

Sage Products Gets Savvy

If you've stayed in the hospital recently, you've probably been made more comfortable with items from Sage Products, Inc. The company manufactures convenient single-use kits for personal hygiene, bathing, oral cleansing and even shampoo-in-a-cap packages.

This fast-growing manufacturer needed a better way to identify work-in-progress inventory and in-transit materials. They adopted FlexNet to automate manufacturing, improve labor tracking and enhance quality assurance on the shop floor. Sage anticipates important bottom line benefits from new efficiencies, inventory visibility and historic records that allow it to meet stringent FDA requirements.

Raising the Bar

For years, Sage Products had relied on CIM+ from Apriso to manage its manufacturing operations, along with Agile Workplace for bill-of-material maintenance. "CIM+ provided basic production and labor information, which was what we needed at the time," explains Bill Kale, director of information technology at Sage. "But we grew considerably, and our underlying technical platform had become antiquated. We needed to improve the level of sophistication of data from our shop floor system.

"We shopped around to compare the various products on the market," continues Kale. "After a good look at other options, we decided to continue our good relationship with Apriso, and upgraded to their new flagship product, FlexNet."

FlexNet Finesse

FlexNet is the world's first event-driven real-time software specifically designed to manage enterprise-wide supply, production and distribution operations. Its Web-based architecture gives executives enhanced control of their people, processes, material and machines, making it easier to deploy strategic business initiatives such as lean supply, pull, six-sigma quality and global tracking.

"Sage now uses FlexNet to manage our manufacturing area on the shop floor, reporting on finished goods production data," says Kale. "We know exactly how many cases are being produced on each line, as well as the labor hours spent by employees running each piece of equipment," says Kale.

Historic Data for FDA Compliance

A key benefit has been FlexNet's ability to give Sage Products a complete product history. "The software provides an electronic genealogy of each product, including a record of raw material components by lot number," Kale notes. "This is extremely important to us as we expand into manufacturing drugs in addition to medical cosmetics and devices, as it allows us to comply with FDA requirements."

Benefits Achieved

- Real-time, full visibility to manufacturing operations facilitates timely reporting on finished goods production data
- Electronic genealogy by product provides a record of raw material components by lot number
- Automated data capture system improves material tracking accuracy
- Electronic file system replaced prior paper-based process

The detailed records stored in FlexNet allow Sage to log and record data from all quality checks that occur throughout the manufacturing cycle. "The software actually prompts us when quality checks are due," says Kale. "Checks occur at different intervals for each product, typically every hour, and might include startup, in-process, end-of-line and quality assurance release testing. The quality data goes into our product history record, along with material issued, detailed production reporting, reverse production reports, total production by product and lot, and genealogy records."

100% Accountability

Being in the healthcare industry, Sage must account for all materials used in production, and reconcile counts at the end of each run. "FlexNet automates our data capture system, so we can account for absolutely everything," Kale explains.

"FlexNet also ensures that there is enough material before any report production can occur," he continues. "It contains checks and balances for reconciling inventory, both when skids are complete and when a production run is finished. This provides extra security that 100 percent of our material issued was either used, scrapped or retained for later use."

Eliminating Paper

Prior to implementing FlexNet, Sage's product history records were written on sheets of paper and stored in filing cabinets. "It's great to have all our documentation in one place," Kale says. "Electronic files are much easier for us to view and maintain. And we certainly appreciate not having to waste time on manual searches, plowing through numerous pieces of paper."

Kale says he appreciates the technical support provided by the software company. "Our implementation was a good collaborative effort between Apriso and Sage, from the executives through middle management, all the way to the end user in manufacturing," he notes. "Apriso studied our operations carefully, in order to understand our unique manufacturing operations, doing customizations when necessary to tailor the product to our needs. Then they worked closely with our IT project lead during all phases of the roll-out. We had a direct phone line for support, and they were always very responsive, giving us answers within a day or two."

Significant Savings

"With FlexNet, our accuracy is much better in raw materials and finished goods. We have more reliable data on scrap totals. The software lets us track manufacturing without slowing down the manufacturing process or forcing us to add headcount. All of these will result in significant savings of both time and money."

About Apriso

Apriso Corporation is a software company dedicated to helping manufacturers achieve and sustain operational excellence. Apriso serves 180+ customers in 40+ countries across the Americas, Europe and Asia. Learn more at <http://www.apriso.com>.

"With FlexNet, our accuracy is much better in raw materials and finished goods. We have more reliable data on scrap totals. The software lets us track manufacturing without slowing down the manufacturing process or forcing us to add headcount. All of these will result in significant savings of both time and money."

Bill Kale
Director of IT,
Sage Products, Inc.