



## Avis Scandinavia shifts into high gear with Data Quality Server

Avis Scandinavia, the leading auto rental company in Norway, Sweden, and Denmark, protects its electronic business processes with Omikron's Data Quality Server. The company was able to consolidate 40% of its customer database by eliminating duplicate records. Once this complex project is complete, management will be able to exert much tighter control over business operations. This is a perfect example of how an entire corporation can profit from duplicate-free customer data and intelligent data quality processing.

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### **The challenge: error-free customer data**

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Avis set a marketing milestone with the slogan "We try harder" for its international rental car services. This principle that Avis established in 1963 fits perfectly with the current IT project that Avis Scandinavia has begun. The goal is to eliminate duplicates from the customer database, as well as ensuring a continual high level of data quality in all master records. In the age of eBusiness, error-free customer data is an absolute prerequisite for efficient internal processing, which in turn is the foundation for optimal customer management.

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### **No controls in the existing systems**

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No matter whether online or via a call centre, each and every Avis rental car reservation is recorded by the "Wizard" system used by Avis for its worldwide reservations and bookings. Except when a customer is using an Avis preferred loyalty card, Wizard does not have any data entry mechanisms to determine whether a customer registered as a "new" renter may actually already be in the database, such as when existing customers are not recognized because of variations in spelling or personal details. This impairs the transparency of the data, both for the company and for the customer. It is simply impossible to get a clear picture of a customer that may have multiple master data records in the system. Some regular renters may even ►



Tom Orvei, up to 2010 the CRM Director for Avis Scandinavia, today the eCommerce Director of Oculos AS.

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be denied premium customer status because they are listed under multiple accounts. Other renters who are regularly involved in accidents may be able to escape detection by intentionally registering under a variety of slightly modified names and addresses.

### Duplicates affect 40% to 50% of the data

A trial comparison using professional duplicate checking software on a large data sample revealed the extreme scope of the problem: 40% to 50% of the customer data records held by Avis Scandinavia are duplicates. This low data quality level makes it impossible to generate reliable reports, or to perform targeted marketing campaigns, leading to ever increasing difficulties for management across the entire corporation.

Avis Scandinavia uses SugarCRM to process all sorts of customer data. This open-source application for customer resource management was put into service in May 2009. The poor level of data quality finally became a hazard for the continued implementation of a CRM strategy. "We could not use our CRM software to its full capacity," reports Tom Orvei, who was the CRM Director for Avis Scandinavia at that time, and now serves as an External Project Manager for Avis as the eCommerce Director of Oculos AS. This Norwegian IT services company had already supported Avis Scandinavia with the selection and introduction of its CRM

applications, and also assists with this data quality project. "We needed to find a way to improve the quality of the data on a continuing basis."

### Tendered offers: top score for Omikron in every respect

Omikron was awarded the contract after an international request for proposals. According to Mr. Orvei, the most significant factor was that "The solution [Omikron] submitted was the best match to our individual requirements, was convincingly presented, and achieved the best test results, and also offered an excellent price/performance ratio." Omikron began work on this complex data quality project for Avis Scandinavia in April 2010, with completion expected in the first quarter of 2011.

### Centralised master data management: requirements and implementation

What is the project expected to do? The goal of the selected approach is to implement centralised master data management, meaning that all customer data will be managed at a central location, and to ensure that this data foundation is and shall remain free of duplicates. Omikron's Data Quality Server forms the central component of the system. This application works upon the so-called "golden copy", a uniform, clean, and duplicate-free database. Any operation that uses or ►

## About Avis Scandinavia

Avis Scandinavia has its headquarters in Billingstad, Norway, and is responsible for car rentals in Norway, Sweden, and Denmark, as part of Avis' worldwide rental car operations in more than 170 countries. The regional company is the Scandinavian market leader, with about 15000 rental cars, 650000 annual rentals, and an average market share of 30%. Avis Scandinavia has about 1200 employees and operates a total of 350 rental car stations.



modifies customer data follows a carefully designed data quality workflow, which ensures that no duplicates or errors can be entered into the "golden copy" of the data.

