Hobie Cat Catches the Waves With Sage MAS 200

"The world is a waterpark, and Hobie makes the best rides." That's the word among owners of the swift fiberglass catamarans that transformed sailing. More than 100,000 Hobie Cats ply the world's waters, often in huge fleets and colorful regattas.

The "Hobie Way of Life" started 50 years ago when high-schooler Hobie Alter began building surfboards in his dad's garage. He introduced his first 14-foot catamaran in 1967, an instant craze because it was light, incredibly fast, and could be launched on the beach into the surf. In 1970 he unleashed the Hobie 16, the most popular catamaran in history.

Changing Tides at Hobie

The company weathered a major downsizing in the 1990s due to the advent of jet skis and sailboards, and moved from a midrange computer to a limited RealWorld accounting system on a UNIX network. The system served only 16 terminals, and had a mere 8 MB of storage. As Hobie Cat diversified and sales picked up again, they were ready for an end-to-end PC-based networked enterprise resource planning (ERP) solution.

"We did our homework, scoping out various business solutions, and chose Sage MAS 90 because its price point was between a third and a half of other contenders," says Bill Baldwin, vice president. "Plus, it offered a good balance between rich features and user-friendliness." The company implemented Sage MAS 90 ERP in 1999, and then upgraded to Sage MAS 200 ERP in 2003 as sales rebounded.

Sage MAS 200 From Stem to Stern

Sage MAS 200 and a full suite of modules now manage the financials, operations, and manufacturing at Hobie Cat. The system, now housed on three servers and 30 PCs, automates order-taking, work orders, labor routings, inventory processing, bill of materials, receivables, payables, and manufacturing resource planning.

"I'm a finance kind of guy, so I really like all of the reporting capabilities in Sage MAS 200," says Baldwin. "I used to spend about half of my life standing in front of file cabinets, or searching through notebooks of transactions each time I needed to check on something. Now I can do everything at my workstation and determine exactly how much was spent, by whom, and for what. It's terrific."

Customer:

Hobie Cat Company

Industry:

Sailboat and kayak manufacturer

Location

Oceanside, California

Number of Locations: Two

Number of Employees: 85

System:

Sage MAS 200

- Accounts Payable
- Accounts Receivable
- Bank Reconciliation
- Bar Code
- Bill of Materials
- Custom Office
- FAS Asset Accounting
- General Ledger
- Inventory Management
- Library Master
- Material Requirements Planning (MRP)
- Purchase Order
- Return Merchandise Authorization (RMA)
- Sales Order
- Work Order

CHALLENGE

Company needed integration between general ledger, inventory, and manufacturing; RealWorld accounting software on UNIX could not be upgraded to PC-based network.

SOLUTION

Sage MAS 200 with full complement of financial and manufacturing modules, with plans to implement bar coding and e-commerce capabilities.

RESULTS

Although business has more than doubled in the past five years, staffing has only grown by 20 percent due to efficiencies provided by Sage MAS 200.

Shipshape System

He also appreciates the flexibility engineered into Sage MAS 200. "The customizable menus allow us to sort data however we want, and users can organize the interface in ways to streamline their workflow," he notes.

Baldwin plans to expand use of the Sage MAS 200 Bar Code module. "Currently only the serial numbers of each boat are bar coded in the system," he says. "In the near future, all parts will have bar codes, which will enable us to process more orders with the same staff." He is also considering adding Sage MAS 200 e-commerce capabilities soon.

Hobie Cat employees come to Baldwin on a regular basis, excited about new features they've discovered in the software. "There's so much potential built into Sage MAS 200, including things we didn't even know about when we bought it," he says. "Each time somebody shows me another capability, it's like finding an unexpected present under the Christmas tree."

Although Baldwin finds it difficult to pin a dollar amount on improvements attributable to the software, he says that benefits have been substantial. "We've more than doubled our business since implementing Sage MAS 90 and upgrading to Sage MAS 200. But we've only had to increase staff by 20 percent. We consider the software to be a major contributor to our success."

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