

Interface Associates' Business "Balloons" with Blytheco Partnership

The tiny angioplasty balloons that help doctors avoid open-heart surgery come from Interface Associates, a catheter production firm in Southern California. So do more than 2,000 other types of medical balloons, custom molds, and sophisticated catheter equipment, which save untold thousands of lives every year.

Interface started 15 years ago, when founder and engineer Joe Stupecky built a machine in his garage that blew unusually good angioplasty balloons. He intended to sell the machines, but instead received increasing requests for the balloons themselves. As the company expanded, he added catheters to the product line. Today Interface has 40 balloon forming machines, three Class-10,000 clean rooms, offers a full line of catheter assembly equipment, and distributes to clients around the world.

Customer: Interface Associates

URL: www.interfaceusa.com



Locations: 3

Employees: 120

Revenue: \$15-20 Million Per Year

Users on Sage MAS 500: 30

Sage MAS 500 Modules: Accounts Payable ◦ Accounts Receivable ◦ Advanced Planning & Scheduling ◦ Advanced Manufacturing ◦ Cash Management ◦ Customizer ◦ Data Migrator ◦ eExecutive ◦ General Ledger ◦ Inventory Management ◦ Inventory Replenishment ◦ Purchase Order ◦ Sales Order ◦ Shop Floor Control ◦ System Manager ◦ Warehouse Automation ◦ MRP ◦ KnowledgeSync ◦ SalesLogix

Challenge: Interface outgrew Peachtree by Sage, and then Sage MAS 90; it needed advanced manufacturing capabilities, plus robust reporting, job cost, scheduling and planning tools.

Solution: Blytheco designed and implemented an end-to-end solution based on Sage MAS 500, integrating financial, manufacturing, distribution and alerts modules, and meeting stringent medical tracking requirements.

Results: The system was fully functional in just 90 days, and has eliminated the need to hire 10% more employees.

Moving Up in the Sage Software Suite

Like many start-ups, Interface selected Peachtree by Sage during its early years. Business increased, and it upgraded to Sage MAS 90. By early 2007, it had outgrown its system once again, resulting in operational slow-downs and inhibiting further expansion. Sage MAS 500 was the logical next step.

"We asked Sage Software for the name of a good consultant, and they recommended Blytheco," says Gayle Arnold, chief financial officer and vice president of administration. "I had worked with Blytheco previously, and it was a terrific experience. I knew we could count on them for a first-rate system design, plus professional implementation services."

Working with a Winner

Blytheco, Sage Software Partner of the Year, designed an end-to-end solution to automate Interface's enhanced business model and new volumes. Interface now uses Sage MAS 500 to manage its financials, warehouse, manufacturing, purchasing and shipping – practically everything that goes on in the busy company.

"Sage MAS 500 suits the level of business we do on a daily basis," explains Arnold. "We have 12,000 different SKU part numbers, 3,000 individual routers that we produce, and 1,000 shipments per month. Our products vary from very small balloons costing about \$20, to intricate machines priced at \$100,000. Clearly, accounting for all this is no easy task, and demands a very powerful and reliable system like the one we have now."



Invaluable Information

The system implemented by Blytheco allows Interface to access a greater amount of meaningful information. "We extract data on everything, including analytics like inventory cost and job cost. There are few limits, in fact, on information that can be produced with Sage MAS 500 reports. A big plus, for instance, has been the system's planning and scheduling tool that lets us stay on top of work orders," notes Arnold.

"If we want to build a particular machine, the component requirement feature in Sage MAS 500 shows us exactly what parts will be needed, and whether they are in stock. The work order shortage report determines whether any parts are missing from a particular product or order. This helps us prevent manufacturing delays, ensuring faster service to our customers," she continues.

Alerts and Weekly Metrics

"The Alerts module is really nifty. It notifies us if an item didn't get through inspection property, or if a receivable account is past due. Everybody likes that," Arnold explains.

"Also, we appreciate the weekly metrics reports we now provide to staff. We're committed to being a data-driven company. However, it's often a challenge for us to get accurate and appropriate data to people, because we're all so busy. The weekly metrics reports provide information on on-time delivery, yields, and other performance items, which really helps to improve our business."

Vertical Integration

Interface uses BWOS, a large customized multi-user database that records balloon production and development from the sales order stage to the finished product. A normalized database, BWOS helps produce work order packages, labels, quality-control inspection reports, meeting the needs of researchers, balloon-forming engineers, planners and others.

BWOS integrates with Sage MAS 500's Sales Order and Manufacturing modules. "When you create a sales order in Sage MAS 500, a script triggers to see whether the sales order already exists in BWOS. The script can create sales orders and customers in BWOS automatically, to match entries in Sage MAS 500, which is really helpful," explains Jorgen Linde, computer systems analyst.

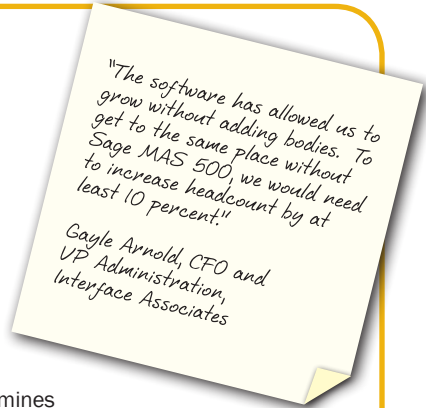
Surprisingly Speedy Launch

Many IT executives flinch at the idea of a software conversion, fearing a year-long trauma. Interface's upgrade was relatively painless and took a mere 90 days.

"In the last year, Interface has grown from 76 to 120 employees, put state-of-the-art quality systems in place for our medical equipment, and experienced a 46 percent growth in sales. Still, we were able to change our ERP in the midst of it all, in an unbelievable short time," says Arnold.

"Blytheco's consultants were here working all weekend before we went live on a Monday, to make certain it would be a smooth transition. Within one week after the launch, everyone was up and running on Sage MAS 500. This really reflects well on both Blytheco and Sage Software's product," she adds.

Arnold believes that Blytheco's Sage MAS 500 system has had a big impact on the bottom line. "The software has allowed us to grow without adding bodies. To get to the same place without Sage MAS 500, we would need to increase headcount by at least 10 percent."



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Gayle Arnold, CFO and
VP Administration,
Interface Associates



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