Success Story

Shropshire Petals is in full bloom with Sage

A bespoke solution, based on Sage 200 and a Sage CRM, helps Shropshire Petals to grow without increasing headcount



Shropshire Petals is a family-run business, owned by the Bubb family who are fourth-generation farmers. Having sold dried flowers for decades, in 2005 the farm diversified into online retail of dried petals for use as throwing confetti at weddings and other events.

Shropshire Petals sells natural, biodegradable flower confetti that is grown, dried, hand-picked and packaged on the company's farm. Typical customers are brides, grooms and their family members, who mainly purchase online from the farm's own website — although Shropshire Petals also sells through other channels.

Key outcomes

- Multiple business processes automated in a complex environment
- A single, shared version of the truth
- Saved 70 hours weekly in order processing, and associated costs
- Live stock system cut stock-takes from monthly to bi-annual, saving 320 hours a year
- Valuable real-time data and actionable business insights
- Flexibility to respond quickly to changing demand
- Allows the business to grow product lines and revenues without recruiting

Company
Shropshire Petals

Location
United Kingdom

Industry
Retail

Sage Products
Sage 200 with a Sage CRM solution and bespoke website integration

Partner
Qmulus Solutions

About Shropshire Petals
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Before installing Sage 200, Shropshire Petals required two full time employees to enter sales orders manually.

Supporting growing demands

Since it began trading in 2005, Shropshire Petals has enjoyed substantial growth as customers increasingly value their confetti for its environmentally-friendly nature and provenance. As Marketing Manager Ashley Evers-Swindell explains: “On our website, we’re really able to tell the story of what we do and how we do it. There’s very much a need for provenance at the moment, people want to know where things come from. And knowing that their wedding confetti came from a British farm growing flowers in the Shropshire hills is really quite beautiful. I think people really enjoy that vision and the journey along with us.”

But while Shropshire Petals’ business model may look traditional, the reality is far more complex. The company’s website lists dozens of confetti mixes and a range of formats, and offers a pick and mix option that allows customers to blend their own confetti. Consequently, customers can choose from more than 275,000 options.

To add to the complexity, 5-10% of Shropshire Petals’ orders go abroad to countries where specific requirements may apply to the shipping and importation of plants and plant matter. Shropshire Petals takes care of all such details, but this adds another layer of administration to an already labour-intensive process.

So it is hardly surprising that, after running the business for a few years, Shropshire Petals’ management team decided that their existing, farming-focused, software could no longer cope with the demands of the growing business, and set out to find a solution.

Supporting a complex business

Shropshire Petals wanted a solution that would make the management of their complex business more straightforward and less labour-intensive, while being poised to flex and grow with the business — all while maximising customer choice, and enhancing the speed and quality of customer service.

As things stood, the website and accounting software operated separately and staff had to manually enter all website orders. This was not only cumbersome for staff, but it also slowed down the firm’s turnaround times and affected customer service. Meanwhile, the only record of overall stock levels came from the monthly stock-take, which was both quickly outdated and time-consuming.

These problems became more acute as the business grew. “As orders have become more and more complicated, it would have required at least two full-time members of staff to enter them manually,” explains Ashley.

Shropshire Petals’ General Manager, Rose Franklin, agrees. “We wanted to expand the business and bring in more orders from various other sales channels. But that wasn’t possible with the system we were currently using. For us, the key was to have a solution that would enable those orders to be integrated automatically. So that, as soon as the customer confirmed that order, it would appear on our accounts system without us having to put in any effort,” she says.

Rose summarises the impact this has had on the business, stating: “Without Sage it would be impossible to be where we are now.”



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Rose Franklin
General Manager, Shropshire Petals

A solution based on Sage 200

Sage Partner Qmulus provided Shropshire Petals with Sage 200, along with a Sage CRM solution and bespoke website integration, as well as day-to-day ongoing support. This immediately sped up and optimised multiple admin processes, while giving Shropshire Petals a 24/7 real-time version of the truth that covers stock, orders and cashflow.

The benefits were soon apparent. The Sage-based system removed the need for Shropshire Petals to recruit new staff to process orders, saving around 70 hours of work and associated costs per week. What is more, the integrated live stock system removed the team's previous headaches and cut stock-takes from monthly to bi-annual, saving 320 hours of work per year.

Not only has the new system allowed Shropshire Petals to achieve their growth ambitions without having to recruit new staff, but it has also enabled them to share knowledge and understanding throughout the workforce. "Sage is actually teaching the whole team the accounting principles. Before this, only our accounts team had anything to do with any form of numbers. Now, the whole team understands that everything they do in the office has an impact on the numbers ... it's really enabled the whole team to have a clear understanding of everything we do," Rose concludes.



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