



Automated Rental Management Solutions – Close Up

It's No Stretch ARM is a Perfect Fit for Sculptware

Every well-dressed event needs coordinated table and chair covers. From conventions, to weddings, to prep-school graduation events, whether one needs eye-catching prints or a formal look, Scottsdale Arizona-based Sculptware has it covered. Sculptware patented PopTop fitted table covers and SculptChair fitted chair covers to match any theme, mood, or setting. Major hotels and event planners rely on Sculptware for their linen rentals; they know they can count on the company to have the quantity and the colors they need, in stock and ready for delivery.

Since the company launched its Web site, www.sculptwareonline.com, business has taken off. The site includes an interactive color selector where customers can “try on” various colors and prints on chairs, tables, and stools to achieve the look they want. An instructional video shows customers how quick it is to install the products, and customers can receive a quote or place their orders online.

A Wrinkle In The System

Things weren't always as smooth running at Sculptware as they are today. Up until five years ago, Sculptware conducted business using a simple homegrown order-entry software. There was no specialized rental functionality, no inventory control, no general ledger, no receivables. To see if the company could meet demand for its products during busy times, staff literally had to leaf through paper copies of the orders adding up how many orders for the product they had. To determine how many white stool covers were in stock, someone had to go to the

shelf and count them. The lack of full rental management functionality threatened to limit the company's growth, even as it went live with the online service.

Achieving That Perfect Fit

Fortunately for the growing business, Mitchell Kelldorf, Sculptware's president was introduced to Automated Rental Management (ARM) at a rental trade show. He was impressed with what he saw; ARM is an end-to-end rental management solution with inventory control, reservation tracking, back-office accounting, comprehensive billing functionality, and much more. Kelldorf went on to test

another half dozen rental software packages, but nowhere else could he find the combination of features, functionality, and price, backed by the commitment to service he saw demonstrated by ARM.

An ARM consultant came on site and worked with each department to understand the tasks and workload. The consultant then mapped those procedures into ARM, providing step by step instruction to each employee. “That's where business experience comes in,” says Nelson Rood, Sculptware general manager. “That visit got us started in the right direction; everyone understood how to do what they needed to do.”

Tailored For The Rental Industry

Rood says Sculptware is a lean operation with a staff of just 20, a feat made possible by the efficiencies afforded by ARM.

During contract entry, ARM warns Sculptware's sales staff if the item ordered is overbooked. Staff can look at a graphic calendar representation of an item's reservations,



A warning in ARM alerts the user to a potential overbooking situation.

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General Manager
Sculptware

Close Up

and make the appropriate decisions regarding the current order.

"ARM gives us choices we never had before," explains Rood, "When ARM tells us we're overbooked, we can choose to make additional product, or expedite the return of a rental and speed up the turn-around time to meet the commitment.

In the rare case when logistics prevent Sculptware from honoring a customer's specific request, ARM displays a list of alternate items that the sales staff can offer the customer.

Frequently in the linen rental business, a chair cover or tablecloth is lost by the customer and not returned. With ARM, Sculptware can manage those shortages by billing the customers for items not returned. For example, when a contract for 1000 chair covers is returned with only 998, Sculptware bills the customer for the purchase of two chair covers in one quick step, right from the rental contract.

Sculptware offers volume discounts for its highest volume customers, and ARM fully supports this and other complex pricing matrixes.

Since Sculptware conducts the majority of its business over the Internet, accurate shipping information is a priority. Within ARM, the shipping weight for each item is stored in the Inventory module, providing staff with a cumulative weight for each contract, which makes finding the correct freight rates a snap.

Inventory Is Covered

Before ARM, Rood says the company was often ignorant of its losses. Since there was no clear way to determine what was in stock, what was out on rental, and what had been returned, it was easy to lose track of items. "With ARM, we have total visibility of our inventory. We can see what's in stock, what's out on rental, what's reserved, and what's been returned but is waiting for laundering."

Sculptware performs bi-yearly physical counts of its more than 25,000 different items, a task simplified by ARM's ability to freeze inventory counts at the start of the count while allowing full business operations, including receipts, invoicing, and contract entry to continue. Throughout the year, ARM supports cycle counts of one or more

product lines at a time, ensuring Sculptware always has tight control and an accurate picture of its inventory. "ARM delivers a huge payoff to us," says Rood.

Fit For The Future

Confident in their ARM solution, Rood is looking at expanding ARM into the company's manufacturing operations. With full Bill of Material and Work Order Processing capabilities, ARM can help automate and control Sculptware's in-house manufacturing process.

Rood is also discussing radio frequency identification (RFID) with the consultants at ARM. Small, washable RFID tags could be sewn into the hem of each item. As warehouse personnel push the cart full of items picked through an RFID reader, each item would be scanned, ensuring the correct number was shipped out. As those items are returned, the process is reversed, allowing Sculptware to automatically identify shortages. Sending those tablecloths through a different portal would scan

them "In Laundry", and then back out again ready for rental. This automation would cut the tedious and time-consuming task of counting individual items.

Well Coordinated Team

Rood has nothing but compliments for the professionalism and responsiveness of the ARM consulting team, "It's obvious that ARM places a big emphasis on customer service, and we're the beneficiaries."

Rood attends the ARM user conference, Perspectives, each Fall in San Antonio. He appreciates the tips and techniques shared at the conference and the opportunity to network with other ARM users. He always returns to work with new ideas he can put into practice.

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The ARM product gives Sculptware control over their inventory that they didn't have before—decreasing inventory loss while improving customer satisfaction.

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