



### Issues that Led to New System

- Over shipment of orders
- Cumbersome and time consuming shipping process
- Difficulty in training new people on shipping system
- Time consuming process to enter credit cards
- Lack of integration between point of sale and accounting systems
- An inability to track direct marketing efforts

### Results Achieved Working with Automation Plus, Inc.

- Improved speed of shipping process
- Increased daily shipping capacity by four times
- Able to grow without adding staff
- Accurate orders shipped to customers
- Tailored shipping system to meet business needs
- Eliminated full-time employee with credit card processing
- Streamlined catalog fulfillment process
- Enabled growth without addition of staff
- Focus direct marketing dollars for profitable results

## Automation Plus, Inc. Outfits Professional Apparel with Tailored System

For two decades, Professional Apparel has been outfitting veterinarians and medical professionals across the country with top quality products and outstanding service. Apparel and related items such as footwear, name tags and jewelry can all be customized with both logos and names and are sold through direct mail catalogs.

As a veteran user of Sage Pro ERP, Professional Apparel needed to find a company to support and service their growing company. After some research on the internet and a referral, Jim Linsley, controller, met Automation Plus, Inc. Automation Plus, Inc. had the experience and customization capabilities Jim was looking for to streamline Professional Apparel's shipping and customer service processes.

The first area Automation Plus, Inc. tackled was shipping. "Our shipping department had so many fields to tab through just to ship out a product," said Jim. "We wanted to make this process easier and reduce the opportunity for error and over shipments." Automation Plus, Inc.'s consultants laid out a plan that involved customizing the system. By streamlining the shipping process, Professional Ap-

parel now has the capacity to ship four times as many orders each day without adding additional staff. "We call the system Turbo Ship," said Jim. "In addition to being so much faster, we are more productive and more precise."

Another result of improving the shipping process was increased customer satisfaction. "Product is now in our client's hands much faster and orders are filled accurately," said Jim. "We also are able to train new employees to use the system very quickly." Turbo Ship is completely tailored to the way Professional Apparel's business runs and has eliminated virtually all errors.

When Professional Apparel purchased a new phone system to keep up with the demands of their customer base of more than 100,000, Automation Plus, Inc. again was called in to make the most of the technology. "Automation Plus, Inc. integrated our phone system with Sage Pro," said Jim. "When a customer calls, their records are automatically pulled up and our customer service team is ready to help them." This saves customer service representatives the time to pull up the account and ensures that the correct account is being opened. Once again, Automation Plus, Inc. streamlined the system.



  
automation **plus**, inc.

*"Automation Plus, Inc. is able to understand where we want to end up and recommend the best way to get us there. Their expertise helps with today's issues while preparing for the future."*

— Jim Linsley, Controller

While taking credit cards was a good way to expedite the payment of invoices, Professional Apparel was spending a tremendous amount of time each day entering in the daily credit card transaction batches. There were frequent data entry errors as the numbers were hand written when the order was placed, then given to another employee to key the data in to be processed. Automation Plus, Inc. suggested an automated credit card authorization solution that enabled the customer service representatives to input the card number while on the phone with the customer. "We are able to see immediately if the transaction goes through," said Jim. "This eliminated inventory tied up due to declined credit cards and reduced our long distance bill from having to call clients back to get another credit card. With the volume of orders we were processing at the time, it saved us a part-time person, and over time it would have definitely been a full-time person."

"We customize practically every garment that is ordered," said Jim. "Automation Plus, Inc. worked with us to develop methods that allowed our customer service staff to enter this customization during the order entry process." Automation Plus, Inc. used existing, unused fields within the software and helped to minimize the cost of modifying the software.

Relying primarily on catalogs for sales, Professional Apparel uses fields customized by Automation Plus, Inc. to determine frequency of catalog mailings. "Depending on how recent and how often a customer purchases will dictate how often we will mail a catalog," said

Jim. "This information is housed in Sage Pro and I am able to use it to analyze our catalog mailings. Customers who purchase more often from us are being mailed to more frequently."

"We operate a small retail store at our corporate offices," said Jim. "We were having a difficult time with the point of sale system we had been using. It did not integrate with Sage Pro and caused a lot of double work." Automation Plus, Inc. located a point of sale solution that would fit Professional Apparel's needs and allowed for integration with Sage Pro. This helps to ensure accurate inventory levels and eliminated having to enter transactions twice.

"The last seven months we have seen tremendous growth in our business. We are running at least 50% more through the business without adding more staff," said Jim. "Automation Plus, Inc. has helped us be more efficient by streamlining our systems to accommodate the growth and helped to expand our capacity. I am impressed that I can talk to anyone at Automation Plus, Inc. and they are extremely competent. They always recommend a solution that is in our best interest."



118 S. Monroe • Sturgis, MI 49091  
800-253-4871  
[www.automationplus.com](http://www.automationplus.com)

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