

Lightspeed Aviation flies high with Sage ERP Accpac and SageCRM

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 ERP Accpac with SageCRM.

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 SageCRM.com," he says. "The hosted software model appealed to us because we had no dedicated IT staff. SageCRM.com had the functionality we needed and we liked the easy upgrade path to the in-house SageCRM integrated with Sage ERP Accpac as our business grew."

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

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 SageCRM and Sage ERP Accpac 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 SageCRM to create and maintain the association between an

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 ERP Accpac and SageCRM 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.

Customer

Lightspeed Aviation

Industry

Distribution

Location

Lake Oswego, Oregon

Number of Locations

1 plus international repair facility

System

SageCRM

Sage ERP Accpac

- System Manager
- Inventory Control
- Purchase Orders
- Order Entry
- Accounts Receivable
- Accounts Payable
- General Ledger
- Serialized Inventory
- Uni Sales Analysis

Iciniti Store and Credit Card

Crystal Reports®

Linxship



item's serial number, the distributor, and the customer. Now, when a registration is received from the company's website, SageCRM 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 ERP Accpac and SageCRM, 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 SageCRM allows staff to create and track support issues and repairs for its headsets. "The integration with Sage ERP Accpac 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 SageCRM 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 ERP Accpac with the same enthusiasm as its SageCRM 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."

About Sage North America

Sage North America is part of The Sage Group plc, a leading global supplier of business management software and services. Sage North America employs 4,000 people and supports 3.1 million small and mid-sized business customers. The Sage Group plc, formed in 1981, was floated on the London Stock Exchange in 1989 and now employs 13,100 people and supports 6.2 million customers worldwide. For more information, please visit the website at www.SageNorthAmerica.com.

"With Sage ERP Accpac and SageCRM, we empower our employees with the tools they need to provide a high level of service and keep our customers happy."

— Jim Mueller
Vice President and COO
Lightspeed Aviation

The advantages of an integrated business 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," Mueller says. "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."

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 ERP Accpac and SageCRM 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."