

CUSTOMER SUCCESS



Friends Marketing Creates Fun Fashion Trends With Sage MAS 200

What makes certain jewelry pieces “must-haves” for teens and tweens? Friends Marketing has clearly figured it out.

Friends manufactures the Italian Charms, Fascination bracelets, and Groovy Girl accessories you see in Hallmark stores, specialty retail shops, and larger department stores. They offer a variety of fashion accessories, as well as classic lapel pins, watches, bookmarks, and holiday items. Hundreds of sales representatives and international distributors represent their products around the world. Their styles are so on target that sales have been growing at 25 percent over the past several years.

Friends Finds a Buddy

But hot sales were not being supported by an equally hot accounting system. An antiquated DOS-based program did not provide accurate inventory numbers or integrate with the customer-relations management (CRM) tool. Many functions like raw material tracking were done manually.

Friends discovered what it needed in Sage MAS 200 ERP—an end-to-end business management system. In addition to core accounting functions, Sage MAS 200 has automated order entry, purchasing, receiving, inventory management, shipping, credit card payments, and even returned merchandise processing, all in a single integrated solution. “We now have an extremely user-friendly system, with critical information available across the enterprise,” explains Eileen Ketcham, vice president.

Friends is a manufacturer and distributor. It imports some products and assembles others. Many items are bundled as kits. “The Sage MAS 200 Inventory Management module gives us almost real-time information on both component parts and finished goods, even though the warehouse is in another state,” Ketcham says. “The module contains a landed cost feature that gives us a handle on true costs, very important to an importer.”

Customer:

Friends Marketing, Inc.

Industry:

Fashion accessory manufacturer

Location:

Glastonbury, Connecticut

Number of Locations: Two

Number of Employees: 15

System:

Sage MAS 200

- Accounts Payable
- Accounts Receivable
- ACT! by Sage
- Bank Reconciliation
- Bill of Materials
- Business Alerts
- Credit Card Processing
- Custom Office
- General Ledger
- Inventory Management
- Purchase Order
- Return Merchandise Authorization (RMA)
- Sales Order
- Sales Order Extended Solutions
- StarShip
- Visual Integrator

CHALLENGE

Stand-alone DOS-based accounting package did not integrate with contact management software, nor provide usable sales and inventory data.

SOLUTION

Sage MAS 200 with complete suite of modules, including manufacturing and distribution suites, ACT! Link, StarShip, Visual Integrator and Credit Card Processing.

RESULTS

Order entry operations speeded by 40 percent; returned merchandise processing now 20 percent faster; overall efficiencies improved by more than 10 percent.

Works Like a Charm

Order entry used to be a painstaking and inefficient process. "Sage MAS 200 has streamlined our order entry and customer service operations by about 40 percent," says Ketcham. "We also appreciate that the StarShip module integrates seamlessly with the rest of the system, so updated shipping information is available whenever customers call."

Since Friends puts many of its own purchases on a credit card, the vendor balance feature in the Sage MAS 200 Accounts Payable module has been a big help. As Ketcham says, "The vendor balance capability means that we know precisely what we've bought and what it cost from each of our vendors. We now have better internal records and can prepare more useful vendor histories."

Similar improvements are seen in merchandise returns. Ketcham notes, "We've easily trimmed 20 percent off the time it takes to do a credit or replacement."

Ketcham estimates that overall efficiencies from the new system are more than 10 percent. "We're very pleased with Sage MAS 200," she says. "We probably wouldn't have grown this quickly, with such small additions in staff, without a system this flexible and powerful."

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