

CUSTOMER SUCCESS



Colgin Smokes the Competition With Sage MAS 200

“Where there’s smoke, there’s flavor.” That’s the slogan Colgin Companies have used since 1943 to market their unique product, Colgin Liquid Smoke—offering savvy cooks a rich barbecue taste and smell without the fuss of outdoor cooking. Shoppers in grocery stores across the country can choose from four different flavors. Colgin also offers two topical bug bite relief ointments, plus Next Generation, a product for washing fresh fruits and vegetables.

Setting Up Smoke Screens

Two years ago, Kerry Thornhill joined Colgin as CEO and vice president of marketing with a clear and ambitious vision. He wanted to transform the company’s perceived image in the retail trade from a small mom-and-pop operation to a large, dynamic, manufacturing firm. He dreamed of setting Colgin apart from the competition through technological sophistication, and possibly even expanding to international markets. This would require embracing the latest software available at all levels, so that Colgin could deliver added value to its customers.

At the same time Thornhill hoped to improve communications with retail channels, and offer all the services of a larger firm, including 24-hour customer support and service, seven days a week. With fewer than 20 employees, this was next to impossible using traditional methods.

A Savory Solution

Colgin’s software consultants had an answer. Since the company had been using Sage MAS 200 ERP to manage its financial systems for some time and were very happy with its capabilities, it would be easy to add the e-Business Manager module. This would enhance the existing system so it could serve as a business-to-business gateway for e-commerce.

Today e-Business Manager is an important part of operations at Colgin. Customers like Safeway and Albertson’s stores can go online to check product prices or place orders. They can verify the status of open orders and make changes virtually any time of the day or night. It’s also possible for customers to confirm scheduled shipping dates and view several years of past sales history, all with the click of a mouse.

Customer:

The Colgin Companies

Industry:

Food products manufacturer

Location

Dallas, Texas

Number of Locations: One

Number of Employees: 20

System:

Sage MAS 200

- Accounts Payable
- Accounts Receivable
- Bank Reconciliation
- Bill of Materials
- Business Alerts
- Credit Card Processing
- Crystal Reports®
- Custom Office
- e-Business Manager
 - .inquiry
 - .order
- FAS Asset Accounting
- General Ledger
- Inventory Management
- Purchase Order
- Sales Order
- Visual Integrator



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CHALLENGE

Leverage the power of a technologically advanced business solution equipped with e-commerce capabilities to strategically position Colgin as an industry leader.

SOLUTION

Sage MAS 200 financial, distribution and e-Business Manager modules.

RESULTS

Streamlined communication; 24/7 customer self-service; improved customers satisfaction; reduced customer service phone requirements; enabled reallocation of resources to sales and marketing.

Why is direct access to shipping information of interest? "Big grocery stores are using Just-in-Time inventory management practices these days," explains Thornhill. "Because they're not maintaining large quantities in stock, they're always concerned about running out. They really appreciate knowing exactly when an order will come in, so they can plan accordingly."

Before the advent of e-Business Manager, Colgin relied on brokers to transmit order and delivery information. All that has changed. "The e-Business Manager module lets us communicate directly with our customers, preventing the possibility of messages becoming garbled or misunderstood," says Thornhill. "Now we can do a much better job of listening to what stores want, and be more responsive."

A related benefit has been a reduction in the time Colgin employees must spend on the telephone. Customers can go on the Web for information instead of calling. This frees up staff members to perform other tasks.

Thornhill likes the various business opportunities that Sage MAS 200 and the e-commerce module have created. "The e-Business Manager module has opened doors for us across the board," he says. "Once you start installing the new technology, you suddenly realize how much more it's possible to do. For instance, now there are many more product lines we can consider offering—because the automation process has freed up our resources for additional sales and marketing efforts."

Another pleasant surprise has been the customer's response. "We were concerned about the reception we'd get from both grocery stores and brokers when we launched our e-commerce program," comments Thornhill. "So we sent out a letter explaining the system, providing each customer with a proprietary password and login ID. As it turned out, virtually everyone has been happy with our Web presence. Customers can see that we're dedicated to the future, and we're a company that's going somewhere. The e-Business Manager module has been an excellent move for our competitive positioning."

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