



DFS

DFS is the UK's number one sofa manufacturer. From simple beginnings in 1969 with one store in Doncaster, the business has enjoyed considerable growth over more than 5 decades and now boasts over 100 stores across the UK and The Republic of Ireland (ROI).

Operating a cross-vertical model spanning design, retail, manufacture, delivery and after-sales service, with custom-built mapping technology and a focus on continual website development to provide the best possible customer experience, clean customer data is a vital component to business operations. DFS has worked with Experian since 1996 to accurately capture, cleanse and validate their address data, which powers operations across the retail, delivery and after-sales verticals.

Situation

DFS operates an integrated retail model, combining a website, nationwide showroom network and telesales function to allow customers to purchase through the channel that is most appropriate to their needs. The business is committed to and mindful of the need to keep customer interactions simple and straightforward – for both the end user, and DFS colleagues. Finally, with in-house delivery and servicing operations in place to manage fulfilment and ensure high quality customer experiences, accurate address data is vital across the entire customer journey.

- Accurate addresses are needed to power DFS' custom-built mapping technology, to help plan and schedule deliveries effectively and ensure sofas reach the right address.
- Following expansion, there is also a need to be able to handle addresses from different countries in addition to the UK. And the ability to refresh and re-check data helps the after-care servicing team react and respond to house moves and changes of address.
- With finance a key element of the DFS offering, it is crucial that the company can pass quality data on to finance partners to assess and extend credit to those who need it.

“ Would we recommend it? The fact we've used it since 1996 tells you all you need to know.”

How we helped

Experian's address validation technology is integrated across DFS' retail platform, used at every point where address data is captured.

It sits online, where autocomplete technology returns address suggestions after just a few keystrokes, reducing address entry time by up to 80% and ensuring a correctly formatted and validated address enters DFS' systems.

It's used by colleagues to fulfil in-store purchases, streamlining the order process for staff and customers.

Finally, it's used within the telesales channel, helping to reduce friction through the order process by ensuring accurate address information is captured quickly and cleanly.

Benefits

Securing finance

Address data is a key element in every finance proposal, and address validation is critical for delivering a good experience for the customer, DFS and the finance provider. Experian's solution allows addresses to be quickly and accurately captured and verified, and clean data to be passed to providers – reducing opportunities for human error, manual intervention, time to purchase and friction through the customer journey; and increasing the number of applications processed successfully first time.

Delivery

Address validation ensures that only accurate and verified data enters DFS' system and feeds the business' bespoke mapping technology. With addresses validated against official postal authority sources for the UK and ROI, delivery planning has been improved and the successful delivery rate increased. Accurate address data allows DFS to optimise delivery routes, create accurate delivery windows for customers and decreases fuel costs for the business; all of which have boosted brand credibility and reputation.

Servicing

After-care is an important differentiator for DFS, and a way to show its ongoing commitment to customers. Address data is re-validated each time an after-care appointment is booked, allowing the business to recognise changes of address and ensure engineers attend the right property for each appointment.

Customer experience

Finally, DFS is able to use address validation to help deliver against a commitment to provide excellent customer experience. The company recognises not only the material benefits of address validation; but also the importance of delivering a customer journey aligned with modern consumer expectations. With quality address data now an expectation in the market, the solution plays a role in keeping the customer experience fresh and in line with current consumer needs.

What's next?

DFS continues to embrace advances in technology and the opportunities these offer.

With Experian's solution firmly embedded in its technical infrastructure, the business remains committed to address validation and its role in executing against the vision to be the leading furniture retailer in the digital age.

“ It is such a good, reliable product, and so we stay with it.”