

# VAST-AUTO DISTRIBUTION FLIES FORWARD WITH EAGLE



## Deploying Modern Technology to Support Ongoing Growth

### Vast-Auto - Corporate

Vast-Auto Distribution, a major distributor of automotive parts in Eastern Canada, has experienced massive growth in the past two decades. They have spent millions of dollars on expansion projects. They started in 1986 with a 25,000 square foot warehouse and 15

employees. Today, the Montreal-based distributor has expanded in Quebec and Ontario and now operates a 180,000 square foot warehouse in Montreal and a 60,000 square foot warehouse in Toronto servicing over 350 corporate and associate stores and service centers in both provinces.

“We realize how important accurate information is, so we put the necessary emphasis on making sure we get the right data to the people who need it,” says Mauro Cifelli, vice president of sales and marketing at Vast-Auto.

Consistent with its commitment to progress, Vast-Auto converted its six corporate stores from Activant J-CON® to Activant Eagle® for the Aftermarket and has started to implement the new system in its associate stores.

### Store Network

Store managers conduct business today in a very different way than what they did 10 years ago—largely because information technology plays a more prominent role. They constantly have to make decisions about stocking or non-stocking parts. The Eagle system streamlines these decision-making processes so they can optimize the way they handle inventory and remain competitive.

### Turnkey Operations from Installation to Administration

The Eagle system was implemented at Vast-Auto’s Granby corporate store. Counter men were able to learn the system very quickly and say it’s more intuitive, and they can complete transactions more quickly. The Eagle system offers them more flexibility when it comes to setting up their catalogs and their point-of-sale procedures as well.

The Eagle system’s ease-of-use also makes the workforce more efficient. “Our counter men have a very flexible system at their fingertips with a wide range of data services available,” explains Eric Duteau, key Eagle trainer and technical specialist at Vast-Auto. “This enables new employees to become productive much more quickly, allowing us to reduce costs and

## PROFILE

**Headquarters:** Montreal, Canada

**Sales Breakdown:** Wholesale

**Number of Employees:** 250

**Locations:** 2 warehouse distribution centers and 7 corporate stores

**Founded:** 1986

**Affiliation:** Aftermarket Auto Parts Alliance

**“Eagle is part of our overall strategy to make our store operations more efficient at every level.”**

MAURO CIFELLI  
VICE PRESIDENT  
SALES AND MARKETING  
VAST-AUTO DISTRIBUTION

improve productivity by hiring junior countermen instead of hard-to-find industry veterans.”

Eric says the Eagle system’s ability to run in training mode is a welcome feature. When new employees use Eagle in training mode, they don’t affect the live system. “They see a mirror image of their data, so they can get comfortable with the environment without impacting the live database,” he explains. “That way there is no impact on the company operations.”

Vast-Auto puts a lot of effort into getting young people interested in entering the automotive aftermarket industry. The company works with school boards to introduce students to the trade. “Finding the right people is a huge issue,” Eric says. “As these new workers enter our industry, we need to manage the turnover. Training someone to sell auto parts should not be more complicated than training them to work in another retail sector. Eagle facilitates the training process, making it easier for us and more attractive to potential employees.”

### **Making Well-Informed Decisions**

André Cabana, Granby store manager, says that when auto manufacturers introduce new models, more parts come into existence. With nearly half a million SKUs in its system, his store depends on the Eagle system to manage the increasingly difficult issue of parts proliferation. “We are constantly faced with decisions about when to activate or deactivate parts,” André says. “We are also required to better manage inventories at the store level.”

Vast-Auto’s corporate stores use Activant Business Advisor, a powerful tool designed to provide key performance indicators to business owners and managers. The dynamic dashboard enables management to quickly see business summary information. “We can look at the dashboard any time to check profitability and sales for the day, the hour, or the minute,” explains Eric. “We can review employee productivity or any aspect of the business we are interested in.”

Eric adds that Business Advisor gives store managers the flexibility to drill down to details behind inventory and sales figures with a simple point-and-click operation from the Management Summary Window. The built-in calendar tool lets managers view information for any period in which data was collected. “We can easily move information from Business Advisor into an Excel spreadsheet or get a graph of the information we want,” he says. “It’s a powerful tool that helps us do a better job of analyzing the business and making the corresponding critical business decisions.”

In closing, André says that the Eagle system is part of his store’s overall strategy to make its operations more efficient at every level. “It enables us to service our customers better by having the right parts on the shelf at the right time,” he says. “It’s very reassuring to know that Eagle gives us that competitive advantage.”



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**ANDRÉ CABANA**  
GRANBY STORE MANAGER

### **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.

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