

Trees 'n Bees, Inc. Saves Time With Sage 50 to Focus on Expansion and Selling an Experience



Customer

Trees 'n Bees, Inc.

Industry

Beekeeping

Location

Auburn, WA

Number of locations

1

System

Sage 50 Accounting—U.S. Edition

Like many small family businesses, Trees 'n Bees grew out of the interests of its founders, Loren and Carolyn Elliott. Having grown up in Shelton, Washington—a town known as the “Christmas tree capital of the northwest”—Carolyn was drawn to the family atmosphere of a “choose and cut” tree farm business. As a result, the husband and wife team started their Fir View Christmas tree business in 1972. Ten years later, when Loren became attracted to beekeeping, Fir View Trees 'n Bees was born. In 2002, Fir View Trees 'n Bees was incorporated under the name Trees & Bees, Inc. to better represent what the business had to offer.

Trees 'n Bees does not just sell Christmas trees, beekeeping supplies, and honey, it offers an experience. Special Christmastime activities such as photos with Mrs. Claus are offered each December, beekeeping seminars are held throughout the year, and a Pavilion featuring a full kitchen, espresso machine, and audio equipment is

available for party rentals. This is what separates Trees 'n Bees from its big-box competitors.

“We’ve loved being able to do what we enjoy, and I especially like that our entire family has been able to participate in the process,” says Carolyn. “Trees 'n Bees has been here so long that at Christmas time, we often see grown-ups who used to come in with their parents—now coming back with their own children to select a Christmas tree. Some families have been our customers for over 30 years. It’s a special feeling, knowing we’re a part of so many families’ traditions.”

In 2010, Loren Elliott suddenly passed away, leaving Carolyn to keep the business running, and growing. To effectively manage all facets of the Trees 'n Bees business, Carolyn had to be able to track the business’ progress and gain insight into both its current and future outlook.

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President, Trees 'n Bees, Inc.

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Trees 'n Bees is a long-time Sage 50 Accounting—U.S. Edition* customer, and she has continued to find Sage 50 to be an essential tool in managing the company's business information. “From selling Christmas trees and decorations to giving seminars on beekeeping, my business is varied and dynamic,” says Carolyn. “The fact that Sage 50 has been able to meet our ever-evolving needs since 1994 speaks volumes.”

In 2001, Trees 'n Bees moved into a new two-story building, increasing its shop space from 400 square feet to a potential of 5,000 square feet. Over the next several years, as time and money permitted, the business grew to use more and more of the space. The bottom floor is used for retail and office space, and the top floor is used for staff office space, and there are plans of adding a classroom. With all of this expansion, plus all the current product and service offerings, Carolyn decided to upgrade her Sage 50 software.

“With everything going on, I knew I needed more time to interact with my customers and market to potential ones and not be tied up with the day-to-day administrative tasks. Sage 50 Premium Accounting with multiuser functionality has allowed for greater simplification of my bookkeeping tasks. All the data is housed in one location, so I no longer have to reenter data from multiple user stations, allowing for more time to focus on other aspects of my business and eliminating the probability of error.”

Another aspect of Sage 50 Premium Accounting that has been beneficial to Trees 'n Bees is the reporting capability. Unlike other programs, Sage 50 allows Carolyn to track both sides of her business, Christmas trees and beekeeping, separately. In particular, Carolyn finds the option of running and printing quarterly payroll reports from the software to be a huge time saving. The email capability in the software has also helped with saving time. “The email capability has simplified my communication with vendors and customers. Being able to email invoices or purchase orders as .pdf files allows me to make better use of my limited time.”

“When I think about the future of this business, I realize that in order to expand my business and give my customers the experience they expect, I need to be more customer facing and not tied to a desk. By using Sage 50, I know I can automate my day-to-day tasks while also capturing the key information that will assist in making important business decisions. I'm excited to see what the future has in store for us at Trees 'n Bees, in partnership with Sage 50.”

About The Sage Group plc

Sage Group plc is a leading global provider of business management software to small and medium sized companies, creating greater freedom for them to succeed. Sage understands how and why each business is unique. We provide products and services that suit varying needs, are a pleasure to use, and are secure and efficient. Formed in 1981, Sage was floated on the London Stock Exchange in 1989 and entered the FTSE 100 in 1999. Sage has over 6 million customers and more than 13,380 employees in 24 countries covering the UK & Ireland, mainland Europe, North America, South Africa, Australia, Asia, and Brazil. For further information please visit: www.sage.com

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*Sage 50—U.S. Edition was named Sage Peachtree when Trees 'n Bees initially implemented this solution. The product names have been updated in this case study to reflect current naming.

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