



DriveRight Data - Powerful Tyre and Wheel data for use in multiple E-commerce environments

DriveRight, an independent wheel and tyre data distributor is a business that has embraced e-commerce from its inception and used it to full advantage.

Anticipating a shift in consumer focus towards online shopping within the automotive industry, the directors of DriveRight began to produce a database of OE wheel and tyre fitments. In 1995 the WTDR was launched, a hard copy fitment guide. The guide, although still produced and widely sold today was reinvented as 'TyreFit' in 2001 to meet demand for online data updated in real time and is now distributed around the world. At the time the notion of a buyer purchasing a tyre product online was met with scepticism in the industry, yet recognising the indications of an emerging e-commerce market around the late 90's DriveRight's positioning in the market has subsequently met many constantly changing requirements.

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Some sources in the UK suggest up to 25% of potential tyre purchases will have been researched by shoppers online prior to making a selection which is a huge advance on figures of less than 6% five years prior. Looking ahead, DriveRight's European Sales Manager Graham Dunford predicts another exponential leap to in excess of 50% in the next five years. "As recently as 3 years ago, major sectors of the tyre and wheel market here were still very sceptical that potential consumers would use the web to research and buy tyres and wheels, claiming that these products were totally unsuitable for sale over the internet. Yet increases in the number of related online distributors and suppliers and the volumes they sell online is growing proof that the internet is now an ideal opportunity to sell tyres, wheels and other related performance styling and fast fit products," comments Graham. "DriveRight's role is to empower these sellers with accurate and up-to-the minute data links and services to ensure the online consumer is offered accurate and hassle-free fitment choices linked to product."

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The TyreFit product provides access to over 31,000 fitments or 99% of vehicles listed since 1995. Retailers and distributor websites are able to advise potential shoppers what brands and sizes of tyres and wheels will fit their vehicles. Customers browsing for product are able to enter the make, chassis and most crucially the model of their vehicle and return a list of tyre and wheel matches. In some regions including the UK, the process is made even simpler and the returns more accurate. Just entering the VRM (vehicle's registration mark) will advise original rim and tyre size and also match to an available range of product and upstep options for that vehicle. "This reduces fitment errors, ensures product availability and greatly enhances the customer service experience." Graham Dunford adds, "DriveRight is now beginning to enjoy major growth in the provision of online and tailored make, chassis and model lookup tables linked where possible to VRM lookup. Many online tyre and wheel suppliers and retailers are using vehicle make,

chassis and model tables that are unsuitable for a given market. "This in turn makes their fitments inaccurate. Others request that the consumer bends down or kneels on the floor in the first instance and looks at their tyre size, memorises it or writes it down and then submits it. Neither method is ideal. As the upkeep of any vehicle and fitment data is a difficult and time-consuming task, use of DriveRight's data services can improve the all-round experience."

Coupling an accurate, comprehensive yet flexibly tailored list of fitments with e-commerce products has allowed DriveRight to develop a range of data and web-based projects that have been sold into the UK, Europe, the US and the Pacific markets. One of DriveRight's most recent data reseller partner is based in Russia.

The volume of business has increased to the extent DriveRight's TyreFit database is now queried in excess of 6 million times a month with retailers buying access to the full database or web services as a monthly subscription, or taking one of DriveRight's "pay per query" options.

Pushing the boundaries of e-commerce

DriveRight's success has stemmed from a desire to remain product neutral and push the boundaries of e-commerce solutions within the industry. Successful collaborations with major manufacturers such as Continental, Goodyear Dunlop, Pirelli and Toyo have improved the accuracy and added value of the datasets and the boundaries of DriveRight operation outside its UK roots. Working with retailers such as Kwik-Fit and National to establish interactive web services linked to their own websites have empowered consumers to research their requirements more effectively before proceeding to sale online or contacting a depot.

Partnerships with Amazon and eBay have seen the deployment of DriveRight 'widgets' within online stores. Branded as DriveRight's "eParts" solution it gives shoppers access to search criteria not previously available on eBay, the ability to again search by make and model or registration as opposed to a random product search.

DriveRight's Wheelwizards API product allows buyers to view 2D or 3D wheel-on-car imagery within a retailer's website. This allows consumers to view wheel, calliper and tyre fitment options on a particular year and make of vehicle.

As for the future, DriveRight predicts online tyre and wheel sales will become a major component of most professional retailers marketing mix. Graham Dunford concludes - "The evidence is indisputable. There is a growing market opportunity for online trading within the UK tyre and wheel market often allied to mail order and mobile or network fitting. DriveRight's extensive, accurate and constantly updated data and web services applications portfolio are proven to empower the distributor and supplier and enhance the consumer's online shopping experience. This delivers added-value for all concerned."

DriveRight's e-commerce tyre and wheel data and solutions can be viewed online at: www.wheelwizards.net