

CUSTOMER SUCCESS



## Sage MAS 200 Client/Server Mops in Profits for Smart Inventions

In 1994, an award-winning TV infomercial catapulted a humble household mop, Smart Mops, into the big time. The two distributors, Jon Nokes and Thomas Persson, became millionaires as a result—a long way from their penny-pinching beginnings in Europe.

Jon Nokes, a native of England, took a big risk when he quit his job, traveled to the United States and began scratching out a living selling lamps at state fairs. As a biology teacher back home, he couldn't earn enough to buy a house. "I felt I couldn't get a fair break. Ours was a working class family and all the best jobs are offered on the old boys' network."

After some hard work and lean times, Nokes got a pretty big break in America. In 1991, he teamed up with Tom Persson, a Swede who was selling cheese graters. They saw the potential in the Smart Mop, a simple hand-held cleaning product that could pick up any type of spill in one swipe, without getting the hands wet.

Smart Inventions hired teams of demonstrators to sell their European import at home shows and fairs around the country. The mop "took," and the company grossed \$1.1 million in 1993. It was time to think big. The entrepreneurs begged and borrowed enough capital to produce and air their first television infomercial.

"After the TV ads hit, our supplier couldn't keep up with the demand," said Peter Breitingger, production manager. "We were getting direct sales from the ads and all the stores were requesting it, so we started wholesaling to places like K-mart, Target, and Walgreens. It was time to manufacture the mops ourselves.

"We started the factory from scratch. In one month, we went from zero to 60,000 mops a day, and from no employees to 1,089 contracted workers on three daily shifts. We made do with the basics at the beginning. We had an electronic time card machine, a fax machine, paper, and pens. No computers."

That first \$8 million television ad yielded \$45 million in mop sales. In addition, the firm inaugurated several new products, such as Smart Wipes, Smart Nails, and Lazer Mouse. A new, computerized system was becoming a necessity.

**Customer:**

**Smart Inventions, Inc.**

**Industry:**

Direct response television

**Location**

Paramount, California

**Number of Locations:** One

**Number of Employees:** 80

**System:**

**Sage MAS 200**

- Accounts Payable
- Accounts Receivable
- Bank Reconciliation
- Bar Code
- Bill of Materials
- Crystal Reports®
- Custom Office
- e-Business Manager
  - .inquiry
- General Ledger
- Import Master
- Inventory Management
- Payroll
- Purchase Order
- Sales Order
- TimeCard



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**CHALLENGE**

Acquire an automated accounting and distribution solution that can handle fulfillment of over 4,000 orders per day and integrate systems for 5 divisions.

**SOLUTION**

Sage MAS 200 financial and distribution modules.

**RESULTS**

Detailed order, sales and inventory tracking; streamlined automation from order to fulfillment; precise reporting and immediate status checks; improved accuracy, efficiency and productivity.

**Too Much to Mop Up**

Until two years ago, Smart Inventions outsourced its fulfillment tasks. Then the company brought its operations in-house. Up to 4,000 orders a day were processed on an outdated, inadequate Novell system. This DOS-based network lost data, limited how many people could use it at the same time and couldn't easily be expanded to handle the volume.

"Our in-house fulfillment operation was a big headache," said Breitinger. "We were manually writing up invoices, keying them into the terminal, and physically looking up sales. We were handling 30,000 – 40,000 records a month—with a system that was difficult to learn and clumsy to access."

**Working Smarter, Not Harder**

Smart Inventions began looking into a new accounting and distribution software system. They decided that Sage MAS 200 ERP fit the bill. It was Windows-based, and had all the modules they needed, especially credit card management, bar coding, and order scanning.

In the Fall of 1998, the reseller customized and installed Sage MAS 200 in all five of the divisions at Smart Inventions: mail order, retail, wholesale, export, and shows and fairs. Each of the divisions has different commissions, pricing and royalties. Sage MAS 200 now tracks every aspect of the ordering process.

Nearly every morning, Sage MAS 200 imports several thousand orders in one batch. This takes about two minutes. The orders are then automatically invoiced, a purchase order created, and the product prepared for shipping. All the modules are linked, and a customer can call any time for an up-to-the-minute report on the current whereabouts of a purchase.

"Before, I could only provide a general estimate of our total monthly sales. Worse, customer and sales information was scattered all over, with no central point of access," Breitinger said.

"Now all our orders are processed through Sage MAS 200 for Windows, so I can tell the boss exactly how many units we sold last month, which divisions were responsible, and what the costs were, down to the penny."

*"Our previous in-house fulfillment system was a big headache. We were handling 30,000–40,000 records a month—with a system that lost data and was clumsy to access."*

Mopping in millions of dollars in orders is a lot cleaner with the right computer system. For Smart Inventions, Sage MAS 200 is that system.

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Sage Software supports the needs, challenges, and dreams of more than 2.7 million small and mid-sized business customers in North America through easy-to-use, scalable, and customizable software and services. Our products help manage a complete range of business functions including: accounting, operations, customer relationship management, human resources, time tracking, merchant services and the specialized needs of the construction, distribution, healthcare, manufacturing, nonprofit, and real estate industries.

