

Machine and component order information a click away

Shops competing in a JIT environment know the frustration of waiting for a machine or component to arrive. Checking the status of an order usually means that they're in for a lot of phone calls and faxes — sometimes just to find the right person to supply the correct information. But a new on-line service is making it easy to get through to one machine builder 24/7/365.

at Hydromat, “The way HSLdirect works is relatively simple. A customer logs onto the Hydromat web page, selects HSLdirect from the options, enters his password, and then has a complete window on his entire account activity.”

A shop can check an open order, for instance. “A customer places an order for a new component,” explains Milligan, “and wants to know its status the next day. He logs onto HSLdirect, finds the order, and then drills down to look at the actual packing slip.” With this information, the end user can validate that the right component will be shipped as well as how it will be shipped. Links to FedEx and UPS web pages provide tracking status.

Access to account information is only phase one of HSLdirect. Phase two, HSLdirect Storefront, lets end users order parts. “Our motive in establishing an HSLdirect Storefront is to provide added value to our customers,” Milligan says. “A customer logs onto HSLdirect, goes to the Storefront, enters a part number, selects the mode of shipment, selects the mode of payment, hits send, and the transaction is complete. The next thing he knows, the part is at his plant.”

Before taking the step to e-commerce, however, Hydromat had to address its internal enterprise resource planning (ERP) requirements. “The selection of a software supplier to fulfill our needs was not easy,” Milligan says. The company eventually selected Vantage ERP software by Epicor Software Corp., Minneapolis, because of its system flow, architecture, and the traceability of information throughout the system. In addition, Hydromat has entered into full partnership with Epicor to jointly explore future e-commerce potential for Hydromat and Epicor's other partners.

HSLdirect
Immediate Customer Service

Vantage per

Shipments as of 9/21/99

Ship Date	Packing Slip	Our Order Number	Your Order Number	Ship Via
09/22/99	27340	24337	WARRANTY	UPS GROUND
09/23/99	27357	24387	WARRANTY-CASE 2065	UPS GROUND
09/26/99	27424	25054	PROJECT H1442	UPS PREFERRED
09/28/99	27427	24621	H1443	UPS RED. NOT DAY
09/29/99	27426	27416	H157	UPS RED. NOT DAY
10/04/99	27587	25284	WARRANTY H1443 LC	UPS RED. NOT DAY
10/05/99	28026	25293	WARRANTY H1443 LC	UPS GROUND
10/06/99	28120	25073	84488	UPS GROUND
10/12/99	28329	27719	SHAWN BATTEN 111299	UPS GROUND
11/18/99	30023	27293	WARRANTY H1534	UPS RED. NOT DAY
11/25/99	30120	27284	SERVICE SC	UPS RED. NOT DAY
11/18/99	30121	27267	H1534	UPS RED. NOT DAY
12/07/99	31119	28293	SERVICE SH	UPS RED. NOT DAY
12/10/99	31326	28224	H1443/WARRANTY	UPS GROUND
12/15/99	31524	28805	H154 SEAN BATTOK	UPS RED. NOT DAY
12/20/99	31726	28224	PROJECT H1443	UPS RED. NOT DAY
12/27/99	31921	28021	WARR. H1534 SH	UPS BLUE PREPAID
12/30/99	31924	28021	8731	UPS GROUND
01/05/00	32079	28133	SERVICE S. MURRAY	UPS RED. NOT DAY
01/07/00	32123	28213	WARRANTY H1443 SH	UPS RED. SAT PFD

▲ Using Hydromat's HSLdirect, end users view a complete window of their account activity — order tracking, part tracking, and more — on-line at any time.

HSLdirect is an Internet-based, customer-driven search engine from Hydromat Inc., a St. Louis-based manufacturer of precision transfer machines. It lets shops access account information such as order tracking, part tracking, spare parts and repairs, open invoices, and payment history. According to Carl Milligan, director of information systems