



GETTING IT MADE IN •

America

Five small manufacturers getting it done,
right here in the United States

An e-book from: Sage



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FOR SMALL MANUFACTURERS,
MADE IN AMERICA MEANS
GAINING AND KEEPING
THE LOYALTY OF CUSTOMERS
THROUGH THE HIGHEST LEVELS
OF QUALITY AND SERVICE.

The word “manufacturer” typically conjures up images of huge factories filled with specialized machinery and assembly lines, cranking out cars, electronics, and appliances, or perhaps commodities such as clothes, toys, and pharmaceutical products.

Yet the reality is that there are thousands of small manufacturers in the United States, many of them “mom and pop” operations that make specialty products serving niche markets.



The average manufacturing
business in the U.S. has

FEWER THAN 50
employees.

(Bureau of Labor Statistics)

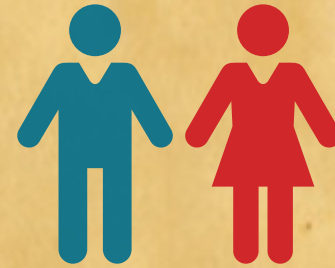
With many factors such as overseas competition and government regulations creating challenges for these small manufacturers, one concept seems to be gaining traction and is working in their favor:

Made in America.



of consumers say they have a favorable opinion of domestically manufactured products.

([Mellman Group and North Star Opinion Research survey](#))



Americans of both genders, all political parties, and all ages care about buying American.

([Harris Interactive Study](#))

QUALITY AND SERVICE RISE TO THE TOP FOR SMALL MANUFACTURERS

In a recent Harris Interactive poll, half of the respondents indicated they want to buy American because they're worried about the safety of products made overseas, while 45 percent worry about the quality. This "fear factor" is clearly an advantage for small manufacturers, as they believe the level of quality and service they can provide customers is much higher than their overseas competition.

"In dealing with our overseas customers, they tell me that there is nothing exactly like our products available over there. To save time and money, people tend to cut corners, and that's just not something that we do," says Susan Svec, owner and founder of a Susan's Soaps & More, a manufacturer of natural soaps and skin products in Scurry, Texas.

Jeffrey Burgess, owner of G&E Architectural Products in Detroit, Michigan, agrees.

"We believe in creating and manufacturing unique and effective products for our customers. We are a 'just-in-time' service, and in our business that is something you can only provide if it's made in America."

THREE TIPS FOR MANUFACTURING IT IN THE U.S.



Make it easy to make: To ensure your product can be constructed at the right price, consider the manufacturing process when designing it. That may mean eliminating unused features or using a design that eliminates time-consuming labor.



The more local the better: Using nearby factories makes it easier to monitor work, reducing the risk of costly mistakes. It also makes it easier to regulate inventory.



Use a matchmaker: A cottage industry of resources to help small enterprises has emerged in recent years. State and local nonprofits, including UtahCan.net, MadeinNYC.org, and MadeinChicago.org, offer help on prototyping, design, and production, as does for-profit MakersRow.com. The Manufacturing Extension Partnership offers a matching service, while MFG.com and Fabricating.com let you get bids from suppliers.

(Source: Fortune.com)

MANAGING AND CONTROLLING INVENTORY IS CRITICAL FOR SMALL MANUFACTURERS



Another important factor in running a small manufacturing business is managing costs, specifically keeping an eagle eye on inventory. Not only does understanding how raw materials are being used help save money, it also leads to better customer service.

Just ask Larry Grindle, owner of [ElectroWarmth Products](#), a manufacturer of heated mattress pads in Danville, Ohio. Because his business is seasonal, primarily September through February, Grindle has some challenges when it comes to managing inventory. He says that keeping track of the finished and raw materials for the 30 different items they manufacture is critical for meeting orders and having just enough left on-hand to fulfill orders when the busy season ends.

“If we get a big order, I need to know right away if we have enough of the right parts. I need to forecast what my inventory will be, say at the end of the month, and how many finished units will be available,” Grindle says.

