DRIVING PROFITABILITY IN MANUFACTURING:

5 Successful Customer Portals

Built with

Liferay

Introduction

From shrinking profit margins and labor shortages to expensive after sales support, supply chain disruptions and antiquated processes – the challenges for the manufacturing industry have been manifold in recent years. And as B2B journeys lengthen and become even more complex, the need for manufacturers to maintain a close connection with their customers, suppliers, and other stakeholders has increased – before, during and after purchase.

Most manufacturers have realized that competing on price and product alone is no longer an option. Hence, digitally transforming their business, especially post-purchase, and finding ways to run more efficiently and profitably are key in today's industry. To keep up with the need for increased digitalization, 69% of manufacturing CEOs in 2021 were willing to invest more in digital capabilities.[1] Still, there's a lot of ground to cover. According to a recent study, only a third (31%) of manufacturers globally can be considered 'fit for the future', i. e. sufficiently prepared to deal with future challenges like increased competition, changing employee expectations, and rising customer demand.[2]

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> **Only a third (31%) of manufacturers globally are sufficiently prepared for future challenges.**
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> The Manufacturer: A third of manufacturers considered 'Fit for the Future' and prepared to deal with upcoming challenges – report

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1 Gartner: Infographic: Future State of Manufacturing Industries
2 The Manufacturer: A third of manufacturers considered 'Fit for the Future' and prepared to deal with upcoming challenges – report

A customer self-service portal is essential when it comes to offering unified solutions that improve customer experience and drive profitability while at the same time lowering the cost of growth and minimizing downtime. Providing modern, user-friendly, and secure portals that simplify complexity enables manufacturers to:

- improve after-sales experiences while reducing costs
- engage customers with powerful personalization
- streamline complex purchasing experiences

Being able to self-manage accounts, access knowledge, and solve problems independently are de facto standards of the industry, underscored by the fact that 90% of consumers now expect a customer portal for customer service.[1]

A customer self-service portal unifies the right tools in one solution and enables manufacturers to stay connected to their customers and scale for growth.

Let's take a close look at five real-life examples and how these businesses leveraged a powerful platform like Liferay Digital Experience Platform (DXP) to build customer portals that improve customer satisfaction and generate revenue.

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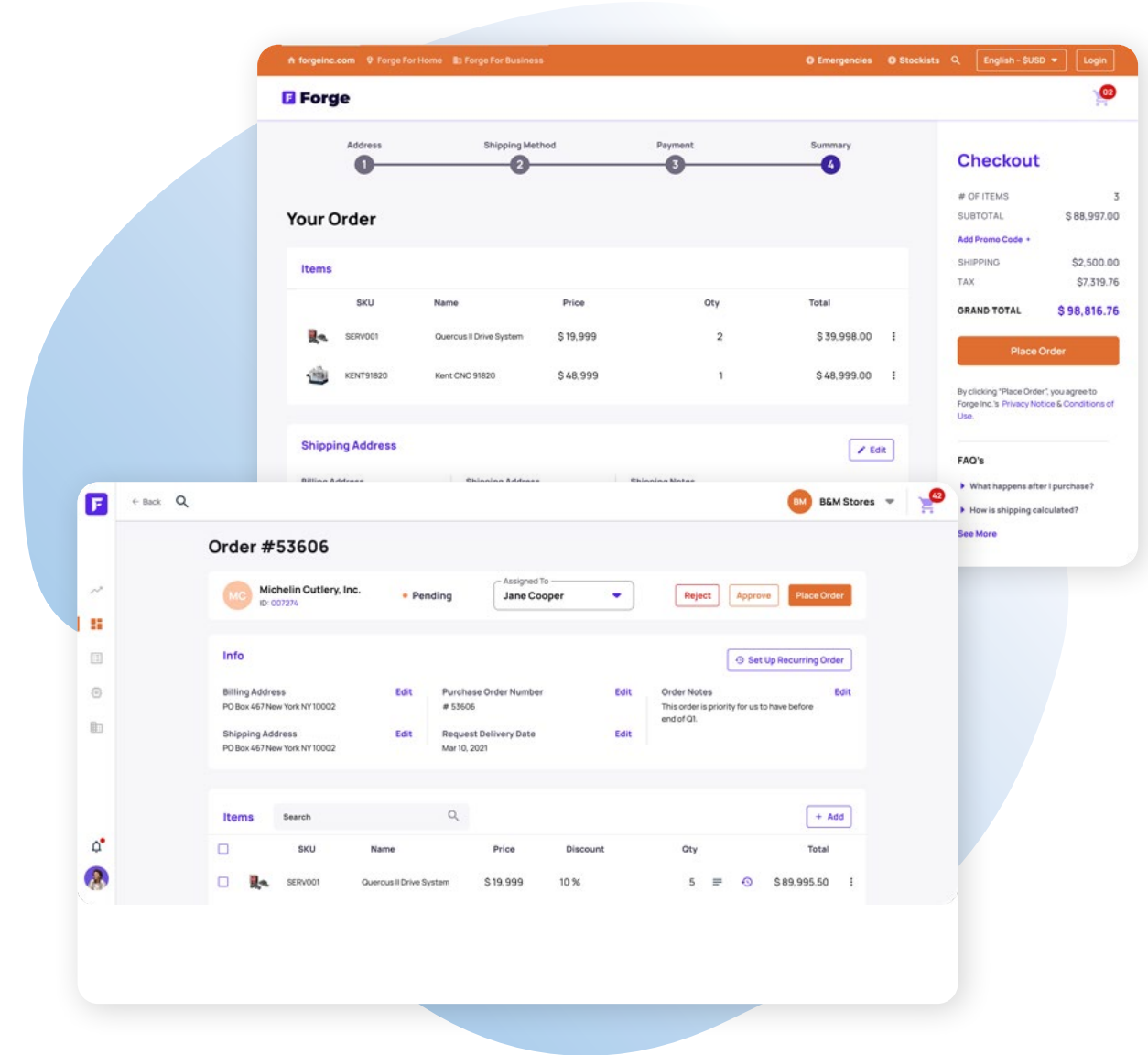
1 Microsoft: State of Global Customer Service Report

