

## GE® Gains Better Visibility into Channel Sales



### Challenges

- No single source of sales data within Salesforce® customer relationship management (CRM)
- Difficult to calculate sales commissions accurately
- Establishing consistency
- Lack of visibility into smaller channel partners' sell-through data

### Solution

E2open® Channel Data Management (CDM) Application

### Results

- Reduced inventory spending and stock-out issues
- Eliminated unnecessary administrative tasks for sales teams
- Dramatically improved the speed, accuracy and detail of channel partner reports

### Summary

## Half the World Depends on GE

GE Automation & Controls is a division of GE, the world's Digital Industrial Company, transforming industries ranging from aviation to renewable energy with software-defined machines and solutions that are connected, responsive and predictive. GE Automation & Controls offers turnkey solutions for full power plant automation, control and safety, as well as standalone industrial automation products for a variety of other industries.

With 2,500 employees in 30 countries dedicated to customer success, this division of GE automates the processes that generate half of the world's power. A third of major metropolitan areas rely on GE control systems to help provide electricity to citizens. GE Automation & Controls leverages hundreds of channel partners across the globe to get local inventory to customers and provide technical expertise on GE products.

## Opaque Processes and Messy Databases Clouded Channel Visibility

When investing in partners to drive program performance, internet business-to-business (iB2B) channel suppliers like GE Automation rely heavily on point-of-sale (POS) data from partners to power everything from customer intelligence to sales compensation.

The ability to collect and use this information is crucial to GE's ability to operate with transparency and enable effective sales processes. With its data in disarray, GE struggled to calculate accurate sales commissions, spent weeks matching POS data to opportunities and lacked any information on sell-through for all but the largest partners.

GE realized that to achieve their goals of increased visibility and better sell-through, they would have to perform an entire overhaul of their data processes. This overhaul would require cleaning up the customer data stored in GE's Salesforce database to eradicate issues like duplicate data and inconsistent naming conventions, amongst many others.

“When I came to GE, I was put in charge of a new sales team to drive demand in small and medium accounts through our channel. I knew we had a database of POS data, so I thought there would be no problem. But once we got involved with the data set, we saw that it was incredibly messy.”

**Dave Henrichs**

Americas Sales Leader, Turnkey Solutions  
GE Automation & Controls

## Choosing a Channel Data Management Partner

GE began by considering the benefits and costs of a manual data overhaul, but came to the conclusion that this approach would ultimately prove to be too time-consuming and would prevent GE from establishing an automated data management process. The other option was to find a specialized vendor with a solution built to automate the overhaul. This solution would also have to tackle the ongoing data management process.

After evaluating multiple vendors and with a consensus from a number of internal teams across a variety of departments, GE selected e2open to drive its new channel data management (CDM) process.

### Channel Visibility Challenges

- No single source of sales data within Salesforce CRM
- Sales teams spent significant time (weeks) matching POS data to opportunities in the Salesforce system instead of selling more products
- Difficult to calculate sales commissions accurately
- Lack of visibility into smaller channel partners’ sell-through data

### GE’s Goals

- Clean up and verify existing data to enable actionable insights
- Implement sustainable, automated data management processes and technology
- Enable a new sales team to drive demand in small and medium accounts across the channel
- Accurately calculate sales compensation based on sell-through to end customers instead of sell-in data

- Provide channel sales teams and senior sales management visibility into customer sell-through and inventory in Salesforce CRM.

## Trust Becomes a Major Component

A key part of the initiative was gaining internal and external stakeholders’ trust and cooperation. Some distributors mentioned security as a concern when GE broke the news that they would use a third-party vendor for CDM, but e2open was able to demonstrate how it offered stronger security safeguards than the legacy practice of emailing or faxing sales reports.

## E2open CDM Platform Brings More Efficiency and Accuracy to Channel Operations

GE began its data integration and collection overhaul with e2open during the summer of 2016. As a key part of the integration, the data that e2open’s platform collected began flowing into GE’s Salesforce instance and was immediately integrated into its data warehouse. E2open’s technology officially went live with all GE channel partners on January 1, 2017.

GE had been unable to measure channel sales reps’ performance at a granular, micro level before implementing e2open CDM. This forced the company to pay based on total sales for each distributor, which wasn’t an efficient or cost-effective way to incentivize channel partners’ performance. Clean data from e2open made it possible to provide variable compensation for each sales rep.

“We could hire employees or temps to clean up the current data, but unless we had a sustainable process in place, every month or quarter distributors would just be sending new data and forcing us to make the same fixes over and over.”

**Dave Henrichs**

Americas Sales Leader, Turnkey Solutions  
GE Automation & Controls

Finally, GE would only send very general sales notices to channel partners before the overhaul. With e2open, GE was able to automate a much more effective and targeted process to send notices to partners, including alerts about when partners should speak with customers and obtain new orders based on information like a product’s lifecycle.

Henrichs described how “we can run reports and tell a partner, for example, ‘These are the 52 customers that you sold parts to in the past, so these are the ones you should approach for their last-time buy.’”

E2open has provided GE with more transparency and better access to inventory data, which has reduced the cost of inventory in the channel, as well as likelihood of stock-outs. The e2open CDM platform allowed GE to start collecting inventory data from distributors, which made it possible to recommend products for distributors to order based on their improved view of similar distributors’ inventory levels. Newly gleaned insights also enabled GE to avoid stock-outs by finding nearby distributors to ship products when normal distributors lacked inventory.

## How the e2open CDM Application Improved GE’s Channel Performance

- Reduced inventory spending and stock-out issues by sharing detailed and accurate inventory data with partners and sending data-driven recommendations for product orders
- Sales teams spent significant time (weeks) matching POS data to opportunities in the Salesforce system instead of selling more products. E2open CDM eliminated unnecessary, administrative tasks for sales teams to give them more time for active selling

- Dramatically improved the speed, accuracy and detail of channel partner reports
- Empowered more effective sales incentives through compensation based on individual performance rather than total distributor sales
- Improved resupply process with automatic personalized notices to partners about expiring products

## About e2open

At e2open, we’re creating a more connected, intelligent supply chain. It starts with sensing and responding to real-time demand, supply and delivery constraints. Bringing together data from customers, distribution channels, suppliers, contract manufacturers and logistics partners, our collaborative and agile supply chain platform enables companies to use data in real time, with artificial intelligence and machine learning to drive smarter decisions. All this complex information is delivered in a single view that encompasses your demand, supply and logistics ecosystems. E2open is changing everything.

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