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## Sage 200 Case Study: Mash Direct



Business Partner



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# Mash Direct grows its farming and food production business with Sage 200 system from Pinnacle

## Client Profile

Mash Direct Ltd, based in Comber, County Down, is a unique award-winning farming and food production enterprise. Originally supplying mash to local butchers and markets, today the company supplies over thirty products to major supermarkets, food manufacturing businesses, and food service and catering outlets, including one of the UK's largest restaurant chains, across the UK and Ireland and further afield to New York and Dubai.

Mash Direct has recently celebrated its tenth anniversary and goes from strength to strength, operating as an independent business.

To manage its growing business, the company uses an on-premise Sage 200 solution comprising the following modules:

- Business Intelligence
- CRM
- Nominal Ledger
- Sales Ledger
- Purchase Ledger
- Cash Book
- Stock Control
- Sales Order Processing
- Purchase Order Processing
- Price Book
- Bill of Materials





Pinnacle is proactive in their communications, we always feel any issues are fully resolved and we find their advice and support very helpful

Gary Armstrong, Finance Director  
Mash Direct



### Expansion triggers search

Finance Director Gary Armstrong recalls what prompted Mash Direct to consider replacing its Sage 50 Accounts system with a more powerful solution, "Over the years, we have expanded locally and also within new overseas markets, such as the USA. Before I joined the company five years ago, there were four staff in finance; now we have eight. The number of users was becoming too great for Sage 50 Accounts to handle. It was struggling to cope with the sheer volume of transactions on a daily basis."

Gary also points out, "Company growth needs to be closely managed to be profitable and sustainable and we recognised that having more comprehensive management information on every aspect of our business would help us to stay on track. We wanted to be able to keep a close watch on aspects such as analysing where our customers are, what they are buying and our profit margins."

### Pinnacle's consultative approach

During 2012 Mash Direct reviewed the leading Sage Business Partners and took soundings from other businesses to assess which had the best reputation and the resources to look after the business. Gary invited Pinnacle to present and was impressed by the consultative approach:

"Sage Business Partner Pinnacle came to see us, and together with Sage, took time to understand the business, how we operate and what we wanted to achieve with the new system."

Pinnacle recommended Sage 200 as fitting well with the company's requirements. It offered a more robust, fully integrated solution to meet present and future needs. The solution had the added advantage of presenting users with a similar look and feel to Sage 50 Accounts. "It was the logical progression for our business and would minimise disruption for our users," comments Gary.



Using Pinnacle Connect, a solution developed by Pinnacle, data could be imported from the third-party point-of-sale system that Mash Direct van drivers use when distributing to smaller, independent retail outlets.

The implementation took place in the early months of the following year. Looking back, Gary says,

"Although it was a major transition and both Pinnacle and ourselves were working to tight deadlines, it was still quite a smooth process. The Pinnacle project manager offered us advice based on best practice and provided guidance throughout to keep everything on track. Pinnacle helped to assess which reports would prove most useful and we were able to have these reports closely tailored to the information we need to extract from the system."

Like many companies migrating to a new system, Mash Direct took the opportunity to overhaul its data on customers, suppliers and stock, and to redesign the nominal ledger structure, all with a view to improving the information that could be extracted from the new system.

The migration from Sage 50 Accounts to Sage 200 provided additional functionality in the area of nominal ledger and stock records for the business. Pinnacle initially provided this functionality as a test platform to enable Mash Direct users to train on the system and become familiar with its look and feel in advance of the eventual move to Sage 200.

This test platform also gave Pinnacle the opportunity to assess how the handheld devices used by Mash Direct van drivers out on the road could best integrate with the software.

### In-depth management insight

Sage 200 is now firmly embedded within the business. Outlining the improvements in extracting management information, Gary says, "Reporting is very good and the business intelligence within Sage 200 provides valuable insight. With data flowing in from all parts of the business, including our vans, no part of the business sits in an information silo."

“ “

The business intelligence available within Sage 200 provides us with valuable insight. With data flowing in from all parts of the business, we now spend less time collecting data and more time analysing it

Gary Armstrong, Finance Director  
Mash Direct

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He goes on to explain, "In the lead up to the implementation, we had defined a complete list of category codes, which allows us to streamline the summarising of the accounting information for the likes of management accounts and financial statements. This has brought the benefit of less data manipulation and the data is summarised. In short, we spend less time collecting data and more time analysing it."

Gary gives some examples of the types of reports produced, "In credit control, we can see who owes us what and which payments are coming due. Each debtor report is customised to give us the information we need. On the other side of the equation, we find the payments reports very helpful in tracking what we're purchasing from our suppliers and when we need to pay them. On the product side, we can analyse customer sales by month for each financial year and identify the most and least popular lines. We can report by sector, region... whatever we need."

Commenting on users' reaction to the replacement solution, he notes, "When they saw how easily we could extract information from the new system, they quickly began to appreciate the benefits and were soon convinced! Sage 200 also has a similar look and feel to Sage 50 Accounts, which also helped the transition."

## Solid groundwork for the future

To date, Sage 200 predominantly supports the finance team, but in the future Mash Direct plans to activate the functionality available within the solution to manage ever-increasing requirements on stock control. The business is also looking forward to implementing the customer relationship management (CRM) functionality within Sage 200 in order to build even closer, mutually beneficial relationships with its customers.

Gary says, "With Pinnacle's continued support, we are confident of having a reliable, steady infrastructure in place that can cope with the transactional demands we place on it and will handle our growth in the years to come. Pinnacle is proactive in their communications and we meet regularly. They're always available if we need them. We always feel any issues are fully resolved and we find their advice and support very helpful."



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