



# Proactive, transparent and service-oriented –

## How TMD Friction optimises returns processes with Warranty & Returns

Warranty claims and returns are not pleasant for any company. But a professional and transparent handling of these processes can minimise the effort involved and at the same time increase long-term customer satisfaction and loyalty. TMD Friction, one of the world's largest manufacturers of brake pads for passenger cars and commercial vehicles, has decided in favour of our Order Manager module Warranty & Returns because it is convinced of the advantages of the industry solution.

## TMD FRICTION

A NISSHINBO GROUP COMPANY

For twenty years, TMD Friction has been connected to our B2B platform Order Manager; the supplier uses it to handle all processes from availability requests to electronic invoices automatically and efficiently. So it was a logical step to also process returns and warranty claims with the Order Manager module Warranty & Returns.

"The satisfaction of our customers is of utmost strategic importance to us. We want to optimise all steps of order processing and are pleased that TecAlliance has delivered the last piece of the puzzle with Warranty & Returns", explains Sarah Schwarz, Global Business Process & Project Manager at TMD Friction.

"Returns have many facets: In the case of defective parts, the fault may have occurred before or after installation, or perhaps a part was missing in the delivery. ***With Warranty & Returns we can handle all these cases and make this rather unpleasant process as positive and easy as possible for our customers,***" says Sarah Schwarz.

### **Standardised returns processes for the automotive aftermarket**

Up to now, each parts manufacturer has defined its own procedures for returns or warranty claims. Completing a claim form was time-consuming and the manual process steps often resulted in incorrect or incomplete entries and unnecessary transport of parts.

"In summer 2019, we introduced Warranty & Returns so that all parties involved in the automotive aftermarket, i.e. workshops, parts dealers and manufacturers, can handle returns and warranty cases in a standardised process and via a common system", explains Moritz Mahler, Product Owner of the Warranty & Returns module. "From my experience, I know how important it is for wholesalers that they can submit all their claims to all their suppliers in the same way. Otherwise they would have to use hundreds of different portals, each with its own access data and claims forms, each of which asks for different information. This makes the process unnecessarily complicated", says Moritz Mahler.



***We want to enable our clients to act proactively and know the status of their cases at any time. With Warranty & Returns they can create a new claim in less than two minutes.***

Sarah Schwarz,  
Global Business Process & Project  
Manager at TMD Friction



It takes about 15 minutes to fill in a conventional complaint form. There is always the risk of information being entered incorrectly when the form is transferred to the systems of the parts manufacturer. Often the parts manufacturer has to request additional information or documents after receiving the claim in order to get a clear picture of a case and make a decision, which delays the process. And the wholesaler is, so to speak, caught between the lines: he is dependent on the supplier's processing being as fast and transparent as possible so that he can offer good service to his customers.

#### **Efficient cooperation even across country borders**

The Order Manager module Warranty & Returns offers advantages for all parties involved. In the Order Manager Online Portal, wholesalers can create warranty and returns claims immediately and free of charge and transmit them to all their suppliers – even internationally.

“We want to enable our clients to act proactively and know the status of their cases at any time. With Warranty & Returns they can create a new claim in less than two minutes. They are informed in real time when the processing status changes and always have an overview of all their open cases with all suppliers”, explains Sarah Schwarz.

“The advantages of Warranty & Returns show particularly when the physical distance to a customer is very large. With customers from South America or other non-European countries, the entire process up to the final settlement sometimes took up to six months. During this time the customer didn't have the part or the money and had no idea of the processing status. Now we work together using the same tool so that everyone can see the status at any time. This close contact is a good way to increase customer satisfaction and bridge the distance,” says Sarah Schwarz.

#### **Less transport, lower costs**

Warranty & Returns supports the claimant in selecting the correct spare part, reducing errors in identification. One can, for example, select a part directly from a previous order or identify the vehicle to find the correct part by entering the VIN number or searching by number plate.

***“The integration of TecDoc data is one of the great advantages of Warranty & Returns. With so many different ways to select the correct part, both our claimants and we can be sure which part a claim is actually about,”*** says Sarah Schwarz.

Using a QR code, claimants can quickly and easily upload photos, videos and other documents related to the case. The supplier can clarify open questions directly via the chat functionality. “We check a lot before an item is sent to us. If we already know in advance that a complaint is not justified because the part is from another manufacturer or, for example, it was

installed in the wrong car make, there is no need to ship it. **Photos or videos from claimants are often enough to decide. This saves everyone time, costs and effort**", explains Sarah Schwarz.

### **Working together for an optimum solution**

Already during the development phase, TMD Friction was interested in the new TecAlliance solution. But from the parts manufacturer's point of view, some functions were still missing.

"Even before Warranty & Returns was officially launched, we were in close contact with TecAlliance. We were convinced that this was a future-oriented product, but it needed a few more functions for a very large international company like ours. Now most of our requirements have been implemented; TecAlliance also took into account the feedback from our

colleagues and customers during the test phase. **Once again it was the very open, trustful and agile cooperation that made this project successful**", says Sarah Schwarz.

TMD Friction started with a test phase using selected German customers. Following its successful completion, the brake expert is now planning large-scale use of the module in Germany in the first quarter of 2021. The international use of Warranty & Returns is already underway: a test phase with seven UK customers is running until the end of 2020. Another test is also planned for China on the way to worldwide use of the module.

### **Racing subsidiary takes the lead at full speed**

Every supplier connected to the Order Manager platform automatically has access to Warranty & Returns via the Online Portal. Wholesale dealers can electronically transmit returns and

warranty claims immediately and free of charge – regardless of whether their suppliers already use the B2B platform Order Manager or not.

This is why the subsidiary TMD Performance, whose PAGID Racing friction products are inextricably linked to racing and rallying, was receiving electronic returns and warranty claims even before the official decision to use Warranty & Returns had been made. Almost 100 per cent of motorsport customers use Order Manager to order replacement parts. Once the new function was available, TMD Performance received the first claims at the end of 2019 from racing customers in France, China and other countries.

"Actually we hadn't planned to use it at such an early stage", remembers Sarah Schwarz, laughing. "But our customers immediately recognised this new possibility and were ready to go. We decided very quickly to seize this





opportunity and take advantage of the benefits of processing claims via the Order Manager platform”, says Sarah Schwarz.

#### **Simple, fast and close to the customer**

In recent months, the interest of TMD Friction's customers has increased significantly so that more and more claims are submitted through the module. “Many wholesalers use Warranty & Returns for all their suppliers, even if these do not use the module. The supplier is then informed about the new claim and can see it in the claims list. When we have received claims via Warranty & Returns, we have approached the dealers directly and connected them – even during test phase”, says Sarah Schwarz. “They were really enthusiastic that

we contacted them proactively and that the chat function enabled direct and uncomplicated communication. We are so much closer to our customers now; everything is much easier. This is not so widespread in the industry yet, but our vision will prevail: **All business processes should be simple, fast and customer-friendly. Tools like Order Manager and the Warranty & Returns module help to make work easier for us and our customers**”, explains Sarah Schwarz.

You are already using the Order Manager, have a TecCom ID, and want to give our Warranty & Returns module a try? Go to the Order Manager Online Portal, log in with your user account and create your first claim!

#### Why TecAlliance?

With data, processes, integrated solutions and comprehensive consulting services, TecAlliance provides a portfolio for the market participants in the digital aftermarket that makes you more successful in the long term.

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