

Deleting data discrepancies

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All too often, counterpeople are forced to send their professional customers elsewhere and the reason is often due to problems with their e-catalog — it's either wrong, late or both, according to Ron Garand, vice president of Vertical Development. "Distributors and jobbers walk away from business every day because of incomplete cataloging," he contests, and it could partially be due to the brands they carry. "While the no-name brands they are purchasing may provide a higher gross margin, they're losing sales when the small company they buy from does not have the resources to provide the complete catalog application data needed to support their products."

To be among the survivors in this increasingly competitive market, companies need to spend their dollars wisely. With that in mind, Vertical Development, Inc. presents five catalog management resolutions they say can help jobbers, retailers and WDs enhance their aftermarket sales in the coming months.

- Automate your catalog system — This will ensure that updates are accurate since most are in e-Cat databases quickly. Printed catalogs are outdated the day they are published, and supplements supplied are seldom referred to.
- Invest in next-generation electronic cataloging — Regular catalog systems only provided application, pricing and inventory data. New next-generation systems also include images, installation instructions, product sales data and more. With extended warranties and systems like OnStar driving vehicle owners to the dealerships, you need to deliver additional value to your customers on a daily basis to differentiate yourself from the competition, says Garand.
- Work with companies implementing ACES and PIES — Adopting these new AAIA standards is easier than ever before and will reduce the number of files needed for e-Cat companies. Parts retailers and jobbers should purchase as many of their parts as possible from companies adhering to these industry-wide standards.
- Select leading-edge, innovative suppliers — Suppliers with leading-edge technology driving their business will ensure new items, the lifeblood of add-on sales, will be on your shelf when asked for at the counter.
- Take control of your data — Errors in pricing, inventory and part-related information result in thousands of dollars in lost sales at the cash register for distributors and jobbers alike. Including detailed photos and diagrams in automated catalog systems ensures that customers get the right part up front, preventing costly returns while increasing customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Keep one or all of these resolutions and you should boost sales, says Garand. Distributors can find out more by visiting www.verticaldev.com.

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