

Success Story

Butcher cuts errors and speeds up processes with Sage 200

Underwood Meat Company landed a new contract, then customised Sage 200 in transformative ways with their partner, Kinspeed

“With custom additions, Sage 200 now gives us a fantastic enterprise resource planning (ERP) system.”

Kevin Jones

Financial Director, Underwood Meat Company



The Challenge

When long-time Sage customer Underwood Meat Company landed a huge contract at short notice, it needed to maximise the speed and efficiency of multiple processes, to manage the dramatically increased (and ongoing) demand.



The Solution

Underwood Meat Company approached Sage partner Kinspeed, and the companies collaborated to create bespoke process management software modules, which integrated with their established Sage 200 implementation.



The Result

Underwood Meat Company's receipt and processing of orders through Sage 200 has transformed the company's picking, packing and despatch. Integration with Sage 200 has generated huge benefits in terms of productivity, accuracy, processing speed and managing complexity.

- Bespoke additions saved £10k monthly on a single contract.
- Dramatically improved productivity.
- 90% reduction in error rate.
- Order processing expedited across business entities.

Sage

Company
Underwood Meat Company

Location
United Kingdom

Industry
Wholesale & Distribution

Sage Products
Sage 200

Sage Partner
Kinspeed



About Underwood Meat Company
Underwood Meat Company is a large independent catering butcher, operating through retail outlets and e-commerce, and delivering meats to hospitality, care homes and schools.



A complex business

Having begun as a sole-trader business almost 50 years ago, Underwood Meat Company has undergone massive growth. The company was incorporated in 1992 and is now among the UK's largest independent catering butchers, supplying chilled, frozen and bespoke meats to hospitality outlets, care homes, schools and other organisations across the UK. Underwood Meat Company also has retail outlets and a growing e-commerce arm with a turnover around £68,000,000 annually.

The firm has been using Sage software for around 18 years, and currently runs Sage 200. The flexibility of the Sage 200 platform has benefited all aspects of the business, because, as Richard Brundish, Business Systems Manager, explains, "Ours is a deceptively complex business, with multiple entities. We have hundreds of clients and every contract comes with its own specifications. We pick, pack and despatch lots of bespoke orders which may change from week to week. And there are nuances within a meat business that don't exist in retail. For example, the customer wants to buy joints of meat within a certain size range. But whilst they buy five joints, we invoice them for the total weight. So, we calculate that and instead of invoicing 5 we invoice 28.37, or something like that."

Sudden growth

That flexibility was crucial in 2018, when Underwood Meat Company made a casual enquiry and ended up with a massive order. "A competitor had serious problems and we knew they worked with a major pub chain. So, one of our people asked the chain if they needed help with the situation; a few steaks or whatever. And we ended up with the full contract," says Financial Director, Kevin Jones.

The challenge of the new account lay in its complexity. "We were producing, picking and packing orders for each site in 'buffet boxes'; a buffet box every other day for around 750 sites," says Kevin. At the time, the relevant processes were entirely manual, which left room for error – and Underwood Meat Company found itself dealing with complaints and claims for credit.

Clearly, the company needed a solution that would automate processes – which would increase accuracy and productivity – while integrating the data with Sage 200 to provide accurate, real-time information for the business. As Richard points out, "We turn around virtually every order within 24 hours. We never have back orders and we have multiple business entities all within Sage 200, so it's imperative that we know exactly what our stock is and where it is."



Having integrated the FastDespatch and EDI solutions, Underwood Meat Company has dramatically improved its accuracy and speed of operations.

FastDespatch and EDI solutions

Underwood Meat Company turned to Sage partner company, Kinspeed, with whom they have worked for many years. Working collaboratively, they created a bespoke solution based on barcode scanning, which Kinspeed named FastDespatch. This solution automated the pick, pack and despatch process with impressive results—the error rate dropped by a staggering 90% and requests for credit were almost eliminated, saving Underwood about £10,000 a month on that contract alone.

FastDespatch was quickly and easily integrated into Sage 200 via API. This immediately gave Underwood Meat Company the real-time awareness it needed, because data from FastDespatch was integrated into the Sage 200 reporting the company uses daily. But the firm's customisation of Sage 200 did not stop there.

Underwood Meat Company was conscious that orders were arriving – mostly electronically – from a range of sources and in various formats; for example from a customer's website, in bundles from asset suppliers or through Underwood Meat Company's own system. Upon receiving those orders, the company had to import and action them very quickly. "Every sales order we get has to be received and pushed through our systems within 24 hours and we have to 100% supply what has been ordered. So we have to be on the ball in terms of knowing what is required and preparing ahead. We use the Sage 200 reporting continuously, so that we know what's being ordered," explains Richard.

So, it made sense for Underwood Meat Company and Kinspeed to collaborate on another customisation, this time an electronic data interchange (EDI) solution that automatically takes orders into the system and passes them – via Sage 200 – to the various stages of fulfilment.

Sage 200 as an ERP solution

Having integrated the FastDespatch and EDI solutions, Underwood Meat Company has dramatically improved its accuracy and speed of operations. What is more, the company now has complete visibility of stock and order status for all of its business entities and its multiple locations, on a single platform – Sage 200 – that has effectively become an enterprise resource planning (ERP) solution. Moreover, the firm has a proven capacity to scale up when business demands, and optimised operations ensure a great return on every contract.

Underwood Meat Company also appreciates the ability of Sage 200 to handle a multi-entity, multi-faceted business. "We have sites in the north and the south, and we have configured Sage 200 so those guys can see just what they need to see, in real time, and crack on," explains Kevin.



“Our business is complex; Sage 200 with API integrations streamlines and improves operations.”

Kevin Jones

Financial Director, Underwood Meat Company

Flexibility is key

Richard and Kevin agree that flexibility is their favourite aspect of Sage 200. As Kevin explains, “The flexibility of Sage 200, particularly the API links to bespoke or third-party systems, works really well for us. We have a complex business and Sage 200 gives us the flexibility required to administer that effectively, along with the real-time data we need to make good decisions. It helps us to simplify and streamline things. After all, this business is complicated enough, the last thing we need is to complicate it any further!”



Sage

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