
Manufacturer meets growing demands with Sage 200

Client Profile

Based in Limerick, MultiFlow Manufacturing is Ireland's leading provider of pipes and fittings to the pharmaceutical, chemical and food industries. The company has seen continued growth over the last three years following significant investment in manufacturing technology, training and product development. Three more people were taken on, increasing the total workforce to 12.

Manufacturing high-value products for production lines, the success of the business has been based on quality and competitiveness. In a sector where fulfilling last-minute orders for heavily customised products is a regular occurrence, the ability to meet increasing demands from customers is also critical.

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Sandra O'Dwyer, Administration & Quality Manager,
MultiFlow Manufacturing

The Challenge

MultiFlow processes hundreds of orders each month and runs as many as 15 manufacturing jobs at the same time. Regular fitting and service contracts also have to be fulfilled. The finance team had been very happy with Sage 50, one of the leading small business accounts packages, but had begun to outgrow its functionality. “Because big customers have immediate requirements we needed better control over our costs and more visibility over stock,” says Sandra O'Dwyer, Administration & Quality Manager. “Our business is based on fulfilling each order, whatever time and effort it takes.”

The company makes carbon steel pipe spools, assembled in multiple sizes using a wide range of components including gaskets, flanges and expensive coating materials. Stock management becomes business critical in a complex supply chain where a single product can cost €4,500. “A client might have a breakdown on a production line and need a spool urgently,” explains O'Dwyer. “So I need to know on an hour-by-hour basis what we have in stock and what we can supply.”

Unable to evaluate stock fast enough, the firm wanted an ERP system that would give O'Dwyer real-time visibility from the desktop, rather than rely on regularly visits to the store room to check shelves. Last minute orders were costing the company money because suppliers were in a position to charge a premium when MultiFlow was caught short of stock. “We knew we were being taken advantage of and it was something we wanted to address,” she says.

The main driver for change, however, came from multi-national customers. Operating in highly regulated industries they were auditing supplier factory floors and finance departments, demanding ISO accreditations to ensure everything was compliant. “To stay on vendor lists, we knew that upgrading to an ERP system would make life easier in terms of meeting customer demands and quality management requirements, which includes having the ISO 9001 standard,” says O'Dwyer.

The Solution

Because of the good experience with Sage 50 and a strong relationship with Sage Business Partner DB Computer Solutions, MultiFlow looked no further than Sage 200 for the upgrade. It gave the firm all the capabilities of an ERP system without the complexity, bringing financial management, stock control and reporting together in a single integrated package.

The bill of materials information in Sage 200 provides a combined stock assembly and process costing function and is directly integrated with the stock control and nominal ledger modules. Because it sits on top a SQL Server - unlike Sage 50, which has its own internal database - Sage 200 can handle more transactions more quickly. With stock lists pulled into the system, MultiFlow is better positioned to deal with customer demands and last-minute orders.

Out of the box functionality immediately took MultiFlow to another level, but the ability to make the application fit with existing processes was also important. DB Computing added an extra field to invoices, for example, to incorporate a delivery docket number that was crucial for customer records. Such customisation enabled a seamless migration to Sage 200.

O'Dwyer also praised DB Computer Solutions for providing the excellent training that followed the deployment. "We have an excellent working relationship with them. All I have to do is pick up the phone and they come out here and help," she said.

The Benefits

One of six users licensed to access Sage 200, O'Dwyer has been particularly impressed at how it has made it easier to collate materials prior to spool production. Seeing stock levels in real time, she ensures she always has what's needed without having to physically check shelves in the warehouse. "We never run out of anything anymore and I can build spools on the system knowing that we have everything we need," she says.

Better visibility means they can see what to forward buy, leaving MultiFlow less exposed to paying too much for components and raw materials. "It saves us both time and money because I'm buying at a better rate and there are no delays in production," she said.

With an overview of every spool job, from sourcing the requirements to sending out the invoice, Sage 200 has transformed the business. "It has changed the way we do everything and made us more profitable," said O'Dwyer.

There is better business visibility for management as well, with monthly reports generated in Sage 200 that provide insights into ongoing profitability and underlying trends that inform strategic planning.

Ian Cumiskey, Managing Director of DB Computer Solutions, sums up the major benefits: "They now have much better stock control with batch number tracking, combined invoices, and reports. Sage 200 gives them the ability to serve their largest customers and all of their demands."

The Future

Working in an increasingly regulated industry where it's a challenge to keep existing customers as well as win new business, Sage 200 has helped MultiFlow strengthen its market leading position.

"The more boxes you can tick the more chance you have of winning new contracts," says O'Dwyer. "You have to be competitive on price and deliver on quality, but you also have to meet growing vendor demands. We can do that now with the help of Sage 200."

For the next phase of development MultiFlow is looking to integrate Sage CRM into Sage 200, to bring the business even closer to its customers. "So much goes into one job with so many different elements that we might not always follow up every aspect as closely as we should. We are starting to look at the possibility of a customer relationship management system," O'Dwyer says.

To find out more about Sage 200 Online, visit:
www.sage.co.uk/sage-200-online
or contact us on 0845 111 9988

Solution Overview

- Sage 200 has delivered significant savings in time and money.
- A fully integrated ERP system meets increasing customer demands.
- Real-time stock management facilitates more efficient product assembly.
- Management reporting now informs strategic planning.
- Sage Business Partner DB Computing helps drive continuous improvement.

