

## **TireTrader**

Reprinted from Tire Business - November 06, 2006

Tire wholesaler and retailer Sandone Tire & Battery Service has turned to a business-to-business Internet ordering program to improve service for its wholesale accounts while cutting costs.

Scranton, Pa.-based Sandone Tire & Battery began using Signal Extraprise Corp.'s TireTrader Internet ordering program in January, and the family-owned dealership reported that 22 percent of its wholesale customers made the switch in the first few months to the Internet-based ordering system. That change has allowed the company to devote more time to building strong business relationships with them, according to Vice President Patrick Sandone III.

The business-to-business electronic program simplifies ordering, streamlines distribution networks and reduces costs while providing a competitive advantage, according to Signal Extraprise.

Sandone Tire, which supplies a full line of passenger, light truck, medium truck, industrial and off-the-road tires and parts to regions encompassing Pennsylvania, New York and New Jersey, said visionary management along with technology has propelled its business plan of a warehouse distributor to exceed business goals.

"It just makes sense" to use the Internet to enhance business, Mr. Sandone said. "It gives you such information that you can't get over the phone."

TireTrader has improved the company's business relationship with customers by providing them with a window to warehoused inventory and pricing structures as well as a sales tool for their use with their retail customers, he said.

"It surprised me that we have that many people using it so quickly," he said, adding that he would be happy if participation reached 30 percent by year-end.

Mr. Sandone said to inform others of the benefits of the browser-based program, his company launched an ongoing communications campaign that has included monthly mailers with product descriptions, mouse pads with the TireTrader logo and company information, e-mails sent to customers and monthly specials that can be accessed only through the TireTrader program.

TireTrader is simple to use and intuitive; a new user can be trained to use the whole system quickly and with very little prior computer experience," he said in a statement, adding that the program provides data and graphics that his customers can use while working with their retail customers.

To date 17 wholesalers are using the TireTrader program, which connects them to 5,848 downstream dealers who process wholesale orders, said Dennis Clark, vice president of client solutions for Signal Extraprise. That equals about \$75 million to \$80 million a year, he said, in terms of volume processed through TireTrader by customers.

Mr. Clark said the cost of the TireTrader program is determined by customer needs, and there is an up-front fee and a small ongoing support charge.