

GOLD STANDARD AUTOMOTIVE USES ACTIVANT VISION™ TO CREATE A THRIVING CUSTOMER-CENTRIC ENTERPRISE



PROFILE

Headquarters: Boston, Massachusetts

Number of Employees: More than 100

Locations: 6

Founded: 2000

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JEFF CLYDE
PRESIDENT

GOLD STANDARD AUTOMOTIVE

A Vision for Complete Customer Relationships

When Jeff Clyde and his partners set out to establish an automotive parts distributorship that would outperform competitors in the Boston, Massachusetts area, they knew that merely servicing customers would not be enough. To prevail in the aggressive market, they built their business around complete customer relationships. “We use the information from each customer touch to make the next touch an even better experience,” says Jeff, president of Gold Standard Automotive. “That level of customer service has been virtually non-existent in the automotive parts business.”

The key to this service level is the distributor’s ability to capture, analyze and communicate customer information on a near real-time basis. To accomplish this, Gold Standard uses Activant Vision™. “Anybody can sell good parts,” Jeff says. “Our policy is making every customer feel like they are the most important person we’ve talked to that day and that their satisfaction is vital to our success. Activant Vision enables us to do that.”

Since opening its doors in 2000 at a suburban Boston warehouse, Gold Standard has expanded to six locations in eastern Massachusetts and has over 100 employees. Annual sales growth consistently exceeds 20 percent. Jeff attributes this success to Gold Standard’s unique coupling of technology and an enterprise-wide commitment to customer relationship management (CRM). “Activant Vision lets us take CRM to the next level,” he says. “Our customers are confident that every transaction will be adapted to his or her specific preferences.”

Activant’s Solution Outshines the Competition

The initial launch of the company hinged on a few imperatives. With the differentiated customer experience at the core of the Gold Standard business model, Jeff and his partners needed a technology platform that would facilitate a true CRM strategy, one that would involve every area of their operation. “We wanted a system that offered a true, fully integrated CRM solution, not just something that would be plugged in as an add-on,” he says.

During a trip to the annual Automotive Aftermarket Products Expo (AAPEX) in Las Vegas, Gold Standard decision-makers compiled a list of 15 possible business management platforms, and then quickly pared that to six. Following presentations to the investor group, three systems were identified as finalists. Activant Vision topped the list. “Vision was head and shoulders above the rest,” Jeff says.

“The look and feel and complexity of Activant Vision sold us immediately,” he continues. “We were very impressed with its graphical user interface, CRM technology, easily customized information fields, APGL integration, and state-of-the-art inventory control.”

Activant Vision is a comprehensive enterprise management system that helps medium and large automotive warehouse distributors simplify growth and streamline operations. Flexible configuration choices and a powerful relational database fit Vision to each distributor’s unique business mix. CRM best practices are built into Vision to help distributors differentiate their business through consistently exceptional service at each location.

Making Best Practices a Daily Reality

The implementation of Vision quickly gave Gold Standard the ability to provide clear, concise business-critical account data to virtually any employee who could have an impact on a customer’s satisfaction and loyalty.

The most effective CRM strategies begin with a single onscreen “view” of the customer that can be accessed by anyone across your entire organization.

Gold Standard recently faced a similar situation. “Our counterman saw the salesperson’s note that he was making progress opening the door and we had to do everything possible to serve this customer,” recalls Jeff. “We had the part and he personally dropped it off in time to get the vehicle fixed that night. This installer has been one of our top customers ever since. We would have never have earned his business that quickly without Activant’s Vision product.”

The business has also integrated Vision with its telephone system. Each time the phone rings, the customer’s account information is instantly displayed on the counterman’s screen. “Let’s say a customer calls back about a quote we gave him earlier,” Jeff explains. “When another counterperson takes the call, he immediately knows that the customer called about pads and rotors for a 2002 Honda Accord. This kind of personalized service is very impressive to customers, and is fundamental to our success.”

The Formula for Ongoing Success

Vision delivers the information Gold Standard employees need to provide customers with differentiated service. The upshot: customers feel Gold Standard cares more about their business than other suppliers, and does all the extra things that help them thrive. From knowing what grade of product a customer prefers, to immediate company-wide awareness of a customer’s recent problem, personalized care cements strong client relationships.

Looking ahead, Jeff foresees continued growth for Gold Standard, with Activant Vision playing a vital role. “We expect to expand to 14 locations within the next couple of years,” he predicts. “The secret to our success is not merely having the right brands, professional countermen, or quick delivery. Vision enables us to attract and retain the leading accounts in each of our target markets by helping us truly understand our customers and enabling us to facilitate their ongoing success.”



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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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