

PANASONIC MAKES CAMERA SERVICE A SNAP WITH HELP FROM CANADA POST



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From anywhere... to anyone

Panasonic wanted to get the whole picture on the Canadian digital still camera market before introducing its Lumix line of cameras here in 2003. So as part of its extensive intelligence gathering, the company spoke to the people on the front lines: the major retailers who would be selling its cameras to consumers.

One of the key issues identified by Panasonic's retail partners was the lengthy waits that consumers had to endure when their digital still cameras needed repair – as much as four to six weeks in many cases.

Panasonic, with its highly regarded commitment to quality and support, decided it would do things differently.

First, it set up a toll free support line (1-800-99-LUMIX) staffed by Lumix experts to help customers determine if their camera is in fact in need of repair and to help arrange returns if a problem can't be resolved over the phone.

Next, it established a central repair facility in Mississauga, Ontario that's fully stocked with Lumix components and staffed by professional technicians with extensive training on the Lumix product line. Panasonic's service commitment: to repair any Lumix camera within 48 hours of its return from a customer.

"Shipping was the final part of our solution," explains Ken Burke, Supervisor, Customer & Product Assurance at Panasonic Canada. "We needed a solution that was fast, affordable, convenient and available for our customers across the country."

Canada Post provided that solution. Here's how it works.

When an agent at 1-800-99-LUMIX determines that a customer's camera needs to be returned for repair, the agent emails the

customer packing instructions, a Canada Post Xpresspost™ label, and a tracking number. The customer packages the camera, prints the label, and drops it off at their local post office – which offers appropriate packaging products if the customer doesn't have adequate packaging.

"The Canada Post system for generating the label and tracking number is tied directly into our CRM system," explains Ken Burke. "Each package has a bar code that let's us and our customers track it online."

Canada Post delivers the camera to Panasonic's Mississauga repair facility the next day when shipped within the Montreal-Toronto corridor, within two days from other major centres in Canada. Panasonic repairs it within 48 hours of receiving it, then returns the camera to its owner via Xpresspost within the same one to two day timeframe.

The result: in an industry where repairs can often take four to six weeks, Panasonic is turning around repairs in four to six days.

"Digital cameras are important to people," explains Ken Burke. "Things can happen that you want to have photos of almost any time, so if your camera needs repair, you don't want to wait."

Not surprisingly, Lumix customers and distributors have been very pleasantly surprised at the speed and convenience of this innovative service experience. And it's working so well for Panasonic that the company has extended the approach to its support for other product lines, including camcorders, LCD projectors, and GPS systems.

"Canada is a big area to cover with this kind of program," says Panasonic's Ken Burke. "Canada Post is able to guarantee speed of delivery at price that makes sense to us. And it has over 6000 post offices and delivers to every address in the country, which makes it convenient for our customers."

