CUSTOMER STORY



WHY 91% OF PLUMBASE STORES SAY PARTSARENA TRADECOUNTER HAS IMPROVED CUSTOMER SERVICE



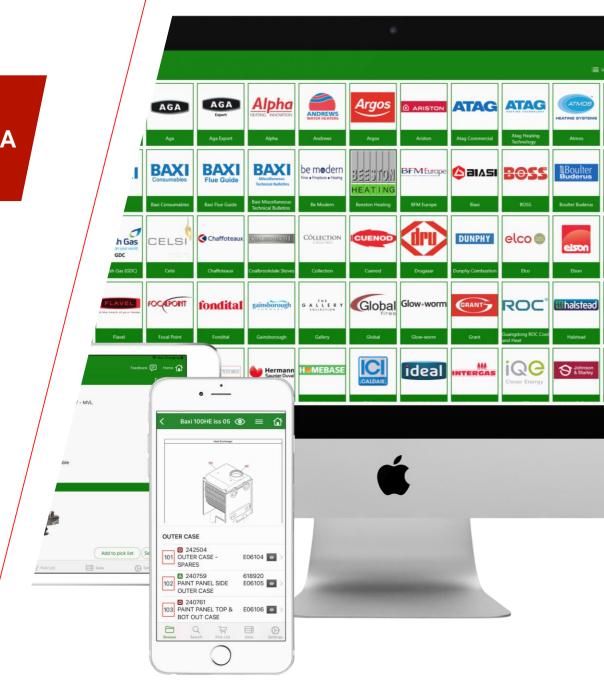
OUR 2022 SURVEY REVEALS WHAT PLUMBASE THINK ABOUT PARTSARENA TRADECOUNTER.

We wanted to know what parts stockists thought of PartsArena Tradecounter, so we surveyed plumbing and heating merchant and national parts supplier **Plumbase** to find out.

From customer service to cost efficiency, parts management and staff training, the overall benefits reported were much wider than we could ever have imagined.

*conducted over 23 Plumbase stores





Plumbase Survey Respondents:

91%

AGREED

TradeCounter improves customer service

74%

AGREED

TradeCounter provides better staff knowledge and training

61%

AGREED

TradeCounter lessens spares returns

91%

AGREED

Tradecounter improves quality of 'phone enquiry outcome

87%

AGREED

TradeCounter has made their store more cost effective



PARTSARENA TRADECOUNTER - MORE THAN JUST A SPARES FINDER

Spanning almost a decade, Plumbase have installed PartsArena in 200 branches across the UK. Over that time, the heating industry has evolved, and PartsArena's data and software has evolved with it. In particular, the influence of the pandemic in the last 2 years has meant that spares buying behaviours have changed. Use of digital tools to help engineers be more efficient and serve customers faster has become more commonplace. It is a critical responsibility of the stockist to identify the correct parts for the customer.

Our survey, conducted in February 2022 is part of wider research as to how PartsArena is assisting with these changes in parts purchasing behaviour, and to establish if it is a satisfactory system for stockists to provide the best possible service to the engineer.





PartsArena, in simple terms, provides our store staff all the information they need to provide the best possible spares information for customers, they simply couldn't be without it.

Aidan Ogle, Spares Director at Plumbase





TRADECOUNTER EFFECTIVELY HELPS WITH 'PHONE AND STORE QUERIES

Effectively manages 'phone queries

Over 90% of survey respondents highlighted TradeCounter helped them deal with 'phone queries more effectively.

Ambiguity of part descriptions by engineers can be fraught with potential error. Plumbase store staff confirmed that using PartsArena Tradecounter information, including interactive diagrams and parts lists, is 'working perfectly well' and makes staff and customers 'more confident.'

Over the 'phone store staff can offer advice on correct, rather than incorrect parts. A common theme in the survey was 'being able to find boiler/cylinder spares even with the minimum information given from the customer.'

Face to face service improvements were also a factor; **52% of Plumbase staff say TradeCounter helped reduce queuing time** as it solved parts queries faster, resulting in a quicker customer turnaround. This is a lesser burden for both customer and store assistant when time-to-fix can be critical in some instances.



