

CUSTOMER SUCCESS



A “Most Admired Company” Selects Sage MAS 500 and ASP

Fortune Brands is the consumer products company behind brands like Moen®, Titleist®, Jim Beam®, Master Lock® and Swingline®. For seven years straight it has been named “Most Admired Company in America” in its category by Fortune magazine. To win the prestigious honor, the holding company consistently outpaced competitors in quality of products, innovativeness, employee talent, quality of management, financial soundness, use of corporate assets, social responsibility, and long-term investment value.

An S&P 500 company, Fortune Brands is traded on the New York Stock Exchange under the ticker symbol FO, as well as on several international stock exchanges. Eighty percent of its sales come from powerful brands that are consistently first or second in their markets.

Selecting a New System

The time had come for Fortune Brands to upgrade its financial package, an older product running on legacy servers. But updating the existing systems would be very costly. Fortune Brands discovered it could realize a dramatic savings by switching to a Windows platform, application service provider (ASP) hosting and a more appropriately sized accounting application.

Fortune Brands’ consultant constructed a weighted matrix of needs to determine which business software would work best. High on the priority list were fast implementation, a multi-company module, flexible reporting, electronic funds transfer, and foreign currency conversion processing, as well as robust accounting capabilities, all in an affordable mid-tier package.

A Most Admired Solution

The winner was Sage MAS 500 ERP, with a twist. Rather than installing business software applications on a local area network, Fortune Brands chose an ASP model, outsourcing application server maintenance, for use through the Internet. The company now uses Sage MAS 500 to automate all general ledger, accounts payable, and cash management tasks. In addition, the new system performs electronic funds transfers, prints checks, and handles data from legacy third-party treasury software with ease.

Customer:

Fortune Brands, Inc.

Industry:

Consumer products

Location:

Lincolnshire, Illinois

Number of Employees

25,000

System:

Sage MAS 500

- eExecutive
- General Ledger
- Accounts Payable
- Cash Management



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CHALLENGE

Upgrade to robust accounting solution that can accommodate multi-companies, electronic funds transfer, and foreign currency and provides flexible reporting on an ASP model.

SOLUTION

Sage MAS 500 financial modules with ASP hosting.

RESULTS

Quick conversion with minimal learning curve; 99.99% system availability; streamlined automation of accounting tasks; smooth electronic fund transfers; flexible reporting and analysis tools; cut IT support costs.

Bill Baxter, Fortune Brands' corporate information services manager, calls the conversion a "great story," in part because it offered the company an opportunity to reorganize its chart of accounts to more closely resemble its current business structure. "We started with a blank piece of paper and rebuilt everything," he explains. "Then we implemented the product with virtually no customization, right out of the box. Ever since, availability has been four nines—99.99 percent."

Reports are also a success. "In our former life, the accounting people had to create special reports whenever someone needed information," comments Baxter. "The analysis tools usually required custom coding. But now with Sage MAS 500 we can build reports ourselves, e-mail them throughout the company, and let people drill down for whatever details they need. This permits our accounting staff to focus on more essential projects."

Baxter has enjoyed the intuitive graphical user interface of Sage MAS 500, especially since it cut down on the learning curve during deployment. He notes that staff members "don't have to be programmers" to feel comfortable using the system.

Outsourcing its software delivery has saved Fortune Brands both time and money. "Sage MAS 500 works very well in an ASP model," Baxter says. "It allowed us to get up and running in half the time we'd originally expected. Overall support costs are much less when they're handled externally, too, since it's possible to get to the guts of the product remotely. Of course, the quality of our experience also speaks well for our reseller, who partners with a world-class infrastructure provider, IBM Global Services, to ensure that we'll get excellent, reliable service."

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