



Ensemble and Dalbello Sports Integrating For Success

"Our software has become a selling tool for us. Information is knowledge, and it's that knowledge that lets us grow our business."

As the world's fifth largest ski boot manufacturer, Dalbello Ski Boots of Italy wins awards for technology, performance, value, and design. Dalbello Sports USA, of Andover, New Hampshire is the U.S. distributor of Dalbello Ski Boots and is also the exclusive U.S. distributor for Austrian-made Blizzard skis and Therm-IC accessories.

The Challenge

For the first several years of operation, Dalbello Sports relied on QuickBooks and a series of Excel spreadsheets to manage their accounting, inventory, and ordering processes. Though successful, the company was limited in its growth by the inefficiencies of its business software. The tools for managing the ins and outs of a perpetual inventory were rudimentary and inefficient. Reconciling the inventory account to the general ledger was a nightmare, and analysis of sales trends nearly impossible. It was apparent that to stay competitive a change was necessary.

Specialty apparel management software packages were evaluated, but were found lacking in core accounting areas. A local reseller recommended MAS 90 to Dalbello Sports for its strong inventory control and reliable financial capabilities. While looking into the MAS 90 solution, they discovered the Ensemble Distribution Solution from Ensemble Business Software. Using MAS 90 as its backbone, Ensemble offers a unique combination of bulletproof back office financial capabilities, stalwart inventory control, and apparel-specific order entry functionality.

The Solution

Ensemble's integrated solution combined strong accounting and distribution modules, at a price point and service offering that fit Dalbello Sports' business

plan. Ensemble Business Software consultants came on-site to install and implement the software, and to train Dalbello Sports' staff. The positive changes were immediately felt. "The software brings to the table online, real-time access to our data. It has eliminated the manual subsystems we used to rely on," says Janet Graf, CFO of Dalbello Sports.

Order Entry

Ensemble's inventory matrix feature enables Dalbello Sports to use a single item number with multiple colors and sizes. A unique spreadsheet style data entry interface makes order entry fast and accurate as operators simply tab across the page entering the desired order quantity for each size of the item. This horizontal layout of the matrix, with the product sizes laid out as columns across the page and the number of units for each size in a row saves reams of paper that would be wasted when printing a vertical matrix using sizes as rows. Consultants at Ensemble Business Software were able to precisely duplicate the look of Dalbello Sports' printed forms, formerly produced in Excel.



Ensemble Business Software allows Dalbello to *fly* through order taking during their busy season

"We love the tickler windows that show us what we have on-hand during sales order entry," says Graf, "This allows us to say, 'we don't have the blue, but we have the silver'. In this way, we

can complete an order on the spot without having to call back and apologize to the customer or short ship the order."

During the busy order season, temporary employees are hired to enter orders and handle customer service requests. The graphical user interface of Ensemble makes it very easy for these employees to learn their tasks with a minimal amount of training. Users describe navigation within the software as "intuitive."

When a customer calls with an inquiry, staff can see



MAS 90 MAS 200

Business power, industry finesse. *The complete player*

the customer's balance, and drill down to an individual invoice, or even to the line item level. They can instantly reprint the invoice, or Email it directly to the customer. "During our busy season, customer calls build up very quickly," Graf relates, "With this incredible detail right at our fingertips, we can answer virtually any question on the spot."

Inventory and Sales Analysis

Inventory is Dalbello Sports largest asset. Holding slow moving products too long in a seasonal marketplace is costly, as is running out of a hot selling item. Decisions about which products are selling, how much to order, and when to place the order are critically important. The Ensemble Distribution Solution gives Dalbello the tools they need to make these critical decisions, enabling the company to operate more efficiently, more profitably, and more competitively.

"Managing sales information is a constant task," explains Graf, "We need to know: when to go on closeout, who sent in orders, who didn't, who isn't buying what they did last year, and who is buying more. The insight we get from Ensemble lets us be in right place at right time."

Each year styles are evaluated for sales and profitability. Using detailed reports, Dalbello Sports can carefully analyze their product sales and plan for future trends. Various reports give them unit sales, dollars, and profitability by product line, by vendor, by warehouse, by item, and by customer.

Reports that show on-hand quantities, quantities on sales and purchase orders, as well as current and prior year sales figures allow Dalbello Sports to make the longer-term projections necessary to place orders for the next season through the European factories. "MAS 90 and Ensemble give us better reporting tools than we thought possible," says Graf, "We have a tremendous insight into our company's data and can make strategic business decisions as a result."

Dalbello Sports' independent sales representatives receive comprehensive sales reports via Email, giv-

ing the reps the tools they need to be more productive. At a glance, they can identify a customer who has not ordered in the same volume as last year, or see which items result in the highest profit margins. "Our software has become a selling tool for us," explains Graf, "Information is knowledge, and it's that knowledge that lets us grow our business."

Custom Reports Without The Programmer

Reports are the primary method for data analysis and distribution at Dalbello Sports. Graf describes reports as a way to "gather otherwise hidden data and push it out" to those who need the information.

With training from Ensemble Business Software, Graf and others now satisfy their own custom reporting requirements using Crystal Reports. As Graf explains, "As much as you put into your accounting software, you should be able to get it back out."

A Pro Team

The professional, collaborative relationship Dalbello Sports shares with Ensemble Business Software is of great importance to Graf, "The support we receive is wonderful; they are very responsive to our needs. They are able to dial into our system and fix a problem or explain the situation."

The Future

Already planned for the near future is the use of the Ensemble Remote Salesperson Solution to enable their sales force to enter orders directly into their laptop and merge them into the corporate database at the end of the day. They are also evaluating the Ensemble eBusiness Manager Solution to enable their retail stores to place orders over the Internet.

"We will continue to work with Ensemble. We're often guilty of using just the functions we're most familiar with and fall into those patterns during our busy season. During the off season we explore the software further, writing new reports and building up tools for the next buying season. We're constantly looking for ways to do our jobs better. Ensemble is a dynamic and vital system that allows us to become more efficient all the time."



Ensemble's industry-specific reports allow Dalbello to accurately determine next season's orders with confidence



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