ABOUT THE CUSTOMER

For more than eighty-five years, Mueller, Inc. has been dedicated to providing their customers with quality in-house products and services as the leading manufacturer and retailer of steel buildings, metal roofing, and components throughout Texas and the Southwest region of the United States.

OBJECTIVES

Mueller, Inc. wanted to transform their website to create a self-service solution that guides and empowers customers during the buyer's journey.

HOW LIFERAY HELPED

By adding Liferay's out-of-the-box self-service capabilities, Mueller gave customers the opportunity to explore product offerings, find project ideas, and learn more about the process. In helping customers to become better informed more quickly, Mueller removed roadblocks to making a significant purchase.

KEY FEATURES USED

Shareable checklists for customers to save their favorite products and submit lists to the sales team, complex workflow routing with Liferay Forms, Facebook integration, 3D design tool for customers.

RESULTS

- 73% increase in quotes per month, with some months as high as 163%.

- Increase of website traffic by 250%, from from around 400,000 per month to 1.4 million.

- Shorter, less burdensome sales process and increased efficiency of sales team thanks to self-service.

- Easy tracking of customer engagement by using metrics like user accounts, created and submitted checklists, digital catalog requests, and more.

MacDon®

ABOUT THE CUSTOMER

For over 70 years, MacDon has been a world leader in technology, innovation, and manufacturing of high-performance agricultural and harvesting equipment, supporting farmers in the cultivation of crops necessary to feed, clothe, and support the global community.

As consumer needs grow, MacDon has adapted with impressive flexibility — but they eventually hit a wall with their legacy technology.

Liferay®

OBJECTIVES

While once robust enough to address the manufacturing company's needs, MacDon's legacy dealer self-service portal wasn't equipped to meet new supply chain challenges and mounting customer expectations. The goal was to offer a flexible self-service portal with a more user-friendly interface to enable a smoother purchasing experience.

HOW LIFERAY HELPED

Thanks to extensive out-of-the-box features, MacDon was able to upgrade their dealer portal to Liferay DXP, creating new functionality for their dealers. Users can retrieve invoice information, check production inventory, create shopping lists, submit warranty claims, and perform key self-service tasks.

KEY FEATURES USED

Personalization, Self-Service,Commerce, Content Management (incl. customized asset publishers to fit brand guidelines), responsive design, catalog browsing, marketplace, tags and categories to direct content to the right places.

MacDon

RESULTS

- Call, fax, and in-person orders have decreased thanks to easier self-service and online options.

- The overall number of site visitors has increased 50%, with concurrent users doubling as well.

- 20% increase in overall sales with e-commerce transactions increasing by 50%.

VOLKSWAGEN

GROUP FRANCE

ABOUT THE CUSTOMER

Created in 1960, Volkswagen Group France is a subsidiary of Volkswagen AG, one of the world's leading companies in the automotive industry and Europe's largest car manufacturer.
In France, it markets the products, spare parts and accessories of the corporation's five brands: Volkswagen, Audi, SEAT, ŠKODA, and Volkswagen Commercial Vehicles.

