Cemstone Gets Concrete Results With Sage MAS 500

Cemstone likes to say it's a company that "ROCs"—an acronym using the first letters of reliable, on-time, and consistent. Since 1927, when sand was still dug by hand and sold by the bushel, Cemstone has supplied concrete and other constructions materials to the Midwest under management of the Becken family.

Today Cemstone's fleet includes more than 400 concrete mixer trucks pouring everything from residential driveways to high-profile commercial projects. The company has diversified into aggregates, blocks, insulated concrete forms and contractor supplies, often through acquisitions. It made industry history recently with the introduction of DURA-CRETE®, a concrete product and installation system that is backed by warranty.

Old System Blocks Progress

Six years ago, Cemstone was only half its current size. Seeing expansion on the horizon, the executive team recognized the need for a full-fledged accounting system. Its existing package was designed for much smaller organizations, and was not Y2K compliant. Neither was it based on SQL server technology. The replacement would have to be very flexible, especially in general ledger functions, handle diverse divisions and operations, and be scalable enough to accommodate exponential growth.

Rock Solid Financial System

Sage MAS 500 ERP gave Cemstone the rock-solid financials it needed. The system automates invoicing, cash receipts, general ledger, accounts payables and financials company-wide, and also performs sales order, manufacturing, and inventory management across multiple warehouses for many of its divisions.

"We're saving a great deal through increased accuracy with Sage MAS 500," explains Steve Abbott, vice president and financial controller at Cemstone. "Before, it took more people to get the same amount of work done. Plus there were many functions our old package simply couldn't do that Sage Software handles with ease."

Cemstone's manufacturing arm sells bagged mixes of concrete for do-it-yourselfers. They also offer mason mixes to general contractors, making for complicated billing issues. "The Sales Order

Customer:

Cemstone Products Company

Industry:

Concrete supplier

Location:

Mendota Heights, Minnesota

Number of Locations

45

Number of Employees

900

System:

Sage MAS 500

- Customizer
- General Ledger
- Accounts Payable
- Accounts Receivable
- Cash Management
- Inventory Management
- Crystal Reports®
- FAS Asset Accounting
- Sales Order
- Sage CRM SalesLogix Sales
- Inventory Replenishment
- Purchase Order
- Warehouse Management
- Advanced Kitting
- Alerts

CHALLENGE

Upgrade to a more robust accounting solution that features flexibility, scalability, and maximum functionality to manage the diverse divisions of a rapidly expanding company.

SOLUTION

Sage MAS 500 financial and distribution modules.

RESULTS

Streamlined automation from A to Z; increased efficiency; increased accuracy; instant analysis for strategic planning; flexible pricing and billing; improved sales management; enhanced quality control.

module in Sage MAS 500 is very good in the pricing area, giving us a wide variety of pricing mechanisms and discounting," Abbott says.

Other billing activities are automated with programs written in-house using Sage MAS 500 Customizer and toolset. This has permitted the system to accommodate specialized billing procedures for concrete, aggregate, blocks, and all other Cemstone products.

The Sage CRM SalesLogix Sales module has been a boon for Cemstone. "We're using Sage CRM SalesLogix Sales as a management tool to make sure that customers get called on a regular basis," he says. "With a company this big, it can be difficult to stay in touch with the field. But now all our salespeople carry laptops and communicate with us electronically. We know exactly who is calling on whom, which customers need more attention, and even do our Christmas card lists with the software. We hope to track resolution of customer issues with Sage CRM SalesLogix soon, and be able to keep our quality control even higher this way."

Abbott praises Sage MAS 500 for well-designed accounts receivable functionality. He likes being able to create an aging report, and then rerun it three months from now. Because the system is date-specific, he can be assured the numbers won't change, and therefore doesn't have to clutter the office with redundant paper copies.

He also appreciates the strategic information he prepares with Sage MAS 500. "I was recently in an executive meeting where we were discussing moving plants from one division to another. I decided to find the potential financial impact right then and there. By changing the reporting tree, we had a definitive answer in minutes." He notes that such a task would have taken days with their former software.

"Sage MAS 500 is a good, strong accounting package for us," Abbott says. "We're running a quarter-billion dollar company on it. We wouldn't if it didn't work effectively."

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