The owner of [Pacific Forest Industries](#), a folding carton manufacturer in Southern California notes that managing inventory isn't always easy. Says Merl Seastrom,



The biggest hassle I have ever had is inventory. We automated inventory, and now we create work tickets and assemblies, so we know what raw materials are needed. If we get an order, we know right away if we have the materials, and it's seldom that we don't have enough.



Five small manufacturers getting it done, right here in the U.S.

To illustrate that there are still small manufacturing companies in the U.S. that know how to get it done, what follows are five portraits of manufacturers that believe in the quality and service exemplified by *Made in America*. These same businesses have relied many years on the specialized functionality of Sage 50 Quantum Accounting to manage their inventory and finances.



SUSAN'S SOAPS & MORE MAKES NATURAL SOAPS AND SKIN CARE PRODUCTS.

The 15-year old company is located in Scurry, Texas, and operates out of owner Susan Svec's converted garage.

Susan Svec's business started out of pure need, with "pure" being the operative word for her. She had been suffering from a skin condition exacerbated by the artificial ingredients found in most shampoos, soaps, and lotions. Unfortunately, she lived in an area where it was difficult to find natural products that wouldn't irritate her skin. So, rather than continue to suffer, she decided to try to make her own products.

A visit to the library to find books on making natural skin care products and some trial and error and Svec was soon making products for personal use. However, it wasn't too long before a local vitamin shop got wind of her natural soaps and asked to carry them. That was in 2000, and today Svec sells her line of soaps, shampoos, salt and sugar scrubs, lotion bars, and face care products at the Texas State Fair and other shows, on her [website](#), and wholesale to a range of customers and stores.



GETTING A CLEAN START WITH SAGE 50

When Svec realized that her soap business was more than a hobby, she knew that it was important to manage the numbers right from the start. **“As a small business owner, you have a dream, a goal. But you still have to manage the numbers, even if you don’t care about how much money you make. You can’t lose money and keep the dream alive. You have to be able to manage it, and Sage 50 has made that easy for me right from the start,”** says Svec.

“As small a business as we are, there is no way I could manually manage the inventory and finances and still have a handle on my business,” Svec declares.

“Sage 50 pulls it all together, so I know exactly what’s going on in my business, including if I am making money.”

Hand-made, naturally made in America

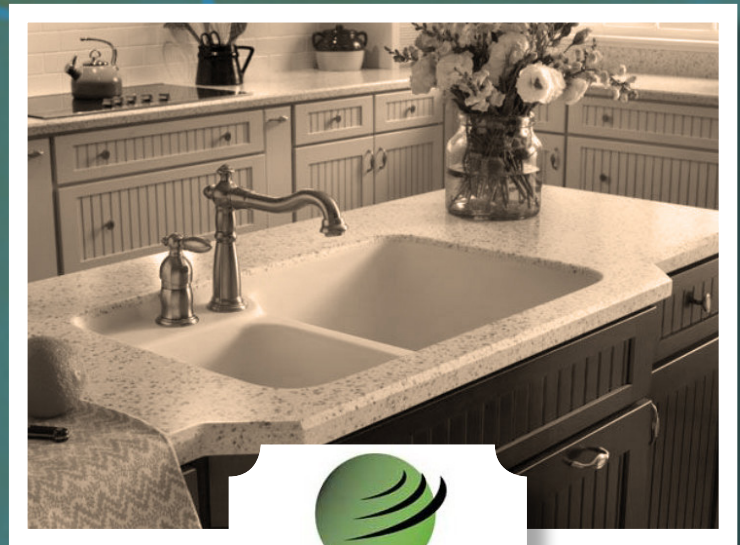
For Svec, there is a strong sense of pride in the fact that she has a woman-owned, home-based, small business with products made in America. **“In dealing with our overseas customers, they tell me that there is nothing exactly like our products available over there. To save time and money, people tend to cut corners, and that’s just not something that we do. It’s a part of what makes our product unique.”**

She observes in her experience that there is a perception from people overseas buying American-made products that the quality is going to be higher and that paying a small premium is worth it. **“There is value to having quality that you can rely on and trust, no matter what the product is,”** Svec says.

G&E ARCHITECTURAL PRODUCTS DESIGNS AND MANUFACTURES CUSTOM CABINETS AND WOOD PRODUCTS.