OBJECTIVES

When Volkswagen Group France launched an overhaul of its customer portal for dealers, the objective was to provide a modern, user-friendly and easy-to-access portal in order to improve the service quality for its partners. The new portal had to integrate existing business applications, allow partners to track their records and stay up to date with the Group's news.

HOW LIFERAY HELPED

Through a Liferay based B2B dealer portal, Volkswagen Group France simplifies the day-to-day operations of its 30,000 users which includes a network of authorized dealers, repairers and employees. The solution has a very broad functional scope and allows for the easy creation of multiple sites. It offers users an easy navigation, thorough profile management to adapt communication for different communities, and access to a wealth of information as well as specific services.

KEY FEATURES USED

Multimedia library, event calendars, personalized access to product sheets, most updated prices, circular letters and directives.

RESULTS

- **Single portal supports the Group's five different brands.**

- **Modern interface integrating 100+ business applications such as booking, rental applications and more.**

- **Document sharing based on user roles and permissions.**

AIRBUS

HELICOPTERS

ABOUT THE CUSTOMER

Airbus is exactly what the name suggests: the world leader in aeronautics and aerospace products and services. The purpose of its subsidiary of Airbus Helicopters is to provide the most effective civil and military helicopter solutions to its customers.

© Airbus SAS

OBJECTIVES

Airbus Helicopters turned to Liferay to redesign its customer portal and put forward a more modern, engaging, and customizable platform that is aimed at improving the customer journey and aftersales experiences of its over 3,000 civil and military helicopter operators and their 24,000 users.

HOW LIFERAY HELPED

With Liferay's help the Airbus consolidated its 15 IT service management tools into a single, user-friendly platform, simplifying the customer journey with self-service options, helping operators run their business efficiently and minimizing downtime. Users are now less dependent on the Service Desk and thanks to an integrated knowledge base, users can find answers to their own questions, thereby streamlining their digital experience and delivering a daily gain in time and efficiency.

KEY FEATURES USED

Customer account management, electronic warranty claims management, health and usage reports gathered from integrated sensors, online purchase of spare parts, order tracking, instant quotations and invoices.

RESULTS

- The Service Desk now manages 30% fewer incidents because the portal helps mitigate and manage issues.
- Improved operational efficiency for all helicopter operators: Incidents are resolved more quickly.
- Greater productivity through personalized dashboards and self-service.
- Costs are easier to control.

ABOUT THE CUSTOMER

The Putzmeister Group develops, produces and sells high-tech and service-oriented machines for placing concrete worldwide.As a leading industry specialist, Putzmeister is involved with large international projects such as the Burj Khalifa in Dubai, the expansion of the Panama Canal, and the new Wilshire Grand Center in Los Angeles.

OBJECTIVES

With over 20 subsidiaries, 12 languages and 3,000 employees in 90 countries, Putzmeister's strategic goal was to eliminate the need for multiple login credentials and create a single sign-on omni-audience portal that offers access to all tools and applications used by customers and dealers worldwide.

HOW LIFERAY HELPED

By unifying technological and organizational siloes on one Liferay DXP based platform, Putzmeister can now offer users a single source of truth with personalized and region-specific information and self-service features, a modern design and an intuitive navigation.

KEY FEATURES USED

Personalization, Self-Service, Content Management, categories, responsive design, regionalization, shared content via API with other, integrated systems (SAP Commerce).

RESULTS

- Modern design, intuitive navigation: MY Putzmeister is the global digital face of the company.
- MY Putzmeister offers Single sign-on access to aftersales webshop and fleet management.
- Comfortable onboarding and registration workflows in 7 languages.
- Unified platform removed tech siloes, reduced IT maintenance costs and minimized security risks.

How to Build an Engaging Customer Portal with Liferay DXP

Each of these businesses were able to leverage the out-of-the-box self-service and personalization functionalities as well as integrative foundation of Liferay DXP. The solutions they built simplify complexity, lower the cost of growth and minimize downtimes while at the same time improving customer experience and driving profitability with digital aftersales.

Take a deeper look into features that make this possible by downloading this ebook.

Liferay®

Liferay

Liferay makes software that helps companies create digital experiences on web, mobile and connected devices. Our platform is open source, which makes it more reliable, innovative and secure. We try to leave a positive mark on the world through business and technology. Hundreds of organizations in financial services, healthcare, government, insurance, retail, manufacturing and multiple other industries use Liferay. Visit us at liferay.com.