


# Customer Segment Story: RENTAL CAR AGENCIES

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Rental car agencies need to keep extensive records for a number of different business transactions. Not only are rental agencies responsible for irreplaceable records such as vehicle titles and account information, other documents such as maintenance records and warranty schedules have become increasingly important. For example, Enterprise Rent-A-Car has had worn tire tread lawsuits filed against the company in the last few years. As companies begin to self-audit tire tread and other maintenance issues, the need for strong documentation of this type of fleet commissioning will skyrocket.

Reliable Rent-A-Car in Baltimore, Maryland is one the largest locally owned and operated rental car companies in the region and has been in business since August 1992. The company currently operates 10 stores throughout the Baltimore Metropolitan area. Reliable Rent-A-Car specializes in insurance replacement rentals – offering discounted rates and insurance company billing.

Reliable Rent-A-Car depends on FireKing Fireproof File cabinets to maintain important rental documents. According to Alex Abrams, Vice President of Reliable Rent-A-Car, many rental car agencies purchase their cabinets through office supply catalogue companies or over the Internet.

“Prior to the purchases of our Fire King file cabinets we simply kept our receivables and current rental contracts in regular file cabinets,” says Abrams. “Obviously, if a fire were to occur we would lose many valuable documents and it would be almost impossible to rebuild our financial and vehicle records. As we grew it became more obvious that we needed a better way to assure that our vital records would be protected in the wake of some catastrophic event.”

In addition to contracts, vehicle titles, receivables, and other miscellaneous records, Abrams also secures computer back up tapes and car keys in fireproof enclosures to prevent loss.

ACTIF (Association of Car and Truck Rental Independent Franchises) is a trade organization for the rental car industry that offers resources on issues related to legal and legislative matters. The organization also helps connect rental car organizations to vendors that are specific to the industry.

According to Marianne Sullivan, president of ACTIF, there are a number of issues that need to be addressed for record retention. “Record retention documents range from the signed copy of the rental contract itself to credit card vouchers, titles, plate information, registration for each state,” says Sullivan.

The issue becomes more complicated as companies expand. “Companies need to keep information related to each fleet. And if a company operates in one state, they would be under the guidance of that states registration of motor vehicles. Companies that are regional have the onus of maintaining the records to multi-state guidelines,” Sullivan explains.

Maintenance records are typically kept with contract information, according to Sullivan. Most vehicles are subject to maintenance every thirty days or 3,000 miles. “That status could change on a very regular basis, so companies keep the information attached to the rental agreement,” says Sullivan.

“Documentation would include the fleet requirements of when preventive maintenance was done and what kind of expenses were incurred. I would say that most of that information is probably housed for a year after the sale of the vehicle; unless it is regulated by law to be kept with the rental contract, which often times is seven years,” Sullivan explains.

Obviously these vital records need to be kept onsite, in a manner which offers the best protection. Many agencies purchase FireKing file cabinets through office supply catalogue companies or through major office supply retailers. Fireproof cabinets, vaults, and safes from FireKing keep important rental fleet documents 100% safe in the case of an emergency. The need for rental car agencies to better manage vital fleet records has increased dramatically over the past few years, and the message for agency managers and owners is clear – get ahead of this issue now to figure out the best set of solutions for their company.