

# Case Study: Hach

## Experian QAS Reduces Return Mail and Duplicate Accounts



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### Situation

With erroneous customer contact information levels at 20%, either in the form of invalid addresses or duplicated accounts, Hach Company was wasting a significant number of items with each of their mailings.

### Solution

QAS Pro was deployed at key customer contact points within the call center, outbound sales and customer service departments in order to ensure accurate address data entry. Once deployed, an unforeseen advantage of QAS Pro was a reduction in the amount of time required to enter customer contact information.

### Results

Hach Company's addresses are now more than 98% accurate, with a marked reduction in return mail and duplicate accounts. Increased mail efficiencies have resulted in the ability to mail more deeply into market segments without incremental budget. Additionally, call center and customer service representatives have more time to focus on their customers' needs rather than cumbersome data entry.

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#### The Challenges of Collecting Data

Hach Company is a business-to-business operation that manufactures and sells water analysis instrumentation that helps detect, alert and classify the contaminants in various water sources. Their primary

customers are large food and beverage organizations, oil and gas exploration companies, and municipal drinking and wastewater treatment facilities. Hach's database contains over 600,000 customer records with 165,000 considered active customers.

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Products are sold directly to customers through a variety of channels including phone, fax, website, catalog and direct sales. While each data capture channel has its own challenges, a ship to, bill to and market to address is required for each customer. "It is critical to enter customer information accurately at the data collection points, rather than rely on a back end data scrub," commented Chris Gorski, Director of Direct Marketing at Hach Company. "In our business it is not uncommon for an account to have two or three different, yet correct addresses, and a specific customer placing an order may only be familiar with one of them. Thus duplicate accounts are easily created."

### **Bad Addresses – An Enterprise Wide Problem**

Bad addresses were causing large amounts of returned packages and mail pieces. Returned mail was a large additional cost not only because of wasted postage and mail piece production costs, but also lost marketing opportunity by not getting an offer to the hands of the recipient. "The lost opportunity cost a bad address created was extremely high for us due to a limited shelf life of much of what we sell. Merchandise sent back due to invalid addresses cannot be returned into stock," continued Gorski. "Moreover, as a B2B company who bills a number of customers, bad addresses correlated to delayed payments. A seemingly small problem had negative impact across a wide variety of departments, and was costing Hach valuable

inventory, marketing dollars and delaying receivables."

Gorski performed an analysis of their customer database and discovered that 20% of their addresses were inaccurate. He knew something had to be done, but it took some work to get other departments on board. "A database filled with bad addresses is a companywide issue, but it's difficult to get other departments to realize that the problem impacts them as well as marketing," said Gorski. "Many times departments don't understand how much money they are wasting due to bad addresses until they take the time to investigate the costs of those inefficiencies."

After getting other departments to realize how important capturing accurate addresses was to their operations, he began looking for solutions. "We began by taking a free evaluation of the software to try it out," said Gorski. "Once word got out about how easy it was to use from our pilot, everybody wanted it." So, based on the positive user feedback and the tool's functionality, Hach Company deployed QAS Pro.

### **QAS Pro Ensures Over 90% Accurate Customer Data**

QAS Pro resides at all human points of data entry at Hach Company in order to capture valid address information in real-time. The tool verifies addresses against the USPS® database and standardizes them as they are captured in the call center and customer service. It is key to

ensure addresses are correct upfront when new customers are established or when an order is placed by an existing customer. QAS Pro's type-down functionality allows users to not only capture an accurate address, but to do so faster. By reducing the number of key strokes needed to enter an address, employees save valuable time.

With bad addresses under control, resources could be put towards leveraging and improving data. "Improving our address quality has been a great way to improve duplicate account identification," commented Gorski. "Since addresses are standardized and accurate, there are more common elements between duplicate accounts and we can merge them with higher confidence." Additionally, Hach Company has had higher match rates when appending customer demographics such as ISO codes.

With all addresses being verified in real-time, over 98% of Hach Company's customer addresses are valid and deliverable. Gorski is confident that the remaining addresses are intentionally invalid, and these tend to be loading docks, construction sites or other areas that the USPS® does not recognize. "QAS Pro has saved Hach Company thousands of dollars in return mail costs while also improving our customer service, call center and billing operations," concluded Gorski. "Verifying addresses when they're captured has been a clear win across our organization."

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