

SMARTSEARCH TURBOCHARGES HIGH-END AUTOMOBILE DEALERSHIP

CASE STUDY



BUSINESS:
Automobile Dealerships

COMPANY:
Carrera Motors

OBJECTIVES:
Eliminate costly paper records; operate more efficiently, profitably and securely; improve customer service

Carrera Motors eliminates costly, cumbersome paper records with SmartSearch, boosting service department performance and improving customer service

Carrera Motors was born when its founder, Tom Anderson, brought his passion for German cars to Bend, Oregon in 1982. Today, the Carrera Motors family of top brands includes Audi, BMW, Porsche and Volkswagen. Dubbed "the outdoor playground of the West," the town of Bend is a picturesque mountain resort with a cosmopolitan flair – an ideal setting for a dealership specializing in high-end automobiles.

The Carrera Motors campus features exclusive Club Carrera. In addition to its 15,000 square-foot dream garage with secure, climate-controlled collector car storage, Club Carrera offers a richly appointed lounge, indoor detail facility and many activities for members. It has become an international haven for auto sports enthusiasts. "We succeeded by creating an environment where the customer thrives," said Richard Grant, Service Director of Carrera Motors. "On top of the unusually high level of experience and service we provide, Carrera Motors is one of only a handful of dealerships with an exciting auto sports club."

In the process of maintaining and repairing customers' automobiles, Carrera Motors' four service departments together generate about 1,100 repair orders and accompanying paper documentation each month. All of these documents must be carefully filed and be readily accessible for Carrera Motors' service personnel to provide the superior level of service its discriminating customers expect. Over the years, however, filing, storing and retrieving the growing volume of paper records had become more and more problematic.

"I don't know of any automobile dealership that has too much storage space," mused Grant. "When we began researching electronic content management solutions, we were primarily looking for a way to reduce the volume of repair orders and related documents we had to store. SmartSearch not only solved our paper storage problem, it also boosted the productivity of our technicians. Because vehicle repair histories are now available at their workstations, our technicians no longer have to leave their bays to locate this information and are 20 percent more productive. Maintenance and repairs are completed and cars are returned to their owners faster, so SmartSearch has improved customer service as well."

Carrera Motors discovered another of SmartSearch's advantages quite unexpectedly. Sometime after Carrera's office equipment reseller had introduced Grant to SmartSearch, a vehicle purchased through a Portland, Oregon dealership arrived at Carrera Motors' Bend facility needing service. Fortunately, the Portland dealership was using SmartSearch. "We called Portland requesting the vehicle's repair history," Grant explained, "and within minutes the dealership had e-mailed the vehicle's entire file to us. We were even able to read the technicians' hand-written notes on the repair orders. I recall thinking 'Wow, everything is right here. This is great!' This experience gave us tremendous confidence in SmartSearch right from the start."



ABOUT SQUARE 9 SOFTWARES

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

"SmartSearch is an excellent value and is extremely easy to learn and use," Grant said. "I can train anyone to scan documents and index them into SmartSearch in just a few minutes. Once we saw how affordable and easy to use it was, the decision to invest in SmartSearch was a 'no-brainer.'"

Like many dealerships, Carrera Motors uses the Reynolds and Reynolds Dealer Management System (DMS) to generate repair orders and customer invoices. Now, however, when the repair and invoicing process is completed, the DMS-generated paper documents are placed in closed files. The following morning they are then quickly and easily scanned and indexed into SmartSearch as PDF files. Once stored safely in SmartSearch, the documents are available instantly to Carrera's service technicians, advisors and other authorized users.

Carrera Motors' technicians use SmartSearch primarily to view the repair history of vehicles they are servicing. This aids in diagnosing problems, ensures that repairs are perfected and helps Carrera to comply with the manufacturers' documentation requirements, an especially helpful capability when parts must be special-ordered and when repairs are made under warranty. Prior to installing SmartSearch, Carrera's technicians had to leave their bays to manually look for this information. "Trying to find paper records was like looking for the proverbial needle-in-a-haystack," Grant lamented. "With 15,000 paper files in storage, the labor costs to regularly find and retrieve them were tremendous."

Total security is another added benefit, since Carrera Motors' irreplaceable files are now backed up electronically. "Heaven forbid we had a fire or other disaster, SmartSearch ensures there is no chance whatsoever of losing any information," Grant said. "The solution proved so reliable that we shredded our paper files within one month of installing SmartSearch."

Grant said the greatest return on Carrera's SmartSearch investment is in labor cost savings. Carrera Motors employs 65 people, many of them technicians working in its busy service department. Since these technicians are now 20 percent more efficient in performing their jobs with SmartSearch, this translates into commensurate labor cost savings. SmartSearch also allowed Carrera to avoid the expense of renting offsite storage facilities. Based on its success in the service department, Carrera Motors plans to deploy SmartSearch in phases throughout other areas of the business.

Would Grant recommend SmartSearch? "Definitely!" he exclaimed. "SmartSearch is an ideal way to efficiently and safely manage vital records and save valuable space. Our service technicians and advisors are saving significant amounts of time retrieving information, a real win-win for the dealership and our customers. Based on my 26 years of service experience, I believe investing in SmartSearch is one of the smartest business decisions a company could ever make."