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## Message from the President

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Power Surge Spring/Summer 2005

Newsletter for our customers in the aftermarket, distribution, retail and service industries



### > **Aircore Inc. E-Commerce Success**

Making money; saving money in New York.

### > **Customer Focus**

We continue to refine our approach to customer support with Workorder Lookup Beta.

### > **New Customers Spotlight**

New members and upgrades using the AutoPower System.

### > **Survive Disaster**

NEW - 2 articles to make sure your business keeps running!

### > **Truck Parts Distributor of the Year Finalists**

Midway Truck Parts and Ott's Friction make it to the finals.

## **AIRCORE Inc. E-Commerce Web Site Big Success**

AIRCORE is a three step wholesale distributor of quality automotive parts. They offer OE products to the automotive aftermarket and new dealer customers throughout the NY Metropolitan area.

They engaged AutoPower to develop an E-Commerce Web Site for their wholesale customer. AutoPower teamed with Wrenchhead to provide NexPart, a cost-effective solution with easy-to-use features providing extensive part search and online purchasing ability.

### **DIRECT QUOTES FROM AIRCORE'S STEPHEN GRESALFI**

"The site has been in operation since late January of 2005. We rolled the site out to our wholesale customers and it has been a big hit with them."

"We made the decision to deploy an e-commerce web site because our new AutoPower system allowed us to seamlessly leverage new technology."

"I expect the site will pay for itself in just a few months. It's much more cost effective than I believed at the onset, and now I can't imagine not having it."

"Within the first 60 days of operation our customers were purchasing over \$250K/month through the site."

"I never knew how much an Internet presence would affect my business. You wrongly assume that your customers know about all the lines you offer, but I'm getting inquiries daily about product lines and special offers advertised on my homepage."

"I've had the website running at full speed for just 2 months now and it's handling almost 10,000 stock checks and almost 2000 invoices per month! That's a lot of phone work my people don't have to deal with anymore. My customers don't get put on hold, and I don't have to be open to serve my customers after hours."

### **BENEFITS FOR AIRCORE CUSTOMERS**

1. Secure, simple and intuitive ordering in minutes with no time-consuming training issues.
2. Online access to a full-line Electronic Catalog with part number photos.
3. Stock checks, catalog lookups and order placements are measured in seconds.
4. Customers can save one-time orders to be used at a later time or save repeat stock orders.
5. Customers can import large stock orders giving the customer a detailed advanced order confirmation.

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6. Parts ordering available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, customers can place orders from anywhere with an Internet connection.

7. Customers have access to every part in inventory from every product line.

8. Customers have online account status access to review current orders status, past invoices, payments and current balances.

9. Customers can access inventory levels instantaneously while they have their own customer on the line. No callbacks, just immediate service.

#### **BENEFITS FOR AIRCORE**

1. Customers can locate parts and order from multiple branches simultaneously, exposing all of AIRCORE's inventory, increasing turns and simplifying part transfers.

2. Increased customer satisfaction, purchases and loyalty by offering a convenient way to order.

3. Eliminated the need to verify and key in messy faxes. Customers can import their stock orders through the site directly into the AIRCORE business system saving staff hundreds of hours each month.

4. Extended business hours without adding staff, paying overtime or creating more HR issues.

5. Customers get the right part the first time. Eliminate misunderstandings, language barrier issues, mis-keyed part numbers or misinterpreted vehicle information. Fewer returns, less headaches, increased satisfaction.

6. Changes to the inventory file includes quantities, pricing, alternates, descriptions, etc. on the AIRCORE computer system are automatically reflected on the site with no extra maintenance required.

7. Quantity On Hand is retrieved from AIRCORE's AutoPower computer system real-time with every inquiry.

AIRCORE's success with their web-site is a firm indication of the e-business processes and customer services that you can provide today with your AutoPower system. It is also a great example of where you can use Internet technologies to realize true savings, establish competitive advantage, provide outstanding customer services and expand your business.

