



PROCESS DRIVEN SOLUTIONS

➔ CASE STUDY

i-Sight Service and Complaints Software Helps World-Class Manufacturer Deliver World-Class Customer Care

“i-Sight has made my job a whole lot easier and it has given us access to information we never had before.”

Customer name: A.O. Smith Water Products Co.

- Challenge:**
- Needed complaints tracking software to replace the existing paper-and-filing-cabinet approach
 - Managers were unable to verify that each complaint was properly handled and resolved; too many cases were falling between the cracks
 - The existing system also made it difficult to analyze complaints in order to identify trends and common problems

- Solution:**
- Chose i-Sight Service and Complaints Software for ease-of-use and customizability
 - i-Sight automatically maintains a complete case history of every complaint
 - The system is web-based, so it is easily accessible to all relevant staff and branch-plant managers
 - Customer relations staff receive an automatic reminder if a case has not been resolved within seven days

- Results:**
- Managers benefit from much greater awareness of customer complaints and concerns
 - More consistent and timely resolution of complaints ensures higher customer loyalty and satisfaction
 - The customer relations department can now easily spot trends and common defects; that information is immediately forwarded to product managers and plants engineers

Around the world, millions of customers depend on A.O. Smith Water Products Co. for innovative, energy-efficient hot water heaters, boilers, storage tanks and related products. And now, because A.O. Smith is committed to providing world-class customer care, the Ashland City, TN-based manufacturer depends on i-Sight Service and Complaints Software to help ensure that customer inquiries and concerns are dealt with promptly and professionally – each and every time.

“With our old complaints tracking system, a lot of customers were falling between the cracks,” says Amy Hopkins, Manager of Customer Relations. “i-Sight has made our jobs a whole lot easier by making sure that every case is resolved in a timely manner. And the ease of use is simply amazing.”

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THE CHALLENGE

Every year, about 250,000 customers contact the A. O. Smith call center with an inquiry, suggestion or complaint about one of the company's residential water-heating products. Most of those cases are handled and resolved immediately, but in a typical month about 150 to 200 calls are escalated to the company's customer relations department for resolution, generally because they involve a request for some form of reimbursement.

Until recently, A. O. Smith used a paper-based system to keep track of those escalated cases. But when Amy Hopkins took over responsibility for the customer relations department in September 2005, she and her supervisor – Roy Wood, the company's Director of Customer and Product Support – decided that the process was in need of an overhaul. "The old system was pretty hit-and-miss," Hopkins explains. "Everything was recorded manually and then filed away under the customer's name. There was no systematic logging or tracking of what had been done in each case, and no way for anyone else to view what action had been taken."

For example, she says, customers who had been told to expect a reimbursement would sometimes contact the company several weeks later to complain that the promised refund had not arrived. "Unfortunately, the employee who took the call would usually have no way of knowing what the customer was talking about, because all we had was a paper record that was buried away somewhere in a filing cabinet."

Moreover, with the old system it was effectively impossible to analyze and cross-reference complaints in order to identify trends and common problems. "We really had no useful data," Hopkins says. "It was basically just a guessing game."

THE SOLUTION

Shortly after Hopkins assumed her new duties, she and her manager arranged for a demonstration of i-Sight Service and Complaints Software from Customer Expressions, the leader in customizable, web-based solutions for business processes that require case management. It did not take them long to make a decision.

"As soon as we saw the demo we knew that this was exactly what we were looking for and there was no need to look any further," Hopkins says. Two things in particular convinced them that i-Sight was the answer to their problems. "Number one, we were impressed by the ease of use. Number two was the overall professionalism of the people at Customer Expressions. We told them what we were looking for and in no time at all they got back to us with a proposal and a process map that fit our needs perfectly. We had a vision in our heads and that is exactly what they gave us."

The new system is simple to use and customized to A. O. Smith's existing business processes. As soon as a customer complaint or inquiry is escalated from the call center, the details are entered into the i-Sight database via an intuitive, web-based interface. "Training a new employee to use i-Sight takes at most an hour – it's that easy," Hopkins says. "In fact, even if you've never seen the system before, you could probably sit down and figure it out for yourself. If you happen to make a mistake it will tell you, which is a really nice feature."

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THE SOLUTION



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Once a complaint had been logged, all decisions, actions and customer interactions related to that case are recorded in i-Sight. If the case has not been resolved within seven days, the system automatically sends a reminder to the appropriate member of Hopkins' team. If it involves a potential product defect or quality control issue, Hopkins can forward the full case history to the relevant product manager or plant engineer. "i-Sight makes sure that nothing is overlooked," she says. "Every customer issue is resolved and there is a detailed record of every step in the process."

The new system also makes it easy to generate reports and analyze complaints to detect trends and common problems. "In the past, if we had received a number of complaints about a defective product and they involved several serial numbers in a row, we might never have made the connection," Hopkins says. "Now we can immediately spot the pattern and use that information to get to the bottom of the problem."

In the past, it might have taken Hopkins half a day or more to put together a monthly summary of the department's activities for her management team. "Now all I have to do is hit one button and it's all set up for me. It has made my job a whole lot easier and it has given us access to information we never had before."