

# MAPADOC

## AGRON, INC. STAYS AHEAD OF THE GAME WITH THE STRATEGIC USE OF TECHNOLOGY

CLIENT: **AGRON, INC.**

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Alan Gomperts  
Controller  
Agron, Inc.

As the sole U.S. licensee for Adidas and Body Glove accessories, Agron, Inc. runs a busy warehouse operation. Charged with the design, marketing, and distribution of branded clothing and accessories, the company has enjoyed steady and significant growth over the years.

It is an industry where retailer requirements, including labeling directives, EDI mandates, and penalties for missed or incorrect shipments threaten to overwhelm many distributors. How does *Agron ensure that its business continues to grow and flourish in a marketplace defined by tight margins and increasing regulation?*

Years ago, Agron made the strategic decision to invest in its technology infrastructure. It’s a decision that’s been paying dividends ever since. SWK Technologies, Inc. is the business software consulting firm Agron engaged to assist with its specialized technology integration requirements.

### **CHANGING RETAIL LANDSCAPE**

In the eighteen-plus years the company has been in business the retail marketplace has changed dramatically. Within the changing retail landscape, manufacturers and distributors like Agron must meet strict labeling, packing, shipping, and invoicing protocols. Retailers increasingly demand more from their suppliers.

Where previously, Agron might ship a large order to a retailer’s distribution center, now it must pack and ship directly to hundreds of individual store locations. One late order may mean hundreds of thousands in lost revenue dollars and chargebacks. As weekly stocking orders pour in from its retail customers, Agron must have adequate stock and be equipped to respond quickly.

## **INVESTING IN TECHNOLOGY**

To meet the increased demands, Agron could have hired additional staff to keep up with order entry and shipping operations or invest in the company's accounting and warehouse management technology to streamline and automate many of the tasks.

"Ramping up staff to perform order entry tasks just doesn't make sense to us," explains Alan Gomperts, controller for Agron. "We believe in using technology wherever possible to handle routine tasks." Electronic Communication One of the first, and the most important, technology tools Agron invested in was Electronic Data Interchange (EDI).

SWK is the publisher of MAPADOC, a powerful and easy-to-use EDI tool that integrates with Sage ERPs. Using MAPADOC, customers' incoming orders are processed, acknowledgements sent, advanced shipping notices generated, and invoices delivered automatically. In a typical month, the company ships millions of units. A single order from some retailers may result in 3,000 individual orders for shipment to individual store locations.

In the past, processing and shipping such a large order could have taken close to a week. Now Agron is able to pick, pack, and ship orders of that size in a single day. With the threat of large chargebacks for late or incorrect shipments, Agron relies on its EDI technology to ensure it plays by customers' rules.

"We consistently receive A ratings from Kohls and JCPenney," notes Gomperts. "Very few suppliers are able to perform to that level."

## **WAREHOUSE AUTOMATION SPEEDS ROI**

Agron invested in Accellos WMS, a best-of-breed warehouse management solution with robust capabilities and a scalable, flexible architecture. SWK developed an integration between Accellos WMS and Sage 100 that keeps the two systems in perfect sync. A radio frequency network with handheld barcode scanners ensures wireless access throughout the warehouse.

Its integrated inventory control, warehouse management, EDI, and accounting system give Agron the control it needs. The company can efficiently manage its inventory levels, to ensure that it has adequate stock on hand to fill customer orders without overstocking. Agron is able to process an enormous order volume quickly and accurately. Its customers receive the goods they ordered on time and with the proper labeling and acknowledgement.

866.627.2362 p  
973.758.6120 f  
sales@mapadoc.com  
5 Regent Street, Suite 520  
Livingston, NJ 07039

[www.mapadoc.com](http://www.mapadoc.com)

## **ADDRESSING NEW CHALLENGES**

Agron recently secured a new contract with Body Glove to distribute clothing items, and found itself facing a new challenge. The color and size matrix necessary to enter clothing was not supported by Sage 100. Agron turned again to one of its trusted technology advisors, SWK Technologies. SWK implemented its Color and Size Matrix enhancement for Sage 100, which speeds data-entry tasks and ensures accurate inventory control.

## **STRATEGIC DECISION PAYS OFF**

Its business philosophy of leveraging available technology continues to pay dividends for Agron. “As a result of the efficiency gained through our technology investments, we have effectively decreased our staff while at the same time we have added customers and enjoyed a considerable increase in sales,” says Gomperts.

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