KÄRCHER®

makes a difference

INDUSTRY

▸ Industrial Equipment Service

THE CHALLENGE

▸ Outdated systems and manual processes were impeding the company's profitability and growth.

THE SOLUTION

▸ Using Astea Alliance, TecServ brought operational efficiencies to its business processes and added value to its customer service offering. The combination gave TecServ an important competitive differentiator and the means to profitably leverage it nationwide.

BUSINESS AREAS

▸ Integrated contract management
▸ Contact center
▸ Field service
▸ Logistics
▸ Repair depot
▸ Sales order processing

ASTEA CUSTOMERS IN ACTION:
TECSERV/KARCHER

How **TecServ** grew from a regional to a national company.

" Astea Alliance allows TecServ to grow because we are not restricted by our service management system... Within two years of implementing Astea Alliance, we were in every major market nationwide. "

– Mike Davis, Director of Business Applications

When you walk into a major grocery or retail store like an Albertson's, a Wal-Mart or a Home Depot, think about all the equipment used to maintain the facility. There is material handling equipment to move merchandise such as forklifts, conveyors, electric jacks and stackers. There is industrial floor care equipment to clean the facility, such as scrubbers, pressure washers, polishers, sweepers and vacuums. And there is still other equipment—balers and compactors—to handle refuse and recycling. A company called TecServ services all this equipment for many grocery and retail chains, industrial facilities and property management companies.

Only a few years ago, TecServ was a regional service company with four locations serving six states in the Northeast. Since deploying Astea Alliance service management software from Astea International Inc., the company has expanded across the United States. At the beginning of 2004, the TecServ network counted 130 offices, more than 200 locations and over 400 service vehicles with continuing expansion under way. In 2006, Alfred Karcher GmbH & Co., based in Winnenden, Germany, purchased TecServ's parent company, commercial cleaning equipment and accessories supplier Castle Rock Industries Inc. Karcher manufactures high-pressure washers, vacuum cleaners, sweepers and cleaning agents. With the acquisition, Castle Rock expands Karcher's presence in North America and adds to their national service footprint with TecServ.

Service Offering and Customer Base Expansions

The operational efficiencies that TecServ gained through its deployment of Astea Alliance have enabled the company to execute its phenomenal growth without need to increase its staff of service dispatchers and billing clerks. Moreover, Astea Alliance has equipped TecServ with a powerful competitive differentiator—equipment asset visibility that improves customers' value for money.

"More than equipment service for cost control, TecServ offers customers complete asset management to optimize equipment value," says Mike Davis, director of business applications for TecServ parent company Castle Rock Industries. "An important part of our value proposition to customers is asset tracking and cost reporting, which we do using Astea Alliance."

The benefits of TecServ Asset Management programs extend beyond what people think of as equipment maintenance to equipment effectiveness, safety assurance, in-service longevity, cost to maintain and impact on customers' operational efficiencies. In addition to improving service delivery processes with Astea Alliance, TecServ effectively utilizes the system's capabilities as part of its service packaging and to the advantage of customers' financial, operational and risk management.

The [Astea Alliance] system provides complete visibility of service activities and service contracts...enabling the company to increase revenue.

Through the Asset Management programs, TecServ performs equipment inventory audits, spare parts inventory analyses with recommended stocking levels and logistics management, equipment safety assessments, equipment service and equipment storage. All programs are supported by TecServ's comprehensive equipment reliability reporting system–Astea Alliance.

Customer-Focused Business Processes

TecServ today still employs the same number of dispatchers as it did as a regional company, but now from one centralized location and supporting customers nationwide. The company also employs the same number of billing clerks as before expansion, only now they send many more invoices to more accurately charged customers. The story gets better.

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"We started sending statements of services performed to customers under contract, which is a proactive demonstration of accountability and a sound business practice that we couldn't afford to do before Astea Alliance," says Davis. "We've since developed a variety of cost, asset tracking and performance reporting options to offer in service contracts from the data we capture with Astea Alliance. We enhanced our service offering and, as evidenced by our growth, have been first-to-market to fill an industry need."

Much of TecServ's business is conducted by service contracts. Before Astea Alliance, the company's service system had no contract management capabilities and manual processes were devised. Customers who should have been billed were not. Other customers were billed in error because invoicing was always left to manual interpretation. The reliance on manual procedures also delayed invoicing. With Astea Alliance, every transaction goes through automated bill processing.

Improvements to contract management are also benefiting service call handling and dispatch. WhenTecServ centralized contact center and field service dispatch with its integrated Astea Alliance solution,everyone interacting with customers gained real-time access to a customer's contract status and entitlements.

New operational efficiencies extend to many other service functions managed with the system—from sales order processing for repair parts and refurbished equipment to repair chain management to huge improvements in TecServ's service logistics. Inventory tracking once limited to warehouses now includes vehicle and customer site inventories as well with Astea Alliance.

BUSINESS GROWTH

- Since deploying Astea Alliance, the company has expanded across the US. At the beginning of 2004, TecServ's network counted 130 offices, more than 200 locations and over 400 service vehicles with continuing expansion under way

- TecServ has demonstrated phenomenal growth without need to increase its staff of service dispatchers and billing clerks.

- Contents of the warehouse can be tracked as well as vehicle and customer site inventories.

- TecServ's growth has enhanced its service offering and has since been the first-to-market to fill an industry need.

IMPROVED CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

- Customer service improved as all employees gained realtime access to a customer's contract status and entitlements

- Within two years of implementing Astea Alliance, TecServ's customer base grew into every major market nationwide.

REDUCED OPERATING COSTS

- With Astea's organization, unnecessary invoicing errors were totally avoided, therefore the customers were billed correctly and payments recieved ontime.

- TecServ's ROI has also increased in terms of their reduced operating costs even though their business volume has increased tremendously.

Thin-client technology is used to connect TecServ's new locations to the Astea Alliance system as they are established. Service transactions and inventory usage, movements and replenishments throughout the TecServ Network are completely visible in the Astea Alliance database.

The company implemented consistent service processes which have directly resulted in reduced administration costs.

"Astea Alliance allows TecServ to grow because we are not restricted by our service management system," says Davis. "All that we need to start a new service affiliate is Internet access for connection to the Astea system. For 19 years our business processes confined us to six Northeast states. Within two years of implementing Astea Alliance, we were in every major market nationwide."

TecServ selected Astea Alliance after evaluating various service systems' capabilities to support the company's aspirations to expand from a regional to national business. The task of profitably managing a larger, geographically

dispersed organization with more customers, products, services, employees, parts, tools and copious data had been a deterrent for years.

As with many Astea users, TecServ is investigating system functionality enhancements such as a self-service portal for customers and mobile tools that will enable the company's field mechanics to independently access Astea Alliance any time from anywhere.

The company is measuring its ROI from the system in terms of competitive differentiation, customer value and much higher business volume at disproportionately low operating costs.

–TecServ

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