

HIGH QUALITY IMAGES HELP REDUCE RETURNS

High-volume imaging solution gives Autopart International the images it needs to ensure customers get the right parts



Autopart International is a leading distributor of replacement automotive parts. As is common in the automotive aftermarket, part returns represent a significant cost for Autopart. Most of these part returns result from customers being sold the wrong parts.

Autopart believed that creating a library of part images would help to minimize returns and increase operational efficiency. However, the company lacked the expertise, software and other resources needed to capture images for more than 20,000 parts.

Autopart adopted the Visual SKUs Full-service Imaging Solution and acquired over 30,000 images from 320 part categories in 10 months. Indications suggest the images will reduce returns by ensuring customers get the parts they need, while also increasing efficiency across departments.

AT A GLANCE

CUSTOMER PROFILE



Name:	Autopart International
Industry:	Automotive Aftermarket
Project Location:	Norton, Massachusetts
Project Size:	30,700 images from 320 part categories
URL:	www.autopartintl.com

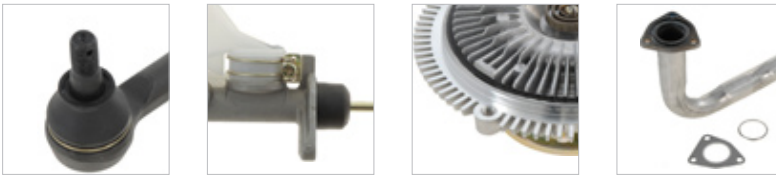
THE CHALLENGE

- Autopart was experiencing an unacceptably high number of product returns resulting from customers being sold the wrong parts
- It became clear that part images would help ensure customers got the right parts the first time, while raising operational efficiency across departments
- Creating a complete image library would be a large, complex task and Autopart lacked the expertise, equipment and software needed to successfully complete this task

THE SOLUTION

- After a thorough cost-benefit analysis, Autopart decided to outsource the project by adopting Visual SKUs' Full-Service Imaging Solution
- This solution was selected because it would empower the company to complete the project four times faster than a in-house imaging system, at no extra cost
- The entire project was completed on-site at Autopart's Norton facility, using Visual SKUs on-site photography studios and Web-based image management software

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A leading name in automotive wholesale distribution

Autopart International is a wholesale distributor of replacement automotive parts. In addition to selling through a network of distributors, Autopart owns 150 wholesale outlets in locations across North America.

Building a library of part images to reduce returns and boost efficiency

Autopart was experiencing a high number of part returns. This is a common problem in the automotive aftermarket – some estimates suggest that as many as 25% of all auto parts sold are later returned.

Receiving, inspecting, investigating and re-packaging returned auto parts is a time-consuming and labor-intensive process that represents a huge cost to retailers, distributors and manufacturers.

The majority of returns result from customers being sold the wrong parts. Without access to high-quality part images with multiple views, countermen cannot be sure customers are getting the parts they need.

Clearly, to reduce returns, Autopart needed to provide its employees with a library of part images, which would make it easy for even inexperienced countermen to be sure customers got the right parts the first time.

Autopart's Director of Parts Information, Gail Volpe, could see that this library would also create operational efficiencies in other areas of the business, most notably in the technical support and returns processing departments.

THE BENEFITS

- Autopart was able to closely track the project's progress using Visual SKUs' web-based Image Management System
- In 10 months, Autopart acquired 30,700 high-quality images, with multiple views of parts spanning 320 part categories
- This new image library has been met with universal approval from store countermen and other employees across the organization
- Autopart is confident the images will help reduce returns and increase operational efficiencies in multiple departments, resulting in cost savings and an excellent return on investment

"Solenium is a company with a very impressive track record of high-volume imaging in the automotive aftermarket. It also has just the kind of software we needed to complete our project."

Gail Volpe,
Director of Parts Information,
Autopart International



For example, whenever a counterperson called technical support for help with a part or a customer request, tech line personnel would be able to access the image library in order to help with the inquiry.

However, Ms. Volpe knew that creating a detailed image library of Autopart's entire inventory would be a considerable challenge as the company has thousands of parts, spread across hundreds of categories.

Maximizing efficiency and minimizing time to market with Visual SKUs

To better understand the challenges involved in large-scale imaging projects, Ms. Volpe initiated a thorough cost-benefit analysis. She also met with several companies that had successfully completed such projects.

Completing the project internally was considered but Autopart quickly realized that specialized software would be needed to efficiently and productively manage a project of this size.

After discussions with Claudio Di Sano, President of Solenium Group, Ms. Volpe discovered that Solenium's Visual SKUs Full-Service Solution would allow Autopart to complete the project up to four times faster.

Mr. Di Sano explained: "As we had access to all the expertise, equipment, software and workflows required for high-volume product imaging, we were able to greatly speed Autopart's time to market – at no extra cost."

Ms. Volpe commented: "Solenium is a company with a very impressive track record of high-volume imaging in the automotive aftermarket. It also has just the kind of software we needed to complete our project."

As the solution was rolled out, this software proved immediately beneficial to Autopart. Ms. Volpe noted: "The Image Management System allowed us to track the progress of every aspect of our project, in real-time."

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Claudio Di Sano,
President, Visual SKUs



Capturing over 30,000 high-quality product images in just 10 months

Solenium's product imaging expertise was also immediately apparent. "It was clear to us that Solenium has a deep knowledge of the industry standards for product imaging in the automotive aftermarket," said Ms. Volpe.

The project was extraordinarily productive. In just 10 months, Visual SKUs was able to supply Autopart with over 30,000 full color, high quality part images, spanning 320 product categories.

The reaction from Autopart's stores has been very positive, with numerous countermen commenting that the images allow them to ensure customers are getting the right parts the first time.

Autopart predicts that its image library will create excellent return on investment. The library is expected to significantly decrease product returns, while increasing operational efficiency.

Gail Volpe concluded: "There is every indication that the image library Visual SKUs acquired for us will reduce returns and create greater operational efficiencies, increasing customer satisfaction and reducing costs."



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Gail Volpe,
Director of Parts Information,
Autopart International



WANT TO KNOW MORE?

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