

The breadth and ambition of Dana's global distribution operations were well demonstrated by the progress of Dana Distribution Europe. Before the emergence of the single European market, the different community countries were separated by language, legislation, trade names and border customs. Parts distribution was necessarily a national business.

But as soon as a single, unrestricted market emerged, a European network became both possible and desirable. Dana was the first company to recognize the opportunity, and assembled a distribution network that covered the United Kingdom, and much of Holland, Portugal and France, supplying the automotive and truck aftermarkets with paint, parts, accessories, tools and equipment.

The wide range of goods and the geographic scope of the operations demanded exemplary inventory control. Dana therefore invested in a sophisticated satellite communications system and a state-of-the-art Distribution Center. Customers were linked on-line with Dana so that their re-ordering became automatic.

By 1994, the Dana Distribution Center at Milton Keynes, England, was delivering daily to 110 owned Branch outlets, and more than 600 independent customers.

Distribution Technology

Technology is essential to supplying customers and responsively serving them. Dana Distribution Europe shows how committed Dana is to upgrading communications equipment, as new technology becomes proven and available. In 1981, a real time on-line computer system was installed across Dana's branch network. The system controlled inventory, ran point-of-sale transactions, and re-ordered products automatically. In 1989, Counterpart was first sold, offering independent jobbers a computer system that linked them to the Distribution Center.

In 1991, the year that Dana became the UK's largest independent distributor, an EDI program was introduced to improve productivity and speed up the ordering process. By 1994, satellite facilities had been introduced, giving Dana Distribution Europe an even greater competitive advantage.

FleetTuf

FleetTuf, a new generation of aftermarket chassis parts, was developed in response to customer desire for ball-joints, tie-rod end and idler arms that could withstand an off-road battering in a fully loaded truck. FleetTuf parts, which in standard tests proved twice as durable as the next best brand, were engineered by Dana's Aftermarket Products Division and distributed through Dana's Automotive Distribution Sales and Parts Craft Divisions.

People Finding A Better Way

And the future?

That the future will bring change is certain. But some things at Dana may prove just as certain.

The Dana Style is not something dreamed up out of nowhere by a Policy Committee, and imposed upon Dana People. Companies have personalities, just as surely as people do. The Dana Style has come from Dana people, and its aspects have been visible at Dana for upwards of seventy years.

Education, communication, idea sharing, and a hatred for too much management and paper have been part of the way Dana has done business since 1920. In engineering and manufacturing, too, the Dana Style has been around for generations. From the outset, Dana people were committed to the highest quality products, processes and service.

They were also dedicated to "continuous processes of refinement," that were equivalent to today's continuous improvement. They prided themselves at working with the customer, ensuring there