

Oates & Company Makes a Lasting Impression on Speedball Art Products



Speedball Art Products

Industry

Manufacturing and Distribution

Software

Sage MAS 90

Benefits of Partnering with Oates & Company

- Increased margins by reducing IT costs
- Working knowledge of manufacturing processes
- Quickly able to resolve support issues
- Reduction of labor costs associated with physical inventory counts

For more than a century the Speedball Arts Product brand has provided a broad range of quality art products to artists on every continent. From children in art class to renowned artists whose works hang in museums, Speedball's products have been used by millions to make a lasting impression. Products include acrylic paints, calligraphy pens and nibs, block printing inks and supplies, screen printing inks and supplies, kid's finger paint, watercolors and a variety of educational materials to help create a masterpiece, just by adding your imagination. From their distribution and manufacturing plant located in Statesville, North Carolina, Speedball manufactures 95% of what they distribute across the globe. Their global distribution and complex manufacturing needs along with steady growth led to a need for an integrated system that was

easy to use, flexible and supported by a firm with detailed manufacturing knowledge.

Manufacturing Knowledge a Must

Ben Lapin, CFO, found Sage Software's MAS 90 product and began the implementation. While the first firm Ben worked with understood the product, they did not know and understand the intricacies associated with manufacturing processes. "We constantly were experiencing downtime and incorrect information since the system was not set up properly for our business," said Ben. "We knew we needed to find another firm to help us." Paramount to success would be to find a firm with significant product expertise along with a thorough understanding of manufacturing processes and workflow.



Oates & Company

An Oates & Company Client Case Study



Speedball®

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**—Ben Lapin, CFO
Speedball Art Products**

“We found Oates & Company and things quickly got better,” said Ben. “We met with their team and felt more comfortable. They knew what we were talking about and understood our processes.” Gone were the error messages and system downtime. “Our support also improved dramatically. We had been waiting days sometimes for a resolution to a problem. Working with Oates, if we have a problem, we call in and get help immediately. Most importantly, we are back up and going quickly.”

Accuracy a Necessity

Speedball’s 700 customers worldwide depend on a quality product that is manufactured exactly according to specifications and shipments are accurate and timely. “We have 17 people using the system in a variety of capacities. In addition to scheduling the production of products, our chemists use MAS 90 to review what work orders are in process, when they can expect shipments of chemicals and purchasing raw materials that they will need,” said Ben. The system is precise and is utilized by many of Speedball’s departments.

Working with Oates & Company has also given Speedball Arts a more accurate inventory. “Our information is so accurate we are able to do cycle counting as opposed to a physical inventory, which we have not had to do since working with Oates,” said Ben. This saves Speedball Arts tremendous time.

“We have compared IT costs before and after working with Oates. We can attribute a 75% decrease in IT costs directly to our relationship with Oates,” said Ben. “They

give us tremendous support, have a great team and they know our business. This has all shown up in terms of an improved bottom line.”

A Relationship Beyond the Software

“One thing I really appreciate is the face-to-face time I have with people from Oates,” said Ben. “Our account manager drops in on us for an on-site visit just to see how we are doing. We also like to attend the annual client conference, Visions. We are able to talk to other people using the software, learn about upcoming releases and gain ideas on how to improve what we are doing internally.”

Each year, Ben comes to Oates’ office to conduct a 12-month planning session. “I meet with key consultants at Oates and we talk about where Speedball Arts is headed over the next year. From there, we map out a plan from the technology side to be sure we will have the infrastructure necessary to meet our plans,” said Ben.

Looking Ahead

Speedball Arts is about to expand its 40,000 square foot offices to five times its size. In addition, they are considering a move to Sage MAS 500 and possibly EDI. “We will definitely look to Oates for help with any system change we are considering,” said Ben. “Our relationship with Oates has definitely attributed to the success of our company and our profitability.”



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