TRADECOUNTER IMPROVES STAFF KNOWLEDGE AND HELPS WITH TRAINING

Knowledge and staff training

74% of Plumbase respondents agreed 'TradeCounter is a valuable training tool'.

Not all store staff are spares specialists, so to have a reliable and trusted resource of information such as PartsArena is beneficial, especially for new starters. Because of the intuitive interface and interactive features, pin-pointing parts is easy even for the complete novice.

Plumbase told us that PartsArena gives 'Improved customer confidence meaning repeat orders and increased sales' a huge factor when it comes to customer loyalty.

"Staff are more confident when selling spares and accessories now and customers return due to the competence shown during transactions" – T Thompson – Assistant Branch Manager - Merton

PARTSARENA TRADECOUNTER

TRADECOUNTER REDUCES THE AMOUNT OF RETURNED PARTS

Fewer returned parts

61% said that use of TradeCounter has helped reduce returned parts in their branches

One of the main profit 'sapping' issues related to incorrect spares orders are the dreaded **part returns**. We always knew that PartsArena TradeCounter would reduce returned parts, but to hear first-hand how effective the system works for the stores is extremely reassuring. After-all, stockists are there to serve customers and make profit, so to have a tool that produces a good return on investment is more than helpful.

"[TradeCounter] reduces returns drastically" – Stephen Waymark – Assistant Manager

"Saves time serving on the counter /avoids keeping the customers waiting to be served/ avoids the wrong parts being sold/refunded" – Trevor Burgess – Technical Director - Sparesbase



87% said TradeCounter has made their store more cost effective

TradeCounter improves cost efficiency

87% of Plumbase respondents agreed that they are more cost-effective due to PartsArena

The reason for this, they said, is two-fold. Firstly, TradeCounter saves time. One of the reasons being *'less time on the phone to manufacturers'*. As previously stated, less time diagnosing parts, less queuing time, less time dealing with 'phone queries all add up to, well... a lot of less time!

Secondly, fewer returned parts means less hours booking them back in and processing credits/invoices/accounts etc.

This all adds up, saving **many staff hours** daily. Time that can be put to better use elsewhere in the stores.

Plumbase also acknowledge that TradeCounter helps handle parts inventory better – "We keep on the shelf the most popularly asked for parts and more, with slower moving parts mostly available on an early next day delivery from our central warehouse"

"It has helped get us the spares sales all year around and being able to see if something is obsolete or has been superseded is also massively beneficial."

"Using this means less time on the phone to manufacturers"



ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT?

As well as the positives, it's important to welcome any negative and suggestion-based feedback too. Plumbase stores were not hesitant in relaying ways that Tradecounter could be enhanced to give staff and customer's an even better experience with spares identification.

With regards to the data held within PartsArena, there were many comments regarding oil heating. Although PartsArena holds oil heating data, we are actively looking to build relationships with oil-based manufacturers to obtain more information to include in our data library and publish to PartsArena. Burners, particularly Riello, were also requested

Heat pumps are currently a hot topic, albeit a 'slow-burn' on uptake. However, in time this will become more popular and is all part of the UK heating product offering, so we will certainly be looking into this type of data. Other requests for information included more commercial models, renewable energy, wiring loom info, and clearer diagrams.



WE ARE ACTIVELY WORKING ON FEEDBACK IMPROVEMENTS

Improved functionality

We are always working on PartsArena in the background, much of which is not visibly seen in the front-end of the system. Keeping structure and taxonomy of data is quite a task when we receive documents and information for 120 manufacturers, 20,000 models and tens of thousands of part codes, part lists, diagrams, and images! We also match stockist codes to products and OEM codes too.

Plumbase stores made very valid and informative suggestions how we can improve front-end functionality. We have already addressed a **Zoom-In** facility on images including imagery in the manuals and part images. We have also now included and highlighted a **'feedback' button** on diagrams so if there is an issue with a particular diagram the user can report it. Survey respondents also requested a clearer understanding of **Top Parts** – valuable feedback to have as it is vitally important TradeCounter is an easy tool to understand.



"Operationally and financially the inclusion of PartsArena in our stores has paid off ten-fold. Customer satisfaction is our primary focus, and to be able to give confidence they are purchasing the right spares is rewarding both for staff morale, customer service and profitability"

Aidan Ogle, Spares Director at Plumbase





