Segway Glides Ahead with On-Demand Solution for Sales, Marketing, and Partner Relationship Management

“Formerly, we lacked an automated process for forwarding leads and tracking sales. Now our methods for handling leads are more accurate and consistent. Thanks to Salesforce, we have much greater visibility into our direct and indirect sales channels.”

— Chris Gorglione
Product Manager

Many great inventions start the same way: analyzing a nagging problem, ignoring the conventional thinking that says it can’t be solved, and working relentlessly until it is. So it was for Dean Kamen, chairman and founder of Segway Inc., and creator of the first two-wheeled, self-balancing, electric transportation device. Widely hailed as a breakthrough in personal transportation, the Segway® Personal Transporter (PT) the product has garnered attention all over the world. Since the Segway PT first went on sale in 2002, the company has enjoyed 50 percent annual growth as commercial and consumer customers adopted it for its versatility, energy efficiency, and ease-of-use.

Today, that same spirit of innovation pervades every aspect of Segway’s operation, from manufacturing to customer relationship management. So when it came time to purchase sales force automation (SFA) and partner relationship management (PRM) software, Segway insisted on acquiring the best solution on the market.

“Until recently, we had no metrics to determine what customers were demanding, so we didn’t know if what we were delivering to the marketplace truly met their needs,” says Chris Gorglione, a product manager at Segway. “We didn’t have a consistent understanding of what people wanted. As a result, we didn’t know how effectively our marketing dollars were being spent.”

Getting Up and Running

Based in Bedford, New Hampshire, Segway has a worldwide distribution network of more than 250 distribution points in 62 countries. To bring cohesion to these widely dispersed direct and indirect sales forces, Segway evaluated several SFA and PRM products. According to Gorglione, Salesforce rose to the top immediately. “Salesforce was the fastest to deploy and the easiest to configure, within both the SFA and the PRM spaces,” he recalls. “About 90 percent of our business is facilitated by Segway dealers and distributors, so we wanted an integrated solution that could manage both direct and indirect sales activities in a cohesive way.”

Gorglione used Salesforce PRM to create the Segway Partner Portal, a secure Web site that allows channel partners to effectively manage sales processes. Because a critical requirement of the system was that it integrate with the company’s Salesforce SFA solution for a single view of Segway’s channels, Salesforce PRM was a logical choice.

Gorglione spearheaded the entire deployment, with no assistance from the IT department. The only integration was a simple connection to Segway’s Oracle ERP system, where sales data is automatically exported each day. “It only took three days for me to implement the Salesforce applications,” he says. “There was no configuration required; we pretty much used it right out of the box. After that, it didn’t take long to get going.”

Navigating the Partner Portal

Segway’s partner portal has two major functions:

:: Delivering and managing sales leads from the Segway.com Web site, tradeshows, advertising campaigns, and various other sources

:: Reporting retail sales for participation in Segway incentive programs

Segway has about 120 dealers in North America, more than 75 percent of which have already adopted the Salesforce PRM solution. Each dealership has its own account and login information, with visibility into the data that concerns it.

Segway’s regional managers can roll up the data to obtain a comprehensive view of sales and forecasts. Additionally, Salesforce SFA is used by about one-fourth of Segway’s employees—primarily in sales, marketing, and customer care.
Gaining Traction with PRM

Today, Segway marketing personnel review each lead before assigning it to a particular dealer, and all leads are tracked to specific campaigns in Salesforce SFA. This gives Segway greater visibility into the effectiveness of its marketing campaigns—for example, how often leads from a certain page of the Web site convert to sales.

Service requests are handled by the Web-to-case functionality of Salesforce SFA. Customer care personnel receive email messages whenever a new case is opened, so they can log in and start the service process right away.

“We follow the sales cycle closely, from the lead all the way to the sale, and then we integrate service information throughout the lifetime of product ownership,” says Gorglione.

Product registrations include valuable demographic information that helps Segway tailor its marketing campaigns more effectively. Gorglione says it was easy to add this custom capability to the partner portal. When a lead turns into a sale, the channel partner simply changes the status to “sold” and enters the serial number of the Segway product that was purchased. Later, the partner can add warranty information to the same form. “This gives us the whole picture, from the marketing campaign to the leads received to the actual sales,” he notes.

Tracking Forward Progress

According to Gorglione, most channel partners actively use the portal on a regular basis. Salesforce PRM allows Segway to manage every aspect of the partner lifecycle, including recruitment, marketing, selling, and measurement. Segway tracks usage metrics such as adoption rate, consistency of use, number of unread leads, and the length of time leads stay in the pipeline. “Over the last two or three months, we’ve sent thousands of leads to our partners and carefully tracked each one,” he confirms. “By monitoring their activities, we encourage dealers to keep their leads up to date.”

Segway also uses Salesforce to gather sell-through information whenever leads are converted into sales. “Closing the loop in this fashion provides a whole realm of information we were missing before,” Gorglione explains. “Salesforce has helped us focus on our most profitable customer segments. We can quickly determine which segments are delivering results and tailor our marketing campaigns accordingly.”

Preparing to Go the Distance

Now that the majority of its domestic partners are on board, Segway plans to roll out international versions of the partner portal to distributors in 30 countries including, Spain, France, Germany, Italy, Austria, the Netherlands, and parts of Asia Pacific. “Salesforce PRM supports 14 languages, and we can turn on the correct language for each partner with a couple of clicks,” Gorglione says. The software also includes a translation workbench for adapting Segway’s own content to language-specific variants.

In the future, Segway plans to add more auto-response capabilities, along with new Web templates to enhance data collection and management activities. The company also wants to create a dashboard for tracking forecasts, revenue projections, and sales results. Based on his experience so far, Gorglione is confident he will be able to handle these development tasks on his own—without breaking stride.

About Segway, Inc.

Segway Inc. is the developer and manufacturer of the well-known Segway® Personal Transporter (PT), a self-balancing, electric transportation device. The company offers a full line of personal transporters and accessories to help both commercial and consumer customers be more productive. The company has a distribution network of 250 retail points in 62 countries.