

Sage X3 brings noteworthy gains to Messenger, LLC

Stationery manufacturer speeds shipping and cuts inventory levels



For nearly 100 years, Messenger, LLC, has been providing top-quality products backed by superb customer service to the funeral industry. The company's stationery products and keepsakes are sold through funeral homes across the country. While Messenger's traditional roots run deep, its operation is thoroughly modern. Sage X3 and complementary solutions are at the heart of its modern manufacturing operation, ensuring Messenger will be leading the market for many years to come.

Move to a modern enterprise solution

"We had been running on an older business system, installed back in 1985," recalls Parker Bennett, information technology (IT) manager for Messenger. "Needless to say, it was outdated. It also required too many IT resources to keep it operational, and it was very difficult to get meaningful reports. We knew it was time for a modern enterprise solution, and we began a structured search for a replacement."

Among Messenger's requirements for a new business management solution were material requirements planning (MRP) functionality, and extensive flexibility and configurability that would allow the solution to adapt to the company's unique business processes. "We reviewed other options, including Microsoft Dynamics, but Sage X3 meets all of our requirements, and we really like that it allows for customization that does not interfere with our ability to upgrade and keep the software current," says Bennett.

Flexible and configurable

Heather Garman, director of marketing for Messenger, has additional priorities for the application, and Sage X3 is hitting the mark on all of them. "Our salespeople are independent contractors, and we give them flexibility to determine their own pricing. With Sage X3, we can build custom pricing tables for each of them. That's a huge benefit."

Challenge

Messenger was running a decades-old accounting application that lacked the powerful functionality and flexibility the growing company demands.

Solution

The company selected Sage X3 and several complementary solutions to meet its needs today, and support its growth into the future.

Results

On-time shipping has increased from 95 percent to 99.9 percent, while sales volume increased by 25 percent. Inventory carrying costs are down significantly. Month-end processing has been cut from weeks down to just a few days. Efficiencies and time savings were gained by automating sales tax calculation and reporting and credit card processing.



Customer

Messenger, LLC

Industry

Stationery manufacturing

Headquarters

Auburn, Indiana

Number of employees

135

System

Sage X3
Sage Enterprise Intelligence
Sage Payment Services
Sage Sales Tax
Sage Inventory Advisor

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Heather Garman, director of marketing
Messenger, LLC

The company wanted an efficient way for its mobile salesforce to enter orders and check order statuses, and the flexible architecture of Sage X3 facilitated the development of such a tool. Using the software's development toolkit, Bennett constructed a secure web portal where salespeople can place new orders, review the status of open orders, and view purchase history, pricing, and other customer asset files. "The portal exchanges data with Sage X3, so salespeople always have current information, and the orders they enter through the portal are created in Sage X3 without rekeying," Bennett explains.

Improve on-time shipping

Both Bennett and Garman agree that among the biggest benefits Sage X3 has brought to the company is the easy access to actionable data. "Data analysis was nearly impossible in our old software," Garman says. "Messenger was recently acquired, and our ability to provide extensive data about the health and history of the company made that acquisition nearly seamless."

"We now have complete visibility into our production cycle as well," adds Bennett. "We've even gone so far as to share the most relevant data with our entire team on big screens in the offices and warehouse. We can all see daily sales numbers, shipments, rush orders, and other data that keep us working together toward our goals."

And the collaborative data sharing is effective, says Garman. "Since implementing Sage X3, our on-time shipping is up to 99.9 percent from about 95 percent, while our sales volume has increased by 25 percent."

Significantly reduce stock levels

Using the sophisticated MRP functionality in Sage X3, Messenger is able to make smarter, more strategic production decisions. "We analyze data including forecasts, work orders, sales orders, purchase orders, and stock levels to determine what we should build and when," explains Bennett. "Through this informed planning, we've reduced our inventory stocking levels significantly."

Currently the company is implementing Sage Inventory Advisor, an inventory optimization tool integrated with Sage X3. "This is a cyclical business, and we believe that using Sage Inventory Advisor will help us better predict and prepare for our busy times while not overstocking during slower periods," says Bennett. "We expect that when Sage Inventory Advisor is fully implemented, we may reduce our stock levels even further, preserving our operating capital."

Notable reporting power

Sage Enterprise Intelligence, a powerful data analysis and reporting solution for Sage X3, provides Messenger's staff with real-time access to enterprise data, quickly and securely. "We use it for financial and production reporting as well as sales data tracking," says Bennett. "It pulls together data from throughout the application, and other applications if we choose, and helps us make cohesive sense of that data."

Rapid data accessibility, combined with efficient workflows, have helped speed month-end processing, a cycle that took weeks under the old system. "We can now complete month-end processing in just a few days," says Garman. The result is increased efficiency and quicker access to important financial data.

Complementary solutions boost efficiency

Other complementary solutions that Messenger has adopted include Sage Sales Tax, which ensures that the company is accurately calculating sales tax and meeting its tax-filing obligations in every state. Credit card processing used to involve a walk to a terminal across the office, connected to an analog phone line. Now, using Sage Payment Solutions, customers' credit and debit transactions are handled securely, and flow from sales order entry or the customer portal directly into Sage X3, eliminating manual data entry, saving time, and speeding the invoice to cash cycle.

Maintain high service levels

Exceptional customer service is a top priority at Messenger, and Sage X3 is helping the company keep its service levels consistently high. "We are capturing customer feedback about their orders in the software," says Garman. "Everything from preferences to noting a damaged shipment. Then, when entering a new order, these notes pop up to ensure our staff has the information they need to ensure we are giving our customers precisely what they want from us."

About Sage

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