AutoPower's e-business division is dedicated to the online success of our customers. We have staff with extensive web strategy and design abilities. More importantly they are familiar with your industry and understand the technology behind your AutoPower business system.

***Give Ross a call today to get your own web success story started. (800) 229-2881***

### **Customer Focus**

We have been working diligently to implement changes to our web site to better service your needs. Our Web Site is now on its way to fruition in providing you the ability to look up your open and closed work orders securely through our web site at AutoPower.com. We are now beta testing the Work Order Management System and Frequently Asked Questions options which will enable you to view your open Work Orders and review our Frequently Asked Questions on our application modules. You can monitor what work we have promised to you and status of where we are in the development process on many of your requests. You will also be able to view 60 days history on closed work orders. To gain access

**Support FAQ: Categories**

Please login [I forgot my login](#)

Username:

Password:

will require that you log on with a User Name and Password. We will be sending you the login & password

information when this new service is launched.

We will continue to improve our service to you by adding features to the web site as we move forward in our web development effort. Your feedback on these new features are of interest to us. We expect general release to all users over the next 90 days.

### **Message from the President**

To some of us, the effect of the "dot com" implosion still resonates in our minds as we read about web commerce successes like AirCore. Stephen Gresalfi and his management team didn't pay much attention to the "dot com" fallout when deciding to have us build their web-based parts store as they knew exactly what their web strategy was to achieve.

Today, their determination to give their customers a better way to buy their product has paid off big time. Yet, their experience does not have to be a unique success story that only makes for interesting reading.

The web still draws us close. Its usefulness continues to create opportunities for companies who are willing to step up to the plate. As we visit customers and prospects alike, web-based commerce is high on their list of where additional growth will come. The reluctance to embrace the web is diminishing and a renewed enthusiasm for capitalizing on the new webonomics has many distributors seeing it to be a place to make money.

Gresalfi's example is just one of many success stories that can be told by our customers. Whether your customers buy products or services from you, the web can be the next growth path at a fraction of the cost of opening another branch with near immediate ROI, as demonstrated by AirCore. AirCore stepped up to the plate and hit it out of the park. So can you - batter up!

## New Customers join the AutoPower Family

The following businesses have joined our family  
and we welcome them aboard.

Memphis Brake Service, Inc., Memphis, TN.....Automotive Parts Distributor and Vehicle Service  
Ly-ConRebuildingCompany, Visalia, CA.....AircraftPartsDistributorRe-builder  
LyonsTruckParts, Inc., Kenosha, WI.....HDTruckPartsWD

### Customer's Upgraded to New Systems

SenecaAuto and Truck Supply, Louisville, KY.....Upgraded to Windows 2003 Server  
Ott'sFrictionSupply, Portland, OR.....Upgraded to Windows 2003 Server  
Power Battery and Truck Parts, Paterson, NJ.....Upgraded to Windows 2003 Server

## Midway & Ott's: Finalists

Midway Truck Parts and Ott's Friction Supply named FINALISTS – Truck Parts Distributor of the Year



Congratulations to Midway Truck Parts and Ott's Friction Supply for being selected as Finalists - Truck Parts Distributor of the Year 2005 by The Council of Fleet Specialists (CFS). Midway Truck Parts was founded in 1978. They currently have 13 branch operations located throughout the

state of Illinois. The majority of their branches carry an extensive inventory for light, medium, Heavy Duty Truck, trailer, off-road, and construction equipment. They also provide machine shop services, made to order hoses, battery cables, speedometer and tachometer cables, and run a brake remanufacturing facility. To learn more about Midway Truck Parts visit their web site at [www.midwaytruckparts.com](http://www.midwaytruckparts.com).

Ott's Friction Supply, located in Portland Oregon with a branch in Eugene, Oregon, recently celebrated their 80th anniversary in the heavy-duty truck business. They specialize



in providing an extensive line of brakes, clutches and related parts and service. Ott's Friction Supply web site is [www.ottsfrictionsupply.com](http://www.ottsfrictionsupply.com). We congratulate them on their 80th year in operation and wish them continued success.

