



CLARKE PHILLIPS SAFETY IS MINING EFFICIENCIES WITH HELP FROM SAGE 300

Order entry time cut in half and inventory holdings down 20 percent



Customer

Clarke Phillips Safety Ltd.

Industry

**Wholesale and retail
distribution**

Location

Ontario, Canada

System

Sage 300

Clarke Phillips was a Canadian miner who wanted safer, better quality gear. Not satisfied with what was available, he started manufacturing safety belts, and distributing everything else that miners might need—steel-toed boots, jackets, hard hats, hearing and respiratory protection, and first-aid supplies. His goal was to “protect the North.”

About 25 years ago, Clarke Phillips Safety Supply Ltd. (CPS) gave up its manufacturing division. Today it distributes safety gear and clothing far beyond Canada’s minefields—directly to leading mining companies like Falconbridge, as well as to contractors and companies in other heavy-duty work environments around the world. Through a sister company called Northwear, it also operates two retail stores that carry top-of-the-line ladies’ clothing.

Prospecting for better software

The firm’s financial software, however, was neither rugged nor up to date. The DOS-based system required up to three days to relieve sales from inventory. CPS employees could not view inventory available in other stores. They worried that switching from their tried-and-true system would be difficult and time-consuming but recognized that to continue to grow the company, they would need a more powerful, modern business management solution.

So, CPS went shopping for new business software. Its main criteria were ease of use, intuitive screens, and seamless integration between modules. The clear winner was Sage 300. A complete suite of financial and operations modules make Sage 300 an end-to-end solution for CPS’s back office.



A Northern star

"Sage does it all for us," explains Marni Kontturi, office manager. "The software automates our accounts payable, receivables, ordering, and warehouse. We have three different locations where we sell our safety supplies, one of which is connected with our main warehouse. Sage 300 runs everything, including the two Northwear clothing stores."

Improved inventory visibility

It was the ability to integrate data from all its locations that has made the biggest difference for CPS. "Previously, our computers updated overnight, meaning we were always a day behind. Now, however, we have real-time inventory. We can go into the system and check stock availability in any of our locations and make transfers when needed. None of this was possible with our old system," notes Kontturi.

"Access to inventory data is especially useful for our retail clothing stores, which are only about a ten-minute drive apart," she continues. "If an item is not available in one store, customers are often willing to pick it up at the other—which encourages people from going to any of our competitors."

Easy to learn

Fears of a steep learning curve proved to be groundless for CPS staff. "Sage 300 is also much easier to use than I had expected. It's designed in a very intuitive manner, which we appreciate," says Kontturi.

Part of the easy implementation can be attributed to Clarke Phillips' Sage business partner, who helped explain the software and introduced many reporting features from Sage 300.

"We like having such a wide range of reports available to us and look forward to learning more about them. And it helps having our business partner right across the street to answer any questions that may arise," says Kontturi.

Rich vein of efficiencies

Previously, orders were written up by hand. Now Sage 300 has automated everything. "It's so much more convenient this way," she says. "I know exactly what is on each order and what each of our different accounts owe us. This has cut order-writing time by more than half and put accurate information at my fingertips."

Clarke Phillips has begun realizing dramatic improvements throughout the enterprise. "We anticipate that the efficiencies from Sage 300 will allow us to cut inventory on hand by a good 20 percent," notes Kontturi. "In addition, we will be able to grow sales by at least 25 percent without adding extra staff. This represents a great return on investment for us—which can only get better as we discover more capabilities inherent in the system."

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