

Invacare

Optimizing complex selling and ordering processes across Europe

Invacare Corporation is the world's leading manufacturer of home medical equipment, manufacturing a wide range of products including power and manual wheelchairs, walkers, home oxygen systems and home care bed systems.

A US-based multinational, Invacare has 7,000 employees worldwide with some 1,800 located throughout Europe.

Within Europe, Invacare has 7 research centers, 11 factories and sales representatives in 20 countries, generating €450 million in annual revenue.

Invacare sells both standard and custom products designed for the specific needs of each individual customer, along with the corresponding spare parts for these products.

Invacare selected Cameleon to optimize their sales process and launch a new e-commerce strategy.



«Cameleon has enabled us to optimize the entire cycle from initial order capture through manufacturing to final customer delivery. For our custom products, the cycle time has been cut from 3 weeks to 48 hours. When orders are transferred to production, they are now 100% manufacturable. We have significantly reduced the number of returns and customer satisfaction has greatly improved.»



José Illan
Director of IT
Applications



The Issues

Shorten the launch cycle for new products

Invacare operates in 20 European countries. Their products are designed and manufactured at the European level, yet must be adapted to meet specific requirements of individual countries in which they are sold. The challenge faced by their research centers was how to delegate the adaptation of the product offering and the marketing thereof to the local country so that they could focus exclusively on designing standard pan-European modules.

Optimize the order-to-manufacturing-to-delivery process for custom products

The complexity of Invacare products made order taking a time consuming process. Most products are made-to-order, and any order error can quickly become expensive.

Once an order had been captured, each had to be manually checked before going into production at the appropriate factory, significantly extending the sales-to-delivery cycle. This non value-added work needed to be eliminated to reduce costs and shorten cycle times, a key to customer satisfaction.

Improve the ability to sell spare parts

Due to the breadth and complexity of Invacare products, customer service representatives often found it difficult to identify the specific spare parts needed by their customers. The subsequent delays responding to requests resulted in poor customer satisfaction levels.

Customers and distributors were also hindered by inconsistent product search and ordering processes that were dependent on the production unit involved in manufacturing the part. They were clamoring for web access to catalogs which would always be up to date and which would provide them with greater independence with regard to the placement and tracking of orders.

The Solution

Invacare has implemented Cameleon, including the Cameleon product configurator and the Cameleon Channel Selling e-commerce platform. Integrated with their ERP system, the Cameleon solution has revolutionized the Invacare organization.

The Cameleon product configurator has enabled Invacare to standardize and streamline their product offering. Using European-wide product templates, Cameleon simplified their ability to adapt products at the country level and to differentiate in the marketplace. This new organizational structure provided the foundation necessary to implement more logical and European-wide product definition processes.



More than 30,000 orders for configured products are being captured each month throughout Europe without any human intervention. Cameleon dynamically generates bills of materials and routings for each configured order to populate the ERP system, eliminating errors and accelerating the order-to-manufacturing hand-off.

Combining engineering data from product development and pricing from the ERP system, the Cameleon e-commerce platform was implemented to enable customer service and after-sales service departments to :

- Easily identify the correct spare part from cutaway views of products in the electronic catalog
- Quickly place error-free orders online

The Advantages

The Cameleon solution has provides numerous benefits to Invacare and their customers and distributors :

- Reduced costs stemming from a significant reduction in product returns through more accurate orders
 - Fewer calls to technical support
- Order-delivery cycle times have dropped from 3 weeks to 48 hours
- Response times and customer satisfaction have improved with 24x7 self-service access
 - Significantly shorter launch cycle for new products
- A simplified process for taking custom orders has made them easier to do business with and reduced order errors
- Standardization and harmonization of product development practices across Europe
 - Orders come into production 100% manufacturable
 - Inventory optimization
 - Faster updates and lower costs of publishing catalogs that are now available online.

