

## Success Story

# Sage ignites the growth of a leader in home fragrances

Scent-maker Empire Candle Co. makes sense of its manufacturing processes with Sage X3



Empire Candle Co. is a Kansas City-based candle and fragrance company founded in 1950. After decades of navigating acquisitions and mergers, the manufacturer finds itself back at its roots delivering the quality and value it has stood for since its first day of business. Today, Empire not only thrives, but it has transformed from a simple candle company to one that manufactures a variety of home fragrance products and accessories. With the help of Sage and business partner NexTec Group, Empire has seen improved efficiencies leading to triple-digit growth.

Empire can make up to 200,000 candles a day and up to 30 million a year. President and CEO Robert Turtledove explains the industry. “You have a massive range of candle manufacturers across this country and across the globe. You have mom and pops who are making candles in their homes. Then you have 800-pound gorillas who dominate the industry in this \$4 billion category. And then you have the thousands of manufacturers in between. We’re probably considered one of the majors.”

**Company**  
Empire Candle Co.

**Location**  
Kansas City, Kansas

**Industry**  
Manufacturing Discrete

**Sage Products**  
Sage X3

**Partner**  
NexTec Group



**About Empire Candle Co.**  
Empire Candle Co. is a Kansas City-based candle and fragrance company founded in 1950.

Sage



### **The challenge**

Empire's resurgence in the early 2000s was a welcome change, but one that came with its own host of problems. Expansion had led to challenges in manufacturing processes related to inventory and production control. Raw materials laid around the warehouse unused for years, while Empire struggled to determine the necessary supplies to meet demands. Austin Mathis, IT Director for Empire Candle Co., points out that while candles and fragrance products themselves are relatively low tech, the business needed technology that would surpass its fly-by-gut tactics. "Our inventory variances were detrimental to the profitability of the business," says Austin. "And it wasn't like product was evaporating. We weren't losing raw materials. We were just mismanaging them."

### **The solution**

Empire had implemented Sage X3 in 2008. The company recognized that it had a powerful system on its hands, but it wasn't making the most of the solution. Austin explains, "What we heard from other Sage customers was that we were potentially missing out on the value-add available to us by working with a partner on a more intimate level."

Enter NexTec Group, a leading provider of business technology systems—and Sage partner for over 20 years. "NexTec's impact was immediate," says Austin. In its initial visit with the candle manufacturer, NexTec was able to efficiently and effectively observe Empire's operation and make distinct recommendations on easy-to-tackle problems.

"The core recommendation was to engage in an optimization project to overhaul some of Empire's practices that had either been poorly implemented originally or had evolved over time with Empire's growth," says Austin. "From this optimization effort, Empire was able to reset critical supply chain, manufacturing, and distribution components within the Sage ecosystem, which yielded high-impact results."

NexTec CEO Eric Frank adds, "Sage X3 helps us to reach deeper into each of our clients' organizations to drive better efficiencies and accelerate growth. Empire is ordering less. They have less waste sitting in the warehouse. And they're fulfilling orders more efficiently. Empire has driven down their costs and they're driving better revenue and better efficiency. That's a check that a customer gets to cash every day. To me, that's the highest mark of success in a business like Empire."

### **The bottom line**

The proof is in the numbers. Empire has grown over 300% since implementing Sage X3. After partnering with NexTec, Empire saw immediate performance increases, including a 30% reduction in productive labor and consolidation of an entire warehouse facility footprint—an annual savings of around \$400,000.

"The right systems don't just make IT better or technology better. They make the company better. That's what you want," says Robert. "This is the central nervous system of the company. That's what a professionally managed business management system like Sage X3 provides us with."



“Sage X3 is the central nervous system of the company.”

**Robert Turtledove**

President and CEO, Empire Candle Co.

#### **The future**

Looking ahead, Austin sees future needs at Empire for interconnected and ISV solutions. He also wants a continual process improvement and ongoing investment in human capital. The company is on a 24- to 36-month major upgrade schedule to ensure it is utilizing the very latest that Sage technology has to offer. And of course, this is all on the docket with the partnership of NexTec.

For NexTec, Eric looks to the cloud for more solutions. “Cloud technology has changed customer behaviors and allows our systems to reach more people. Our goal remains to help our customers drive more value from their business system.”

Eric offers this advice to business builders: “Stay true to your values, play the long game, and focus on continual incremental improvement.”



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