Document Locator®

Case Study > Quality Machine

> " *Over the years we've developed thousands of AutoCAD drawings. Prior to installing Document Locator we sometimes spent 20 minutes searching for the right drawing. Today we can find any drawing in seconds using full-text searching.* "
>
> **Daniel J. Louque Jr.**
> **President**
> **Quality Machine**

Customer: Quality Machine
Industry: Manufacturing

Critical Issue
Thousands of inadequately indexed documents that took too many people too long to find.

Solution
Electronic document management system with full-text indexing and Web access.

Software and Services
Document Locator
WebTools

WebTools gives customers 24/7 Web access to critical maintenance records and product information

About halfway between Baton Rouge and New Orleans, looking out on the Mississippi River in the midst of Louisiana's petrochemical fields, Daniel Louque, was looking for ways to improve his company's productivity in a tight economy. As Quality Machine's President, he thought document management might improve customer service for the company's two divisions, Quality Machine Works and Quality Machine Manufacturing. Both units depend heavily on documentation, the former concentrating on repairs of petrochemical industry equipment and the latter manufacturing parts for the same industry. The core of the problem was the company's shared file servers, which allowed them to store and name documents but not adequately index them for easy search and retrieval. As the volume of documents increased, it became more and more difficult to access the ones customers needed.

Louque spent six months researching possible solutions before he settled on ColumbiaSoft's Document Locator with WebTools. He not only fixed his document management problems and expedited customer service, he also was surprised by the marketing opportunity made possible by publishing easily and securely to the Web.

So many AutoCAD drawings, so little indexing

"We deal with thousands of AutoCAD drawings, whether for our own manufacturing or the repair work we do for customers, and about half the calls we get are from customers who either don't know their part number or our drawing number. In the past, when a customer called in, we'd have to scroll through a spreadsheet and see if we could guess if we could find the right one. Usually, they'd have to describe what it looked like, and we'd go off and search our files. It might've taken three or four people 20 minutes or longer to find what we thought they were referring to, and then we'd get on the phone with the customer and see if we'd guessed right," Louque explained. "Now, it takes one person seconds while on the phone with the customer to find the item we need to discuss."

ColumbiaSoft™

Document Locator®

Instant access to AutoCAD drawings

With the arrival of Document Locator, Quality Machine's AutoCAD drawings have been stored and indexed for full-text searching. Now when customers call with questions about a specific part or a related item, Quality Machine's customer service representatives simply type in the customer's words or phrases, and Document Locator pulls up the appropriate documents.

"Not only are we saving time with the system, but we're saving money, and we don't have to tie up a small committee of people," Louque said.

A new level of customer service: online access

But the nicest surprise was the marketing opportunity made possible by Document Locator's WebTools: easily and securely making documents available via the Web changed customer access to critical information.

The company has taken its AutoCAD drawings and turned them into PDFs in order to share with customers and prospects, using their website as a "view portal."

"From a manufacturer's standpoint, Web publishing gives us the equivalent of an online catalogue our customers can access, which enables them to locate specific parts and the associated documentation," Louque said. "On the repair side of the house, we essentially have a 24x7 quality department, so that when customers misplace the documentation that went with their order or someone else in that company needs to access it, they can simply go to our Web site and it's there for them any time they want it. Most of our customers can't store their documents as well as we can, so we're providing them a valuable service."

Making the company's AutoCAD drawings available as secure PDF files also has another advantage: prospects and customers can view them but not change the drawings. This enables Quality Machine to better protect its intellectual property.

The company also publishes as PDF files the thousands of welding procedures it has developed for various pieces of machinery. Each procedure is unique. The net effect is that QMMI has created a virtual library for customers with appropriate access rights.

In the near future, Louque expects Document Locator to serve Quality Machine's internal needs in human resources and other departments. Currently, 28 of Quality Machine's approximately 75 employees at two locations connected by a local area network use Document Locator. In the future, Louque anticipates eight to ten people will be "power users," generating the greatest amount of documents that the remainder of the company—and its customers and prospects—can access either through the network or over the Web.

"We've just scratched the surface," Louque said.

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