# INDUSTRY
**Retail Distribution**

# ORGANIZATION
**Les Schwab Tires**

# SOLUTION

**Up to 50,000 invoices per day arrive from some 270 retail outlets. They are scanned, indexed, written to CD ROM and reconciled against the AS/400 invoice report. Exceptions are easily managed and the process starts all over again the next day.**

Les Schwab Tire Centers' corporate headquarters in Prineville, Ore. receives 50,000 sheets of paper a day, all needing indexing, auditing and storage. Metafile software integrates the documents' images with reports from a workhorse IBM AS/400, all stored on CD-ROMs. It makes an efficient, customer-oriented operation that is poised for sustained growth.

Les Schwab, the company, keeps the northwest United States rolling. Les Schwab Tire Centers, Inc. is the region's premier purveyor of tires for cars, trucks, tractors and recreational vehicles. In 270 retail outlets ranging from California to Alaska and Montana to the Pacific, Schwab's credo goes with his product. Slogans like,"Our business is earning your trust," and "If we can't guarantee it, we won't sell it," let buyers know there is no hype, just confidence in the man behind the tire.

The Les Schwab chain of stores has grown steadily for the last quarter century, in 1995, sales exceeded $600 million. This steady growth has kept pressure on the accountants. When manual record keeping became overwhelming, the audit department went to microfilm. But according to Manager of Technical Services Paul Dunn, demands soon exceeded microfilm's capabilities. "We would shoot all the film here, then send it to Portland for processing," he explains. "If the photography was good, it took four days to get film back.

Dunn and his associates began looking for a document imaging system. Soon they had a major, international vendor install one on their AS/400 Model F60, a powerful machine for its time. But the 30,000 pages per day proved to be too much for the software, and its consumption of AS/400 cycles was overwhelming. They began the search again.

Following up on a seminar from years past, Dunn found Metafile, the Rochester, MN. developer that pioneered document imaging in the mid-eighties. By mid-1992, Metafile was bringing out MetaViewer, its windows-based C.O.L.D. (Computer Output to Laser Disk) complement to its document imaging FOLDERS product. In the hybrid, Dunn recognized a close fit to his needs at Les Schwab.

"We chose Metafile because they had technical expertise in various hardware platforms, including mainframe and AS/400," Dunn relates,"but the hard work is all done on the PC. Other vendors either were AS/400 intensive, or if they were based on the desktop, they could not communicate as well with the AS/400. Some could not integrate imaging with C.O.L.D., but Metafile was fully integrated and covered the whole spectrum."

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When Metafile President and CEO Allan Sprau heard of the high volume and unique requirements at Les Schwab, he took a personal interest. "Their workflow was non-traditional, and with their high volume, a stock solution would have required a huge computer," Sprau opines. "But a filing cabinet-type application with specialized workflow had real possibilities. We found that our MetaViewer with full text retrieval capabilities, and its full integration with the AS/400 and C.O.L.D. reports dimension, looked like a more efficient and less expensive way to attack the problem.

Sprau continues, "we found the processes

that took several minutes on their AS/400 took less than two seconds on a notebook. That was the proof-of-concept that we wanted, and we all got excited about the possibilities."

Metafile generated the custom requirements in late 1995, and the system went on-line early in 1996. When a store calls HQ for a copy of an invoice, operators can start a search that displays the document, usually in a few seconds. With a network fax, the records department can send a document while an inquiring store is still on the phone.

"Writeable CD-ROM is a big part of this story," agrees Sprau. "It makes millions of images per year practical for on-line and off-line storage. And CD-ROM is so widely accepted and vendor-independent that we know the disks will be readable in five years"

"The Metafile system is more convenient too," Nancy Prince, Schwab Business Systems Analyst adds. "Instead of trying to find the right roll and the image on the roll, you just go to one place on the system, initiate a search, and there it is: immediate accessibility.

"The training for MetaViewer retrieval users was very easy too,"  she continues.

Although Les Schwab, the humble patriarch, has cut back on his hours, plans still call for the chain of stores to grow by eight to 15 sites each year. And Dunn expects the MetaViewer system to grow in both size and capability. "There is very little limit to growth," he explains, "and it can be done cost effectively. We can easily grow the system vertically and horizontally."

# METAFILE
## THE CONTENT DATABASE
*Setting the Standard for Content Management*

# APPLICATION OVERVIEW