

CUSTOMER SUCCESS



Air Ride's Sales Soar With Sage MAS 200 ERP

Bret Voelkel has always been into fast cars. One day while driving behind a semi, he wondered why the air ride suspension common on large trucks wasn't being used on speed cars. He experimented with various prototypes, and developed a system for the hot rod he was building at the time.

Before he knew it, Bret and his wife Sharon had launched Air Ride Technologies, and were manufacturing suspension products for hot rods and street rods. The company has grown in little more than a decade from two to 38 employees. When customers ask if there's really a difference with Air Ride products, the Voelkels simply say, "See it, drive it, feel it, and know it."

All in the Family

Back when the company was operating out of the Voelkels' garage, Peachtree by Sage was an ideal accounting software package. By 2004, however, Air Ride had grown to include eight different companies with needs that could no longer be handled with Peachtree by Sage.

"We were very pleased with Sage Software in general, and preferred to stay within its family of products," says Sharon Voelkel, vice president. "Also, we spoke with another firm in a position similar to ours, doing both retail and manufacturing, and they encouraged us to go with Sage MAS 200 ERP. So we made the switch."

Air Ride was able to import their mission critical data from Peachtree by Sage to Sage MAS 200, avoiding re-entry tasks. At the same time, the company saw an opportunity to "clean house" and streamlined many of its accounts during the conversion, making for an easier upgrade.

Ramping Up Control

Air Ride now uses Sage MAS 200 for all aspects of financial management. The software automates accounts receivable, accounts payable, inventory, and manufacturing.

"With Sage MAS 200, we record raw materials as they enter our facility," says Craig Meyer, warehouse manager. "We use the software's production entry capabilities to build parts from the raw materials. By doing batch process updates, we can keep our inventory numbers completely up to date. This improves visibility of our inventory, and therefore allows us to have greater control."

Customer:

Air Ride Technologies, Inc.

Industry:

Hot rod air suspension products

Location

Jasper, Indiana

Number of Locations: One

Number of Employees: 38

System:

Sage MAS 200

- General Ledger
- Accounts Receivable
- Accounts Payable
- Payroll
- Inventory Management
- Sales Order
- Purchase Order
- Bank Reconciliation
- Bill of Materials
- Return Merchandise Authorization (RMA)

CHALLENGE

Growing company outgrew Peachtree by Sage, and needed more robust inventory management capabilities.

SOLUTION

Upgraded to Sage MAS 200 with complete suite of financial and manufacturing modules.

RESULTS

Existing staff easily handles 20 percent more sales; shipping time cut from up to four days to 24 hours; RMA abuse cut in half.

Real Inventory Management

Meyer particularly likes the flexibility Sage MAS 200 affords him. "I can alter part numbers easily," he comments. "This comes in handy when we need to change a bill of materials, and want to modify part numbers instead of deleting them."

Better inventory knowledge helps cut costs. "Sage MAS 200 gives us a more accurate picture of inventory on hand, and how it's being used," says Meyer. "We can print reports to track warehouse stock levels, usages, profitability percentages, and back orders. This lets us tighten up reorder points and prevent waste."

Air Ride uses the Sage MAS 200 RMA module to manage its returned merchandise authorization program. "The RMA module provides an excellent paper trail, from the moment a product comes in the back door, to the moment it ships again," says Voelkel. "And it has helped cut the number of customers abusing our returns policy by half."

Great for Eight

Before implementing Sage MAS 200, Air Ride had a hard time integrating financial data from its eight separate businesses. Previously, the accountant laboriously hand-entered data from each firm into a spreadsheet to create an enterprise-wide analysis.

"With Sage MAS 200, it's easy for me to consolidate data into a single report," explains Connie Jarboe, accountant. "Whether we're dealing with marketing, real estate, or manufacturing operations, we can now view a complete picture of the company's financials and manage the company better."

Increasing Productivity

Efficiencies are obvious in the shipping department, also. Prior to adopting Sage MAS 200, it took Air Ride up to four days to ship an order. Today orders take less than 24 hours, and back orders have dropped to less than one percent of total sales.

"We are handling 20 percent more sales without hiring staff... As the hot rod market heats up, good financial data is a must for staying ahead of the competition."

By adopting the Sage MAS 200 payroll module, Air Ride has started paying employees with direct deposit. "We've saved at least half an hour a week that was previously required for processing checks for multiple companies," says Voelkel. "Employees really appreciate having direct deposit. Also, the bank reconciliation module has cut reconciliation time in half—a great benefit."

Overall, Voelkel views the upgrade to Sage MAS 200 as a wise strategic move. "We are handling 20 percent more sales without hiring staff," she says. "Also, having integrated financials makes us more proactive. As the hot rod market heats up, good financial data is a must for staying ahead of the competition."



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