

Two Cities Manufacturing Ltd

Founded in 1985 by the owners Syd Carton and Charlie Darnay, employing 34 staff across two sites (in two cities – hence the name) and with an annual turnover of approximately £14.5 million, Two Cities Manufacturing Ltd could be described as a typical example of a medium sized manufacturing company. Two Cities manufacture and distribute commercial and private ride-on lawn mowers as well as spare parts (for servicing and repair) and accessories for the range of six products. The company is the brand leader in this niche market, though competitors from abroad do offer inferior – but cheaper – products, which have eaten into sales over the last couple of years.



Whilst Two Cities do export to Europe, over 85% of their business is in the UK. There are no plans to expand to other countries at this time. The mowers are sold through a well-developed distribution system based around appointed dealers – Two Cities do not sell mowers direct to the end user.

Despite representing only 15% of its total turnover, the supply of parts is a highly-profitable aspect of the company's business. Although the most commonly purchased products are stocked by the distributors, Two Cities does have a 'parts hotline' where customers phone in their requirements and the parts are despatched to them by post or courier. The staff in this department are very experienced and can normally answer the variety of questions that customers have – even if sale is not a direct result. As the parts hotline sells directly to end users, this has caused some friction between Two Cities and its distributors, though currently around 75% of the phone calls and orders taken are actually from the distributors who order parts on behalf of their customers.

The company identifies target market segments by usage, namely:

- Private use (householders with large gardens)
- Estate management (private houses with large grounds, often open to the public)
- Municipal and amenity (councils and public bodies with vast areas of grass to maintain).

Each site uses computers for administration and communication (email) purposes, and one site uses CAD for mower design. There is no dedicated IT staff, with outside contractors being used to solve problems.

Syd and Charlie are rather old-fashioned in their outlook to marketing (behind their backs employees say they are like characters from a Charles Dickens' novel), leaving the promotional work to the distributors. A marketing manager is responsible for such things as brochure and literature development, trade show attendance and limited advertising in appropriate trade journals.

Two Cities Manufacturing has a limited website which does little more than describe the organization and products, the parts hotline and lists the distributors, referring potential customers to those distributors.