## Disaster Recovery & Business Resumption

The fact that your company could be subject to any number of disasters, such as theft, flood, earthquakes, fires, mudslides, tornadoes or hurricanes means it is critical to spend some time devising a solid Business Recovery Plan (BRP) and to review it often. It is too late should calamity strike to start thinking about a plan.

Paying attention to the small details will not only help your business survive a disaster, but can make your larger customers feel at ease when you can quickly recover and continue to meet their business



needs. The Federal Emergency Management Agency states some good reasons to plan for a disaster. The top 3 are listed below.

- Two out of 5 unprepared enterprises hit by a disaster fail within 5 years
- 40 percent of businesses hit by a natural disaster don't reopen and 25% that reopen close within a year.
- The single largest cause of workplace emergencies - Human Error!

Make a list of critical issues involved in what it would take to reopen your doors for business. The three principal goals of disaster recovery/ business resumption planning are to:

- Save data.
- Save hardware, software, and

facilities.

- Resume critical processes and restore data.

While this may sound simple the actual task of disaster recovery is complex. Many books and processes have been written and developed that address this subject. In its simplest form, you need to assign or otherwise take ownership of formulating a plan to recover your business records should the need arise.

The purpose of this newsletter item is for you to start thinking about disaster and business resumption in the event of such an occurrence. We will publish a series of future articles to discuss the processes involved in putting together your own Business Recovery Plan (BRP). In the meantime, if you don't have a plan in place you need to start one now.

## Can You Survive a Disaster?

Computer systems are a great asset in managing our business processes. These systems are no different than any other machine, requiring maintenance and attention from management. A few case studies and lessons learned follow.

**Case #1:** Review of the event viewer showed a number of critical errors were recorded that related to the hard drive and the hard disk interface. Then the unthinkable happened, an unwanted kernel error, dumping memory to disk. Usually these errors are unrecoverable. IBM had the customer create a diagnostics - recovery disk so that they could boot the system. Error logs indicated to IBM that the hard drives failed. Since the single drive was swappable, the customer would install a replacement shipped next day.

The operating system would need to be reloaded as well as a restore from a backup tape. We provided assistance to install the Windows operating system and ancillary software products. Locating the software disks and license keys was imperative and are showstoppers when not readily available. **Know where yours are stored and have the license keys in a protected area.**

With the server back on line, the last task was to restore the AutoPower applications and data, a simple enough task.

When we installed the last data tape into the drive and did a read we found the tape was blank. The most recent tape the customer had with data was from 6 months earlier. Three days into getting this customer back on line only then to learn that their backups had been failing for months. In the end, the customer decided to start fresh and use the End of Month (EOM) printouts to reload G/L balances, and perform a physical inventory to get on hand balances



loaded so that they could get back to doing business.

**Case #2:** a customer lost their hard drive on an older Windows based system. They were performing their file save to tape daily. When it came time to restore their AutoPower data there was no data on the tape. After some research we found that they were not performing their backup using an administrator password so the file save to tape was failing. No one noticed until it was too late. The result was not pleasant and required they too re-key opening balances and quantity on hand for inventory.

There are a number of lessons learned that we would like to share. First and foremost, you need to know how to use the backup software installed on your system. It's more than sticking a tape in the drive and having an expectation that you are getting a good save. You need to monitor the process and validate that the data is being saved to tape.

Second, verifying data saved to the tape will preclude problems if and when a need to restore is required. We can provide assistance to check your backup software settings, review logs and perform tape verification. However, someone in your organization still needs to be given the task to manage your backup process. This usually falls on the person you designated as your system manager.

Third, the backup process is only part of your overall disaster recovery plan. It is one of the more important business decisions you need to make on how you will keep your business running in the event the unthinkable happens.

When disaster strikes most companies rely upon luck, hope and chance to recover because they had no plan. Don't put your business at unnecessary risk. A disaster recovery plan can be your saving grace should the unthinkable happen.

*Visit us on the web at [www.autopower.com](http://www.autopower.com) to see our latest news and information!*

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