



A leading Japanese automotive manufacturer uses Assima solution to deliver a sophisticated parts-ordering application for retailers and distributors across Europe and Africa, in 20 local languages

THE CHALLENGE

As a key element of their post-sales operations, automotive manufacturers must be able to deliver spare parts to dealers and distributors quickly on demand. This is the case at the European branch of a leading Japanese automotive company, which employs 80,000 people, operates nine manufacturing plants, and sells vehicles through 8,500 retailers and distributors in 56 countries.

To give their 8,500 official retailers and distributors across Europe and Africa fast, reliable access to the spare parts they need, in 1997 the company developed an innovative online parts ordering system, called the New Parts Application (NPA). This is a JAVA-based Delivery Ordering System (DOS) that enables retailers to order parts online, claim for broken or missing parts and check the availability of parts in the company's local distribution centres. Orders are sent electronically to Diest, Belgium, where a stock of 260,000 parts and a catalogue of a million orderable parts are maintained. Retailers place 120,000 orders on the system every day, and these are typically delivered within one or two working days.

With very few of the company's retailers in the region working in English, the NPA had to be translated into a total of 20 local languages. Initially, this was an extremely daunting prospect. The company was planning to build, host and maintain 20 different versions of the system, as well as updating content and inventory changes manually.

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But realising that the cost of developing, hosting and updating different versions of the NPA to meet these language requirements was prohibitive, the company began looking for alternative, more efficient ways to support online parts ordering in customers' local languages.

SOLUTION

The company's search led them to Assima's Multilingual Suite (AMS), which enables organisations to translate their

AT A GLANCE

CHALLENGES

- Enable retailers and distributors to order parts in 20 languages
- Minimise development and hosting costs
- Update content and inventory changes cost effectively

SOLUTION

- Assima Multilingual Suite (AMS)
- Translation of application content into multiple languages
- Efficient, centralised process

BENEFITS

- Only one system to develop and maintain
- Substantial cost savings
- Continual improvement for customers

applications into multiple languages without impacting the underlying source code. This approach eliminates the need to develop, host and maintain multiple systems to meet local language needs – delivering major time and cost savings.

The Assima solution works by extracting text from the NPA's Graphical User Interface (GUI) into a separate editable file which can then be translated into the required local language. When local users access the system, the Assima software applies the translation in real-time.

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In effect, the solution creates a 'translation layer' on top of the NPA. This means the company can use just one set of application code and content to meet local language needs, instead of building and maintaining lots of different applications.

New versions of the NPA are released regularly to ensure text and inventory content is always current and accurate. Four times a year, the company extracts data from the NPA GUI into Excel spreadsheets and translates them into local languages. Then, they send the spreadsheets to the National Marketing

and Sales Companies (NMSCs) in different countries to be checked for style and grammar.

The developer team in Diest, Belgium, then uploads the approved content back into the system, and the company releases a new, updated version of the NPA.

RESULTS & BENEFITS

Every day, the Assima solution enables the company's 8,500 retailers and distributors to place 120,000 orders from the European branch's online catalogue of more than a million spare parts – all in their native languages.

System costs cut significantly

By reaching out to customers across the region using a single application and set of source code, AMS has significantly reduced the company's development, hosting and maintenance costs, delivering substantial cost savings.

Fast, efficient system maintenance

The Assima solution has greatly simplified the process of maintaining the NPA content based on centralised, standardised processes. The company can now deliver ordering services across Europe and Africa with a single system and just one set of code. As a result, all changes and updates to content or inventory can be handled centrally based on efficient, standardised processes, which minimises time spent on manual admin and leads to significant cost reductions.

Supporting the company's value of 'Kaisen' (continual improvement)

The NPA's quarterly release cycle ensures that the NPA content and inventories are always accurate and updated, supporting the company's global corporate value of 'Kaisen', or continual improvement.

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To stay true to Kaisen, the company needs to constantly adapt and evolve its technology resources to meet changing business needs – which is exactly what it's doing with the NPA. Its ability to make changes to this application in 20 local languages is largely thanks to the Assima solution.

Delivering returns on investment, year after year

The Assima solution was initially implemented in 1997, when the NPA was first deployed. Since then, it has been constantly updated and improved, but it continues to deliver the same key benefit – efficient online ordering in multiple languages, with just one application to host and maintain. And, importantly, the solution is still providing significant returns on investment.

