

HAMPTON FORGE, LTD:

USING CATSWEB ONDEMAND FOR GLOBAL QUALITY AND VENDOR INCIDENT TRACKING SYSTEM

An AssurX interview with Dave Sommers, Vice President of Operations

Dave Sommers is someone who understands the value of quality control. A long-time industry leader, Mr. Sommers helped Lenox address and surmount important quality issues as a leading executive there for many years. Last year he left Lenox to join Hampton Forge, a well-known company that manufactures many household goods including dinnerware, cutlery, and housewares.

One of the first things he did after arriving at Hampton Forge was to contact AssurX to help him at his new company in the way they helped him at Lenox.

Q: What kind of experience have you had with AssurX and CATSWeb?

A: I've been a user for years. At Lenox, I used CATSWeb for reporting/quality problems in the field and customer complaints. It did such a great job for me there that bringing it here [Hampton Forge] was one of the first things I did. I started using CATSWeb at Hampton Forge at the end of 2007 for Quality Control. Our business is similar to Lenox in that we distribute consumer products made overseas.

Q: How has CATSWeb improved work for you at Hampton Forge?

A: Well, we need better control of quality and sourcing. Before I arrived, Hampton Forge had a very confusing system that made it difficult to track issues. You couldn't look up a vendor's history or track trends.

Now we are using CATSWeb to help up track trends and keep better tabs on vendors. Soon we're going to be more ambitious and use CATSWeb to help us be more efficient with product development and sourcing. It will be helpful to use CATSWeb as an important part of our task management system and will allow us to keep tighter reins on handoffs between our various offices and production facilities in China and elsewhere -- but mostly in Asia.

Q: You chose CATSWeb OnDemand (SaaS). Why?

A: We didn't want to deal with installing software. With CATSWeb OnDemand, we got up and running very quickly.

Q: Talk about your experience with training. You led the training effort at Hampton Forge, correct?

A: That's right. The training was very simple. Our team found it easy to use and configure. It took just a few days to get everyone up to speed.

HAMPTON FORGE, LTD: CONTINUED

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Q: You've got manufacturers and other vendors using the system in Asia. Was it hard to train them at a distance?

A: No, it wasn't hard to train them at all. We did most of it over the phone and via email. I did visit local facilities, but many people learned how to use it with do-it-yourself training. It's that easy and intuitive to grasp.

Q: You've said that you already have plans to expand CATSWeb usage later, but how did it help from *day one*?

A: It has definitely already improved our efficiency. Before it was hard to produce any kind of trend report and now it's just point and click. In the past, we were also incident-driven, but now we are trend-driven and more proactive with potential problems. We fix them before they get out of control. It's a huge benefit to our business to have CATSWeb.

Q: Would you recommend CATSWeb OnDemand to others?

A: Yes, definitely!

About Hampton Forge, LTD

Hampton Forge, Ltd., was founded in 1992 and is a privately held design, marketing, sales and importing company in the tabletop and housewares business. They have over 300 customers in North America including the United States, Canada and Mexico. The channels of distribution fall into five major areas: department store, national chains, home specialty, warehouse clubs and mass. Hampton Forge, Ltd. markets products under several trade names including but not limited to Argent Orfevres, Hampton Forge, Hampton Signature, Hampton Silversmiths, Soho, Skandia and Essenstahl.

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