



PINNACLE

Computing Solutions

SAGE LINE 500 CASE STUDY: THE PREMIERE KITCHEN COMPANY

sage

Business Partner

The
Premiere
Kitchen Company

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SAGE LINE 500 SUPPORTS RAPID DESIGN-TO-DELIVERY SERVICE AT THE PREMIERE KITCHEN COMPANY.

■ CLIENT PROFILE

The Premiere Kitchen Company (www.premierekitchens.co.uk) is a leading manufacturer and supplier of kitchens for the UK public housing sector. Based in Hardwicke near Gloucester, the firm offers a complete design-to-delivery service, providing products that combine quality with value for money.

Originally founded in 1989 to manufacture, supply and fit good quality bespoke kitchens to retail and trade customers, Premiere Kitchens began to specialise in the public sector market following a commission from Gloucester City Council. Today, the thriving firm has around 150 employees and a turnover in the region of £14 million. From its factory close to the motorway network, it is well positioned to supply over 150 local authorities and housing associations throughout England and Wales.

In focusing on a niche market, Premiere Kitchens has built up a comprehensive knowledge of specification requirements, adapting manufacturing processes to meet the demands of each project they undertake. Using the UK's only fully automated kitchen unit assembly line, the firm can produce a fully assembled unit every 45 seconds. Growth in recent years has required relocation to larger premises and investment in capital machinery.

■ THE CHALLENGE

For many years, Premiere Kitchens had conducted its business using Sage Line 50, with supporting Microsoft Excel spreadsheets. However, as Accountant Gary Holt explains, "We recognised that we'd come to a natural end in outgrowing the system's capabilities. Clearly, for strong sustainable growth, it was vital to move to a more powerful and comprehensive solution, with additional functionality for configure-to-order manufacturing. We have a policy of sustained across-the-board investment to support our growth and undertook a process of in-depth reviews to analyse the market and ascertain what solution would best meet our needs."

A key priority was finding an established vendor with a proven, secure system. Finally, the firm required a Business Partner with experience of the furniture industry and an understanding of its public sector solutions.

■ THE SOLUTION

Premiere Kitchens began the process of selecting a system which would provide a secure foundation for future expansion. Having experienced high quality service from their Sage Line 50 software, management at Premiere Kitchens regarded moving up through the Sage range to a more powerful system as a strong possibility. Furthermore, Sage Business Partner Pinnacle Computing could offer a configure-to-order module, which gives companies in the make-to-order, assemble-to-order or kit-to-order sector greater flexibility to extend their product range.

After careful consideration, Premiere Kitchens purchased a Sage Line 500 system for 23 users, running on Microsoft Windows 2000 and with a SQL Server 2000 database, implemented on Compaq hardware, along with Pinnacle Configurator. "Implementation went ahead successfully, even though it was interrupted by our move to larger premises," recalls Gary. "We went live with hardly a hitch; an achievement largely down to the quality of the support we received from our Pinnacle consultant."

■ THE BENEFITS

Since the implementation of Sage Line 500, Premiere Kitchens has grown considerably and has also achieved landmark quality accreditations such as ISO 14001 for environment management and Investors in People. The Sage solution has supported all these developments, as Gary Holt comments, "With Sage Line 500 in place, we have been able to process a greater volume of orders without increasing our head count. Looking back on how we used to operate, it was very cumbersome. In contrast, today we have an efficient system in which data flows from one part to another, from the initial estimate onwards, to support our sales, manufacturing and delivery processes."

He notes, "This is critical when you consider that we operate to extremely tight delivery deadlines. Thanks to Sage Line 500, even with a huge increase in the volume of business, we are still fulfilling our commitment of just five to ten working days from receipt of order to delivery. The solution has helped toward this in reducing costs by eliminating double-entry of keystrokes, saving many hours of data entry and also increasing accuracy. In short, Sage Line 500 is helping us to maintain our competitive edge."

Enhanced management reporting is another notable benefit, as Gary points out, "Sage Line 500 has provided us with a solid platform on which to base decisions. We have improved visibility of management information which gives us greater control, both day to day and strategically."

With a vast choice of kitchen designs, colours, materials and finishes available, an almost endless combination of options can be incorporated to provide a virtually bespoke service to tenants of the firm's local authority and housing association customers.

The Pinnacle Configurator has played an important role in helping Premiere Kitchens to offer maximum choice without increasing its overheads. The information captured through the company's on-site surveying design service feeds into all stages of the build, from sales order to sales invoice. As Gary notes, "Making changes across our range used to be very onerous and always felt like reinventing the wheel. Pinnacle Configurator is easy to set up and maintain to reflect changes in our product line, so now the process is much more manageable and no time or money is wasted."

To take its Sage Line 500 solution a step further, Premiere Kitchens has recently installed SalesLogix, one of the customer relationship management (CRM) software offers. This provides increased support in planning and controlling orders from start to finish, with improved quality and speed in forecasting. Credit control is enhanced, too, Gary says, "By giving easy access to up-to-date customer information, SalesLogix ensures all the team, including our sales people, share the same accurate picture. If there are problems with payments, they're on the case. They also understand where investing their sales efforts is likely to bring optimum return."

Paul Markey, Managing Director of Premiere Kitchens, sums up, "From a senior management point of view, it's invaluable to be able to interrogate the data held in Sage Line 500 and easily produce high-level reports which give accurate and timely views of how the company is performing."

■ THE FUTURE

Premiere Kitchens' use of Sage Line 500 continues to expand and the benefits enjoyed since its implementation has led to other sister companies within the same group also implementing Sage Line 500. One construction company has already upgraded to the system and another is about to do so, a clear measure of the firm's satisfaction with the solution.

More users are being given access to the system at the Hardwicke site, while barcoding in the factory will further streamline traceability for stock control and quality assurance in case of recalls. This move will also accelerate cash flow: delivery tickets will be scanned in and the information will be sent back to the accounts office to flow quickly into invoice production.

The next major development under consideration at this forward-thinking firm is to add Sage Business Intelligence as a driver for further innovation and growth, with continued support from Pinnacle Computing.

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■ SOLUTION OVERVIEW:

- ▶ Improved cash flow management, with faster invoicing and tighter debt control.
- ▶ A comprehensive solution integrating leading finance and accounting software from Sage with configure-to-order functionality from Pinnacle Computing.
- ▶ Support across all the firm's processes - from receipt of order to fulfilment.
- ▶ A solid platform for informed management decision-making.
- ▶ Increased efficiency so higher volumes of business can be handled with the same head count.
- ▶ A system with the power and capacity to accommodate and sustain future growth.

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*Gary Holt, Accountant,
The Premiere Kitchen Company.*

■ ABOUT PINNACLE

Pinnacle Computing is a Sage business partner providing the full range of Sage Accounting, ERP & CRM solutions. Pinnacle Computing is based throughout the UK & Ireland with offices in Belfast, Dublin, Glasgow, Hull, Maidstone, Nottingham, Portsmouth, Warrington and Worcester. Sage is a global provider of end-to-end business management applications for mid-sized businesses. Look to Sage for fully integrated software that delivers high performance, advanced functionality, cross-product integration and unmatched freedom of choice. Integrating powerful front-office web and wireless capabilities with back-office accounting and operations. Sage provides companies with the solutions they need to enhance competitive advantage and increase profitability.

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