner of Automotive Industry Management System (AIMS), has built his business on a simple philosophy. "It's the service that makes the difference," he says. "We don't sell auto parts. We sell service."

Bob's customers can buy products from a host of sources, but time and again they choose AIMS. Bob believes there is a simple reason why

AIMS continues to win the business: his competitors focus on product lines instead of on people. "You'd be surprised how many companies sell parts but don't understand customer service," he says. "We exist first and foremost to service our customers' needs. That's why we use Activant Prism. Prism is essentially a service tool."

Bob's father founded AIMS in 1948. Until recently, the Simi Valley, California wholesaler used a homegrown information system to manage the business. Like most aspects of the company, the system was designed to meet a specific set of requirements. As time marched on and the industry as a whole became much better automated, Bob knew it was time for change. Although the homegrown system ran well and was inexpensive to operate, it was not integrated with an electronic catalog. "Our productivity was being impeded," he says. "It was inefficient to rely on paper catalogs, and a stand-alone computer with a catalog didn't seem like a complete solution."

The Proven Formula of Price, Service and Value

After doing exhaustive research, he narrowed his search to Activant Prism™ and Autolog. "It made sense to go with Activant because they are the industry leader," he says. "It wasn't hard to justify the expense of Prism. Because it reduces our operating costs, it will easily pay for itself over time. We see proof of that every day."

Prism has enabled AIMS to lower operating costs by functioning with one fewer counterperson. Shortly after installing Prism, a counterperson at AIMS resigned. Bob found that because Prism had streamlined operations, he did not need to replace the employee. "That person cost \$4,000 per month," he says. "We're spending a little over \$1,000 per month on Prism. So we're ahead \$3,000 per month in that situation alone. That's money to the bottom line."

Prism also helps AIMS save costs by transforming new employees with very little industry knowledge into proficient parts specialists. "Thanks to Prism, we are no longer restricted to hiring people who already know about automotive parts," Bob says. "Those people are expensive and difficult to find. Prism can turn someone new to the business into an expert in about six months."

Another reason AIMS favored Prism is because Autolog uses Activant's electronic catalog. Bob prefers working with a single vendor that offers integrated products. "An integrated system is more reliable," he continues. "We might have saved a few dollars in the short term by going with a cheaper product from another vendor. But it's worth paying for the best. If you buy a system based solely on price, then service and value will suffer."

PROFILE

Headquarters: Simi Valley, California

Sales Breakdown: 100% wholesale

Number of Employees: 13

Locations: 1

Founded: 1948

Affiliation: Automotive Parts Associates

"I knew Prism would pay for itself from productivity gains. It has proven its worth since day one."

BOB DUXLER
OWNER
AIMS

Prism is Rich with Improvements in Speed and Accuracy

AIMS' objective is to empower customers to return repaired vehicles to their owners as quickly as possible. To that end, AIMS countermen make the most of Activant Cover-to-Cover™, an electronic catalog that can display diagrams and pictures of parts. "Fast and precise parts delivery is key," Bob says. "Prism and Cover-to-Cover ensure we deliver the right parts promptly."

AIMS uses Activant PartExpert® in Prism to reduce the time it takes to look up parts. In Prism Release 13, users can enter a Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) during the lookup process. Because the VIN contains information such as make, model, year, engine size and brake system, it's a more accurate and efficient way to determine the right parts for each car. If AIMS needs to source the part from outside its inventory, the information that PartExpert provides makes the sourcing process more precise. "When our parts identification processes are accurate, we reduce the risk of returns," Bob says. "This technology also increases customer loyalty. VIN Lookup is an extremely useful new feature."

Prism also helps AIMS identify customers with its Phone Lookup feature, which allows counter staff to quickly find a customer record using a telephone number. Phone Lookup lets countermen avoid the limitations of a basic alpha lookup, which can take longer to identify the correct data. Counter men enter a customer's telephone number into Prism to get all the information they need—from credit limit and balance to tax information and terms. "Phone Lookup vastly increases our productivity at the point-of-sale," Bob notes. "It also makes it easier for us to track customers and their buying patterns."

Meanwhile, Activant PowerPricer™ reduces the time it takes for AIMS to update prices. Previously, personnel had to calculate prices in a spreadsheet and then manually enter the changes into the system. PowerPricer, another new feature in Prism Release 13, automates that process. "We buy from 45 vendors," Bob says. "Monthly pricing updates used to take as long as five days. PowerPricer has cut that to five minutes."

Bob and his staff appreciate Prism's flexibility, which enables them to tailor the system to their unique business processes. Take for example INSEQ, Prism's Part Number Sequencing feature, "Before we had this feature, we couldn't control the order in which an inventory item appeared in the system," Bob explains. "They were sequenced by the manufacturer's method. Now our inventory list can be correlated to the order that items appear on our shelves, or practically any other method we want. This new feature saves time and improves accuracy."

Ongoing Enhancements to Prism Helps AIMS Deliver Quality Service

"The great thing about Activant is the way they improve the product based on user feedback," Bob says. "They pay attention to suggestions from the people like us who use the product. As a result, we obtain genuinely worthwhile enhancements — a lot faster than I ever could have built them into my custom system."

In closing, Bob says AIMS has measurably improved the business by leveraging Prism's seamless access to parts information and customer data. "It's almost twice as fast to serve customers with Prism than it was with the old system," he says. "At the same time, we have enhanced our high standard of customer service by increasing accuracy. We should have moved to Activant Prism a long time ago."



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Bob Duxler
Owner
AIMS

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,
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