

Achieving the Promise: Protech CRM for Members Helps American Hardware Manufacturers Association Transform Business Processes

It isn't every day that a software package lives up to its goal of transforming the way an organization does business. But don't tell that to Donna Liotta, Manager of Business Applications at the American Hardware Manufacturers Association (AHMA). Donna was instrumental in encouraging her association to adopt Protech CRM for Members – and now both she and the organization are reaping the rewards.

AHMA was established in 1901, and its members include home improvement product producers, manufacturers' agents and industry trade publications. The organization's previous association management system (AMS) was nearly 20 years old and plagued by a creaky operating system that couldn't be updated. That meant it could no longer recognize dates. "It was our own personal Y2K," Donna says. "The system's days were definitely numbered."

While searching for a new system, Donna attended Convergence, Microsoft's annual customer conference, and sat in on several sessions dedicated to Microsoft Dynamics CRM.



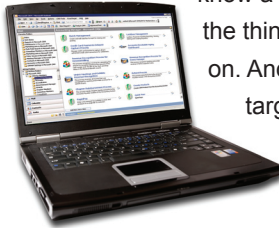
"I thought it was a great package, except that it would take a lot of work to change it from a sales-support system to the membership system we needed," she recalls. So she kept looking, and quickly discovered CRM for Members, which is built on the Microsoft Dynamics CRM platform. "We saw a demo of it, and the cry from our staff was, 'Protech CRM for Members it is!'" Donna says.

Helping Transform an Organization...

CRM for Members has helped AHMA adopt a different philosophy toward doing business, Donna says. "I see people using Protech CRM for Members to store data that can now be shared by everybody, which is something we had never done before." The software has helped AHMA replace inefficient, paper-based processes with time- and resource-saving electronic ones. For example, in the past AHMA had to create member invoices manually, using merges with Microsoft Word. Now, all invoices are processed electronically through CRM for Members. In addition, team members are now eagerly posting notes in the system and using workflows to assign, complete and track tasks. In part because of CRM for Members, "We're not the same company we were before," Donna says.

... And Transform a Job

CRM for Members also helped transform Donna's role in the organization. In her job, Donna manages a full spectrum of technologies—from servers to copiers to fax machines. “Two of the things I really wanted to be able to do were to get out of the business of pulling lists and handling opt-outs,” she says. CRM for Members has helped her dramatically reduce, or eliminate completely, the time she spends on these tasks. Because the solution is so easy to use, team members are able to easily compile their own lists. “Protech CRM for Members has made our users more self-sufficient, which frees me up to do other things,” Donna says.



So, when it comes to understanding AHMA's members, Donna says, “Now we know our members primary area of responsibility. We know a lot more about them because of the things they have interacted with us on. And because of that, we can better target our communications to our members.”

In addition, the fact that CRM for Members operates on a Microsoft platform helps make Donna's job easier. “I'm a big believer in consistency, and having an all-Microsoft shop has made our job less convoluted because we don't have a bunch of middleware and cross-platform solutions to worry about,” she says. “Protech CRM for Members is a great package and it's improving the way we do business.”

Improved Communications with Members

CRM for Members also helps AHMA collect the information it needs to identify and communicate with the right people in its member organizations. “With our old system, the only person who heard from us was the primary contact at the member company,” Donna says. “We relied on them to pass the information along to other people who might be interested.” Using CRM for Members, AHMA is now able to identify and communicate with an unlimited number of contacts at member organizations.

AHMA is a leading industry trade association, providing a wide range of programs and services to hardware producers, manufacturers' agents and industry trade publications.
<http://www.ahma.org>



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