

Sage ERP Accpac Helps the Scotch Malt Whisky Society Implement Fully Integrated Business Management Applications

A New Accounting System for a Different Business

The Scotch Malt Whisky Society is for people who enjoy fine Scotch. It began as a group of friends who shared the price of a cask of fine malt whisky. But of course Scotch Malt is a truly international drink, and as membership grew, the Society was officially founded in 1983. Membership is now over 24,000, with branches in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Germany, Austria, Italy, France, Japan, and North America.

The Scotch Malt Whisky Society now does much more than whisky tasting. The Society has its headquarters in one of the oldest commercial buildings in Scotland—the Vaults in Leith, Port of Edinburgh—and runs a Members' Room in London, located in the heart of the city, as well as four self-catering flats in Edinburgh that can be booked by members. It holds a variety of events at both Members' Rooms throughout the year, including Burns Suppers, members' dinners, musical performances, and, naturally, whisky tastings. The very finest whiskies are made available to members to buy by mail order and online, bottled direct from the cask in the peak of condition.

The Society is obviously a very different business from what it was in those early days when the group of friends shared a wee dram. Similarly its financial management requirements have moved on considerably. The Society's existing accounting system didn't have the breadth to manage the full range of booking, subscription and membership services, retail operations, and events management it now maintains.

After considering a wide range of financial systems from the major suppliers, the Society selected an integrated financial solution from Sage and Sage business partner, Gamma Dataware.

Selecting the Right Blend

Joan Saywood, head of finance at the Society, explains: "We have a very wide range of offerings, and it was becoming impossible to manage and integrate all of this with our existing accounting infrastructure.

"For example, we buy whisky from distilleries by the cask, bottle it ourselves, and provide it to our members. We need to be able to deal with the complex duty implications of introducing whisky from bond, bottling, and exporting the finished product. We have also opened an online shop, selling whisky, books, gifts, and more to our members, and this needed to link straight into our accounting systems—having to retype all the orders manually would almost defeat the object!"

Customer

The Scotch Malt Whisky Society

Industry

Leisure and Retail

Location

Europe

System

Sage ERP Accpac 200



Challenge

The Scotch Malt Whisky Society needed a comprehensive financial system that could manage a wide range of offerings as well as provide an up-to-date picture of its overall position.

Solution

Sage ERP Accpac 200 significantly streamlines operations with a highly open architecture that easily integrates with core accounting solutions.

Results

Sage ERP Accpac 200 streamlines the Society's operations and provides financial data in real-time for improved forecasting and decision-making.

The Society took its time to examine all the solutions on offer. “The Sage ERP Accpac/Gamma Dataware solution was the only one to provide truly end-to-end management capabilities and give the highest standards of performance in every area of our business. We don’t believe in blending our whiskies, but the combination of Sage ERP Accpac and Gamma Dataware was certainly the strongest offering on the table! The integrated solution allows us to control each separate service whilst giving us a unified view of the business as a whole,” Saywood continues.

Matured in Just Three Months

The Sage ERP Accpac 200 accounting solution was implemented, customized and supported by Glasgow-based Gamma Dataware, the leading Sage business partner in the region. The Sage ERP Accpac system integrates with Gamma’s own specialized LeisurePOS front-office marketing solution that includes events, booking, point-of-sale, and membership systems. The entire implementation was carried out swiftly, smoothly, and successfully, with the whole process being completed in just three months.

Peter Ferguson, managing director at Gamma Dataware, explains, “We tailor our solutions to the needs of the business to make sure that the system someone installs is exactly what they require, rather than what we want to sell them. That’s why it’s vital for us to be able to integrate the best-of-breed accounting engines into the finished item—and that’s why we work with Sage. Sage ERP Accpac has one of the most open architectures of all systems on the market, making for easy integration with our own solutions.”

Bricks and Clicks—From the Vaults of Edinburgh

“LeisurePOS and Sage ERP Accpac are the perfect combination for us,” says Joan Saywood. “Information entered into the Bookings or Events modules of LeisurePOS, for example, is automatically uploaded into the Sage ERP Accpac system. This prevents laborious rekeying of data and ensures that we have access to consistent, up-to-date financial data.

“A large amount of our consolidation used to happen as an end-of-the-day process—with information from the various areas of our business being integrated manually. The Sage ERP Accpac solution will streamline our operations significantly, enabling us to speed

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—Joan Saywood,
Head of Finance
The Scotch Malt Whisky Society

up bookings, sales order processing, and new memberships. For example, we now have a live link from our London operations to our main systems in Edinburgh, from where we operate our mail order business and dispatch items purchased from our online shop. This gives us real-time updates of what purchases are being made and lets us fulfill orders quicker to keep our members happy.”

Tasting the Quality

“As well as integration and breadth of functionality, better quality management information was a major requirement for us,” Saywood continues. “Sage ERP Accpac is more than just a basic accounting package—it’s a comprehensive business management tool that lets us collate and analyze financial data from across the Society.

“We are expanding rapidly in terms of our size and the services we offer, so the powerful financial and business intelligence we get from Sage ERP Accpac is of real value to us in forecasting and making fully informed decisions in both the short and long term. And we are confident that as we continue to expand, welcoming and providing yet more services to whisky lovers across the globe, the Sage ERP Accpac system will be able to grow with us,” Joan Saywood concludes.

About Sage North America

Sage North America is part of The Sage Group plc, a leading global supplier of business management software and services. Sage North America employs 4,000 people and supports 3.2 million small and mid-sized business customers. The Sage Group plc, formed in 1981, was floated on the London Stock Exchange in 1989 and now employs 13,400 people and supports 6.3 million customers worldwide. For more information, please visit the website at www.SageNorthAmerica.com.