DQT Case Study

How DQT Solutions Help Williams Distributing Optimize Customer Experience and Increase Delivery Efficiencies

Summary

Name
Williams Distributing

Headquarters
Grand Rapids MI

DQT Products
GPS
ODT
Advanced Routing
ELD
POD Pics & Signatures
AssetManagement/ Vehicles Maintenance Records
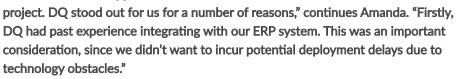**Customer Portal App**
Emessaging/SMS

Founded in 1968, Williams Distributing is a full-service distributor of HVAC, kitchen and bathroom products, garage doors, and hearth products. Headquartered in Grand Rapids, MI, the company services resellers, builders, contractors, interior designers, and architects located in Michigan, Indiana, and Ohio.

A key customer differentiator for the organization is their commitment to prompt delivery, aiming to turnround orders either the same or next day. Operating from seven warehouse locations around the Midwest, the implementation of effective logistics and tracking tools are a crucial component in fulfilling their customer delivery promise.

"The decision to improve the scheduling and tracking of our delivery services came from two directions," says Amanda Williams, Vice President - Operations at Williams Distributing. "On the one hand there was an internal focus at the company to both reduce delivery lead times and increase delivery efficiencies. From the customer side we were getting more and more requests for faster turnaround times, as well as to provide timely order status information to better plan their workloads."

Amanda Williams
Vice President - Operations

The search for the right solution

"We invited three suppliers to tender for the project. DQ stood out for us for a number of reasons," continues Amanda. "Firstly, DQ had past experience integrating with our ERP system. This was an important consideration, since we didn't want to incur potential deployment delays due to technology obstacles."

While Williams Distributing was initially looking primarily for a Proof Of Delivery solution, Amanda and her team were impressed with the breadth of DQT's product offerings in addition to POD. "Our workflow is complex and nuanced, with different delivery needs depending on the type of product being shipped, or by location.

DQT's routing software offered the flexibility and customization to enable us to easily integrate the solution into our other systems easier than the other vendors we considered. It soon become apparent that we could create even greater efficiencies and customer service tools by deploying more DQT modules."

Another influencing factor for Amanda was DQT's willingness to work outside the default scope of the software. "Our needs are specific and varied. We weren't going to radically change our processes in order fit in with the way a software product needed to work. It was DQT's willingness to be nimble and make things happen for us that was a contributory factor to why we ultimately picked them."

Systems implementation and training

Implementation was deployed in pre-determined phases, with both Williams Distributing and DQ Technologies tweaking and refining process stages to everyone's satisfaction before moving to the next deployment phase. "With such a complex and technically demanding installation, there were always going to be process or technology hurdles to overcome. That's to be expected," says Amanda. "DQT went above and beyond what we expected in addressing issues according to spec, and in a timely fashion. For me, that level of willingness to go the extra mile is what separates a company from being 'just another supplier' to a true business partner."

When it came to user and customer training, Amanda found out about a hidden DQT benefit. "Another nice thing about DQT is that we didn't have to activate all the features at the same time. For our smaller locations that only make a few deliveries, we didn't turn it on for them straight away. Instead, we focused on our distribution center and our freight group, allowing us to be more effective with product and workflow training. Once everyone was happy, we rolled it out to our smaller locations and got them trained on it."

Staging rollout and training in this way allowed Williams Distributing to prioritize training on certain DQT modules, following-up with subsequent training once the staff were up to speed with the new way of working. Not only did this speed-up the overall implementation process, but it also allowed less technically educated staff members to accept the new technology at a more sustainable pace.

As Amanda explains, "We rolled out the GPS, routing, and Proof Of Delivery features all at the same time, but just to a subset of our locations. Once things were running smoothly, we rolled it out further, later adding the SMS notification functionality and our branded customer mobile app. Finally, we launched the ELD to a handful of our drivers. Being able to stage the rollout by location as well as by feature set allowed our training teams to be more

effective in getting everyone using the system comfortable with their new workflow."

Time and process efficiencies

Today, Amanda and her team have found several other benefits from implementing DQ Technologies' solutions, including ones that didn't even occur to them at the start of the project.

Amanda explains, "I love that the visual representation of the routing instantly alerts everyone to data errors. We have over a hundred people that can enter an order. Before, if they entered an address incorrectly no one would have known until the driver arrived onsite. Now the error is highlighted as soon as we try to route it. We can now solve those issues in advance and set the driver up for a better day, as well as saving us on inefficiencies and time."

"Another area is with the size of the delivery. Supposing an order involves fifteen boxes, but the customer can only find twelve. With the POD photos we can prove the order was delivered correctly. The savings from this feature alone have been huge. I think we had an idea of the kinds of ancillary benefits it would bring, but I don't think any of us really understood how the level of information we now have would positively impact our business."

Future plans and services

The next few years will see Williams Distributing focusing more on customer-side services and providing tools and services to enhance customer experience.

As Amanda explains, "We have made a business acquisition that has brought in another seven locations. We're currently in the planning stages to bring those sites on board. Looking further ahead, we plan to use DQTs reporting tools to a greater extent than we do currently. The industry is under continuous pressure to optimize efficiencies around fleet size, costs, routing, and so on. Having access to accurate information at a granular level allows us to make better plans for the business as a whole."

"In a short space of time DQ Technologies has become an invaluable partner and a key component in our strategic business development plans for the future."

DQT

Delivery Management Solutions

Find out more at dqtech.com