

# SMARTSEARCH REVS UP EFFICIENCY FOR BUSY AUTO DEALER

## CASE STUDY



**BUSINESS:**  
Automobile Dealership

**COMPANY:**  
Donley Auto Group

**OBJECTIVES:**  
Manage repair orders more efficiently and improve customer service

## SmartSearch helps a high-volume automobile dealership simplify the complex task of managing thousands of repair orders across multiple locations.

Managing thousands of vehicle repair orders had become a real challenge for a high-volume Ford dealership with multiple locations. By providing a simple, affordable way to accurately and reliably store and retrieve these critical records, SmartSearch turned out to be a great deal for Donley Auto Group, saving the company many thousands of dollars in labor costs annually and significantly improving customer service.

With locations in four communities, Donley Auto Group has been “the Heart of Ohio’s Ford dealer” for more than 50 years. Thanks to Donley, folks looking to buy or lease a new or pre-owned vehicle in Ashland, Galion, Mt. Vernon and Shelby can browse through an extensive inventory of cars, trucks and SUVs online or on the lot. The company’s busy sales, service and parts departments strive for “100 percent customer satisfaction.” Offering this level of service across the state, however, had brought on an acute recordkeeping headache.

Donley Auto Group’s documentation requirements are inherently complex. Vehicles purchased at any of its four locations can be serviced at that or any other location, so every outlet requires access to the others’ repair orders. Some customers own multiple vehicles which may have been purchased and serviced at different locations. To complicate matters further, routine service work is handled differently from internal and warranty work; and service writers, cashiers, accountants and others working in different locations all may require access to these records.

Prior to adopting SmartSearch, company processes for managing repair orders relied almost exclusively on paper copies. Donley Auto Group uses a Reynolds & Reynolds Dealer Management System (DMS) to help manage its business operations, including service work, but the system’s capabilities are limited. Typically, a DMS-generated repair order was produced by a service writer when a customer dropped off a vehicle for servicing, and a copy of the repair order was printed on hard stock (a “hard card”) for use by the service technician working on the vehicle.

When the work was finished, the hard card and keys were given to the cashier and, if the work was to be paid for by the customer, an invoice was generated. When the customer picked up the vehicle, four copies of the invoice/repair order were generated: 1) a *customer* copy, 2) an *accounting* copy (signed by the customer), 3) a *service* copy (stapled to the hard card), and 4) an *internal* copy. For work classified as “internal” or “warranty,” the process differed somewhat and the invoice might be generated up to a week later.



## ABOUT SQUARE 9 SOFTWORKS

Square 9 Softworks is a leading developer of innovative, business-centric software solutions including the award-winning SmartSearch Content Management Suite. Dedicated to making content management available to organizations of all sizes, Square 9 Softworks designs solutions built on open architecture and cutting-edge technologies that drive efficiency and productivity across all business applications.

Through decades of experience with content management technologies in business enterprises of all kinds, Square 9 Softworks has acquired a thorough understanding of document-driven business processes. Intensely customer-focused and highly responsive, the company delivers effective, value-driven solutions and has achieved a reputation for excellence in meeting the rapidly evolving needs of its customers.

Square 9 Softworks distributes its solutions exclusively through a network of highly skilled channel partners from its corporate office in New Haven, Connecticut. For further information, visit [www.square-9.com](http://www.square-9.com)

By the time Donley Auto Group had grown to four geographically diverse locations, this system had become extremely problematic. Candy Bores, IT Manager for Donley Auto Group, explained: "Depending on where the work had been performed and how it was invoiced, a repair order could wind up in any one of four different boxes in any one of four different locations."

As might be expected, both efficiency and customer service were suffering. "Our biggest problem was getting things done in a timely manner," Bores recalled. "Frequently, if someone had a question, you had to get a hold of someone else who might then have to drive to another location, go into the attic to find the information, make copies and transport them back to you. If a customer had a question, it might take our service writers a day or two to get back to them with the answer."

Initially, Bores devised a system for storing scanned repair orders to a shared computer drive, but archiving them proved to be a "nightmare" because of the need to catalog them by multiple criteria and locations. So when Bores' trusted office technology company proposed SmartSearch, she was open-minded.

With SmartSearch, Donley Auto Group enjoys a simplified version of its customary procedures—less much of the paper and virtually all of the aggravation associated with it. The signed customer copy of the repair order and associated hard card are now scanned by cashiers at each location and indexed into SmartSearch using the required criteria (V.I.N., service date, repair order number and customer). Secure in SmartSearch, these critical records are available to authorized users at any Donley location *instantly*. The information is literally "at their fingertips."

Efficiency has improved dramatically and measurably. In addition to being "a lot happier," Bores estimated that cashiers at all four locations are each saving up to eight hours per week—a 20-percent reduction in labor costs for these employees. The "service" and "internal" copies of repair orders are no longer necessary and could be eliminated—a 50-percent reduction in paper costs. And, at last, Donley Auto Group's customers now get timely answers to their questions. "SmartSearch resolved many customer relations issues and has definitely helped us to retain customers," Bores said.

SmartSearch was so successful, Bores explained, that within five months of adopting it, Donley Auto Group had expanded the use of SmartSearch to its accounting, human resources and parts departments and wanted to double its user licenses. "This affordable, easy to use solution has worked very well for us," Bores said. "I would not hesitate to recommend SmartSearch to others."