

# ACONNEX GROWTH

## DELIVERS SPEED, SERVICE AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR AUTOMOTIVE ELECTRIC DISTRIBUTORS



### PROFILE

**Headquarters:** Portland, Oregon

**Annual Sales:** \$23 million

**Sales Breakdown:** 25% corporate,  
75% independent

**Number of Employees:** 90

**Locations:** 4

**Affiliation:** Automotive Distribution  
Network

**“AConneX gives our customers anytime access to our inventory, thus freeing counter personnel to handle other transactions. This allows us to grow without adding counter staff.”**

MAC GRITTON  
IT DIRECTOR

AUTOMOTIVE ELECTRIC DISTRIBUTORS

### Executive Summary

Automotive Electric Distributors (AED), headquartered in Portland, Oregon, recognized that the key to managing operating costs and growth was streamlining its ordering process. Activant AConneX® and A-DIS® solutions have helped AED to increase sales and accuracy at their company stores and provide the connectivity required to serve independent jobbers across a wide geographic

region. AED’s next step is to incorporate Activant Vision, thus continuing AED’s business growth and success with the Activant family of business management solutions.

### A Postwar Era of Prosperity

The founders of AED must have recognized that the 1950s was prime time to enter the automotive aftermarket. With passage of the Interstate Highway Act in 1956 and massive suburban expansion, Americans’ thirst for the automobile was nearly insatiable. Along with record automobile production and sales, the auto industry was adding new features to many of its vehicles. Air conditioning, electrically operated car windows and seat adjusters were just some of the comforts that made road travel even more appealing. The more Detroit added, the more demand there was for replacement parts.

AED’s founders were part of a generation that embraced the future and believed anything was possible: rapid, upward mobility of the middle class, automation in the home, space travel and quite possibly, two cars in every garage. Perhaps it was this social culture of the 1950s and 60s that still guides the corporate culture at AED today, giving forward-thinking owners and managers the courage to implement efficient, cutting-edge technology—with Activant’s business management solutions at the center.

### Speed, Service and Expansion with AConneX

“As we’ve expanded from three-step to two-step distribution, our biggest challenge has been keeping our operating costs under control,” says Mac Gritton, IT Director at AED. “AConneX has allowed us to manage growth without adding counter staff.”

After 18 months using AConneX, AED has increased electronic transactions by 25% and now processes 32% of its two-step business transactions electronically through AConneX. Mac reports, “One of our stores handles 46% of its overall business with AConneX. That’s outstanding.”

Jobbers connected to AED can give their service dealers 24-hour ordering capability and faster delivery. "AConneX gives our customers anytime access to our entire inventory and frees our counter personnel to handle other transactions. With exposure to our extensive inventory, jobbers and service dealers don't have to source parts elsewhere," explains Mac. "Before we had AConneX, many of our customers experienced lengthy hold times. Those using AConneX are now much happier. We've eliminated any difficulty in ordering from AED."

#### **A-DIS Connects Customers, Regardless of Platform**

For years, AED was a traditional three-step organization. With market changes, it is seeing increased sales on the two-step side. "Our customers are free to choose a platform that makes sense for their business and are able to connect to AED's inventory through A-DIS. A-DIS handles both segments of our business," says Mac. "It also has been able to solve a tremendous amount of connectivity issues with our customers. We communicate easily with both Activant systems and non-Activant systems."

#### **Excited About the Future**

In the 1950s, futuristic meant wraparound windshields and jet-tube taillights. Today, futuristic means a cutting-edge business management solution that helps long-standing companies like AED operate a lean, efficient organization focused on just-in-time service at rocket speed.

For AED, this certainly means an Activant solution. "We really feel confident with Activant products," says Mac. "They do a good job with connectivity and that's critical to our business. But what's next for us? We're looking forward to the next-generation product, Activant Vision. We're certain that it's going to help us continue to grow our two-step side while accommodating our three-step business. I'm really impressed."



AConneX gives AED customers anytime access to the entire inventory.

#### **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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