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### **For eBusiness, as well**

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For example, when a customer wishes to rent a car over the Internet, the registration process uses an error-tolerant, Web Service based comparison with the master data to ensure that no new duplicate records can be produced. Data missing on the registration page may be filled in automatically. For this purpose, a new interface had to be implemented for Internet rental car reservations, which according to Mr. Orvei was "an absolutely critical element for the overall data quality project." For new customers, a comparison with external reference data sources will verify that the data are real and correct as entered. The Data Quality Server can complete these tasks via Web Services thanks to its Service Oriented Architecture (SOA).

Most rental enquiries can be processed on a workflow basis, and therefore automatically. In the case of inconsistent data, hierarchical rules determine which entry takes priority. Everything that happens to the data is supervised by monitoring features, and detailed reports make quick evaluations possible.

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### **Positive effects of good data quality take root and grow**

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The improvements in data quality at an individual level are conducted throughout all internal and external systems at Avis Scandinavia. Every subsequent process profits from the enhancement in transparency. Marketing campaigns can be targeted more reliably, thanks to more complete knowledge about the customers. Dependable reports provide immediate information about customer behaviour and movements in the market. These key performance indicators allow management to react quickly and precisely to any changes that occur in the marketplace.

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### **Summary**

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This data quality project has enabled Avis Scandinavia to enliven its traditional motto "We try harder", and it will not be the last joint project for Oculos and Omikron: this constructive cooperation has led to the creation of a mutual partnership. There is a huge potential market, because even in Scandinavia many companies have problems with poor data quality, which is a toxic problem for all types of marketing and customer management processes.

## **A quick dictionary of terms:**

### **Omikron Data Quality Server**

Omikron's Data Quality Server ensures that your data will automatically be checked and cleansed at every important point during processing. You also have access to Omikron's proven comparison and other intelligent functions. Thanks to its Service Oriented Architecture (SOA), your systems can access Data Quality Server at any point where it is needed, allowing you to take advantage of its full functionality.

### **Duplicates**

Duplicates are repeated entries in a database. It is extremely work-intensive to identify, mark, and eliminate them without appropriate tools – especially when the database contains a large number of addresses.

### **Data quality in eBusiness**

All business processes, including manufacture, procurement, marketing, and sales are becoming electronic. Networked systems permit quicker turnaround times, reduce costs, and allow optimisation of details that would be impossible manually. The foundation of all these electronic processes is the data they manipulate. DP means data processing, and even the best processes cannot achieve anything without good data. When a company converts to eBusiness, then it is imperative to ensure right from the start that the data is good, and that it stays that way continuously, even as it is integrated into processing.

### **Language independence**

Omikron's comparison technology is language independent, so that Data Quality Server may easily be used to process international address lists containing multiple languages, producing convincingly high-quality results.



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**In worldwide use**

Omikron's software tools have been integrated by many well-known CRM and ERP companies, and is currently used in over 30 different systems, including Microsoft® CRM, SAP® R/3®, and Siebel®. In addition, the Omikron Address-Center has been established as a dedicated Windows application for operational data cleansing.

The competence of our data quality experts is highly valued by worldwide corporations for their large scale data migration and integration projects.

**Existing problems**

- Duplicates in the customer data pool
- No way to ensure consistent data quality
- Lack of transparency about customer activity
- No central master data management

**Products used**

**Omikron Data Quality Server**

- Duplicate check module
- Reference comparison for correct entries
- Comprehensive data quality workflow (online bookings, call centre, etc.)

**Results achieved**

- Duplicate-free master data, thus uniform customer
- Greatly improved transparency for internal and external systems
- Reduced risk of unpaid invoices and efficient collection processing
- Targeted marketing campaigns
- Reliable reports