

# WHOLESALE AUTO PARTS REINFORCES MARKET LEADERSHIP WITH MOVE TO ACTIVANT EAGLE®



## PROFILE

**Headquarters:** Summersville, W.V.

**Sales Breakdown:** 40% wholesale, 60% retail

**Number of Employees:** 8

**Locations:** 1

**Founded:** 1988

**Affiliation:** Auto Value

**“We’re completing more work with the same amount of people. Overall, we’re faster, smarter and more accurate. Activant Eagle allows us to be that good.”**

MARK SMITH  
OWNER  
WHOLESALE AUTO PARTS

## Leadership Proven in Every Transaction

Counter professionals at Wholesale Auto Parts, Summersville, West Virginia, wear T-shirts that read, “Let me guess, you’ve tried everyone else.” The message reflects two key facts: One, there are several parts businesses in this town of 3,400; and two, when customers want the right answer, right parts and best service, they eventually end up at Wholesale.

“We compete with Advance Auto Parts, AutoZone, NAPA, Fisher Auto Parts, and two independents and we understand that our success is based on our ability to set the benchmark for quality, service and professionalism,” said store owner Mark Smith. “Basically, we’re telling the competition, ‘We’re this good — don’t you wish you were?’”

Not surprisingly, this “fiercely independent” store has doubled its sales and significantly enhanced bottom-line performance since Mark’s purchase of the business in 1995. In fact, when vehicle dealerships struggle in finding specific parts or interpreting diagnostic codes, they too turn to Mark’s five highly trained counterpeople. Highly trained and well equipped, that is, thanks to Wholesale’s recent transition to Activant Eagle® for the Aftermarket.

“Our customers are genuinely impressed with the technology we use,” Mark said. “They see that we really are committed to leadership in everything we do. We’re not just another guy who wants to sell them oil filters.”

## Technology as a Competitive Edge

Being the best means getting it right — catalog lookup, anticipating and addressing customer preferences, locating rare parts, maintaining a laser focus on pricing and margins, and offering value-added services — in every transaction. It means offering new conveniences such as online ordering, electronic invoices and statements, electronic signature capture, and fax or e-mail delivery of detailed parts photos — services not available through many larger competitors. Ultimately, it means partnering with shops to, as Mark describes it, “drag them into the 21st century.” Activant Eagle has been the ideal solution in each of these areas and several more, he said.

“If you’re going to be as good as we say we are, you have to give yourself and your people the tools to deliver on that promise,” he said. “We’ve established the expectation for always having the right answer, the right brands and products, and being able to locate parts no one else can. The Eagle™ system is key to that.”

The Eagle solution's seamless integration of POS and catalog enables Wholesale's staff to do what they do best — sell. There's no need to leave the workstation to locate old invoices, track down parts online or verify that the product they're sending matches what the customer is holding in his or her hands. "The ability to be talking on the phone with your account and instantly fax or e-mail him a photo of a part or technical service bulletin...well, that's a beautiful thing," Mark said.

This enhanced customer experience enables Wholesale to level the playing field with the "big boys." Wholesale's Eagle-based document imaging and electronic signature capture tools, for example, eliminate the paperwork hassles that impair other store operations. In spite of these new capabilities, Mark said the Eagle system was an easy change for his staff thanks to the consistent look and feel of each software program.

Availability of the system's Cover-to-Cover™ graphical eCatalog at each counter station is itself "worth its weight in gold," Mark added. Another key catalog-related benefit is Activant's exclusive OE Carry-Forward feature, which automatically updates coverage listings for existing SKUs when the application design doesn't change from one model year to the next. "In the past we had to guess and hope we were right (about carry-forward parts), but now our catalog does the footwork," he said. "This helps us sell more parts more confidently."

A sales-driving feature of Eagle is a special alert function that supports Wholesale's special orders business by eliminating improper returns, and catalog prompts that suggest related sales during lookup. Mark is making more strategic buying decisions, as well, by leveraging enhanced reporting and PO capabilities to capture more volume discounts.

#### **"When Mama's Happy, We're All Happy"**

The benefits of Eagle don't end at the counter. In fact, the system's integrated inventory control tools have helped drive consistent performance improvements. "Thanks to Eagle, our gross profit is up 1.5 points because we know precisely what our real costs are," Mark said.

And then there are the benefits that come with keeping the back-office staff happy, particularly when that staff is your wife, Kim. "Kim used to spend eight to 10 hours at the end of each month just to copy invoices and send them to our customers," he explained. "With Eagle all of that wasted time was eliminated. Believe me, that made her happy. And when Mama's happy, we're all happy."

Also making Mark happy are the Eagle system's extensive reporting capabilities. Wholesale is now able not only to record lost sales, but assign a reason code to each. Mark can regularly pull reports indicating lost sales based on lack of adequate stock, national back-orders, pricing concerns and other issues. This insight ultimately contributes to faster, smarter stocking decisions.

Indeed, faster and smarter are two characteristics that can be applied to most areas of Mark's business today. "We're completing more work with the same amount of people. Overall, we're faster, smarter and more accurate. Activant Eagle allows us to be that good. We looked at a lot of other solutions. This is the most comprehensive system out there."



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**MARK SMITH**  
**STORE OWNER**  
**WHOLESALE AUTO PARTS**

#### **ABOUT ACTIVANT**

Activant, a leading technology provider of business management solutions serving small and medium-sized businesses, offers customers tailored proprietary software, professional services, content, supply chain connectivity and analytics. Activant's systems are designed to help customers increase sales, boost productivity, operate more cost-efficiently, improve inventory turns and enhance trading partner relationships.

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