

Lightspeed Aviation flies high with Sage 300 ERP and Sage CRM



Customer

Lightspeed Aviation

Industry

Distribution

Location

North America

Solution

Sage CRM and Sage 300 ERP

Lightspeed Aviation has carved out a niche market for its products that not only remained strong during the recent recession, but has seen spectacular growth. The company assembles, distributes, and services aviation headsets for recreational pilots. With a stellar reputation for service and support, the company demands a powerful and flexible business management solution that allows it to adapt to evolving requirements. For Lightspeed Aviation, that solution is Sage 300 ERP with Sage CRM.

Growth dictates change

When the company began operations, it used QuickBooks and a rudimentary contact management system to track its customers and product repairs. As its successful business model propelled its growth, the old software quickly became overwhelmed. "We built this business on service. Back then, we were only one-quarter of the size we are now, yet the old system's limitations

threatened our ability to deliver that service," recalls Jim Mueller, vice president and COO of Lightspeed Aviation.

Mueller and the management team began looking first for a CRM solution to support Lightspeed Aviation's customer-facing operations. "I researched several systems and zeroed in on Sage CRM," he says. "The hosted software model appealed to us because we had no dedicated IT staff. Sage CRM had the functionality we needed and we liked the easy upgrade path to the in-house Sage CRM integrated with Sage 300 ERP as our business grew."

Lightspeed Aviation successfully used Sage CRM for two years before its growth again dictated a change. "We wanted to take advantage of the customization capabilities available with Sage CRM, plus it was time to upgrade our accounting system," notes Mueller.

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Jim Mueller,
Vice President and COO
Lightspeed Aviation

Challenge

As it grew, the company's basic contact management system and entry-level accounting software threatened to disrupt the exceptional service on which Lightspeed Aviation has built its reputation.

Solution

Sage 300 ERP and Sage CRM provide an integrated business management solution that is powerful and flexible enough to meet the company's needs today and into the future.

Results

Product quality has increased through the ability to analyze service calls. Integration with web and shipping components increases efficiency. Broad customization capabilities allow the company to configure the software to match its workflow.

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Jim Mueller,
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Lightspeed Aviation

The company called a local Sage Authorized Partner for help and Mueller was very pleased with the results. “They came in, learned our business, and tailored Sage CRM and Sage 300 ERP to match our company’s workflow,” he explains. “It was a very easy transition.”

Keep customers happy

Lightspeed Aviation sells a majority of its products through a distribution channel and the ultimate user of its headsets is not known until the pilot registers the product. The Sage Authorized Partner tailored Sage CRM to create and maintain the association between an item’s serial number, the distributor, and the customer. Now, when a registration is received from the company’s website, Sage CRM is equipped to complete the circle by associating the serial number with the customer as well as with the distributor. By maintaining this association, Lightspeed Aviation keeps the entire history of each product’s lifecycle, this equips its staff to quickly answer questions, address warranty issues, and deliver exceptional service.

“There are a relatively small number of recreational pilots out there so customer retention is key,” Mueller explains. “With Sage 300 ERP and Sage CRM, we empower our employees with the tools they need to provide a high level of service and keep our customers happy.”

Service levels soars

The customer service component in Sage CRM allows staff to create and track support issues and repairs for its headsets. “The integration with Sage 300 ERP allows our repair associates to pull up the part numbers used for the repair from the ERP system and accumulate the total cost of each repair,” explains Mueller.

A significant benefit of tracking its service calls in Sage CRM is the visibility it provides into product quality. Mueller explains: “By tracking a product through its lifecycle, we know its ship date and its repair date. This allows us to easily perform time-to-failure analyses on our products. We can quickly identify quality issues or manufacturing problems by tracking the exact nature of each repair; this has increased our overall product quality.”

Single source for data

Lightspeed Aviation adopted Sage 300 ERP with the same enthusiasm as its Sage CRM component and takes full advantage of the product’s functionality. “We have integrated it with our shipping software and our web store,” Mueller explains. “We utilize Bill Of Materials to track the components of our headsets and Engineering Change Orders to monitor the changes to our production.”

Mueller says the advantages of an integrated customer relationship management solution are many.

“The flow of information between the ERP and CRM components means we have one database for all customer and product information.”

“This allows us to deliver professional and polished, yet personable service to our customers — we have not only the history of what they bought from us, but additional details such as the type of plane they fly,” he says.

Works the way we do

The company is in the process of growing its global business and opening international repair facilities. Those facilities will be able to access the system securely through Lightspeed Aviation’s web portal, and log support calls and tap into the knowledgebase of resolutions. This is another example of the way the software adapts to meet the changing needs of this organization.

“I believe that the software’s job is to support our operations, not require that we change to fit the way it operates,” Mueller concludes. “Sage 300 ERP and Sage CRM are flexible enough to work the way we work and help us to be better at what we do. We have a platform that will support our growth and adapt to our changing business for years to come.”

About Sage CRM

Over 15,000 small and medium sized companies across the globe use Sage CRM every day to accelerate sales, drive business productivity and make every customer interaction count. It is used by enterprising, growing companies seeking new ways to interact with customers, leverage the power of social media and take advantage of the latest mobile developments to further grow their business. When combined with Sage ERP, our customers enjoy better business insight, increased efficiencies and productivity, and gain a single, customer-centric view across their entire business. So whether you're just starting out or have already grown to several hundred employees, Sage CRM can help accelerate your business success.

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