Founded in the early 1980s, the company is located in Detroit, Michigan, and is a family-owned business with eight employees.

G&E Architectural Products began as a manufacturer of bathroom vanities and over the years transformed into a full-service cabinet and woodworking company. In addition to cabinets, the company designs and builds countertops, crates, and balusters for balconies and staircases. **“We even make specialty toilet seats for a discontinued brand. You can’t buy the toilet anymore, but there are about half a million out there that need the seat replaced. Last year, I sold about 600 of them,”** owner Jeffrey Burgess reveals with a smile in his voice.



BUILDING IN INVENTORY CONTROLS AND MORE WITH SAGE 50

Today, G&E Architectural Products does high-end custom kitchen renovations for individual homeowners as well as installing thousands of cabinets and countertops in apartment complexes. With the variety of raw materials needed to serve these diverse markets, keeping track and control of inventory is critical to the success, and profitability, of the business. **“It’s not enough to know that I have ‘x’ sheets of laminate or particle board. I need to track what apartment complex bought what color and what size cabinets the particle board was used to build,”** says Burgess.

“ I have to have the ability to take the raw materials and turn it into inventory, and Sage 50 lets me do that. Other systems I’ve looked at simply don’t have that capability. ”

The inventory controls are particularly important to Burgess because he depends on it as a loss-control tool as well. “Without Sage 50 keeping track of everything that goes out and what it’s being used for,

I simply wouldn’t know if I was having a serious theft problem or not. It gives me a feeling of security that I can accurately account for all of the materials.”

The core of manufacturing in America is vital

G&E Architectural Products’ home town of Detroit is known primarily for its American automobile manufacturing. **“I think we perceive ‘Made in America’ a little differently than many people. Around here, it’s not just about supporting home-grown businesses. It’s about sustaining the economy, providing jobs, and essentially feeding families,”** states Burgess.

For his company, Made in America is a signal of higher quality and service than the competition from overseas. **“Most builders cannot wait for countertops or cabinets to be shipped—they need them yesterday. And they certainly can’t wait weeks for a delivery only to receive the wrong size or poor quality. We can manufacture, deliver, and install balusters in a matter of days, and they are consistent quality and size,”** says Burgess.

PACIFIC FOREST INDUSTRIES

A 34-year old company located in Southern California manufactures folding cartons for a variety of industries including fast food, cosmetics, food packaging, and household goods.

The first folding cartons were used more than 150 years ago by the National Biscuit Company to package soda crackers. Today, soda crackers still come in folding cartons, along with tens of thousands of other products from industries of every category. That's good news for Merl Seastrom, owner of [Pacific Forest Industries](#), because there probably isn't a folding carton that his company can't make. **"Among many other types of cartons, we make the boxes for what some people call 'Texas T-shirts,' also known as toilet seat covers,"** he says.

Seastrom did not get into the carton making business by accident. The first business he owned produced paper bags, and it was quite successful. However, when he went back to school in 1981 to get his MBA, he soon discovered while writing his thesis that the paper bag market was declining due to the introduction of plastic bags. Seastrom realized it was time to start something new. More than 30 years later, Pacific Forest Industries is a major player in the folding carton industry, staffed with 15 highly experienced, long-time employees.



MANAGING TONS OF MATERIALS AND MILLIONS OF BOXES WITH SAGE 50

Pacific Forest Industries buys 300 tons of boxboard each month from different mills and of different grades to manufacture millions of boxes and folding cartons each year. **“Before Sage 50, we would be running around doing inventory, not knowing what we have or don’t have. We didn’t write it down, and we couldn’t afford to hire someone full time just to manage inventory.”**

With Sage 50, the hassle goes away, he says.

“Sage 50 has improved our inventory and our customer service and bottom line has saved us lots of time and money.”

Made in America boosts employee morale

At one point, Pacific Forest Industries lost a lot of business to overseas manufacturers, but Seastrom says it has gained much of it back due to the level of quality and service that his company provides. **“When we close, all of the phones are transferred to me personally, so customers can reach someone 24 hours a day, 365 days a year,”** Seastrom says. **“That is our advantage, along with over 200 combined years of experience and custom products that are made in America.”**

“Our employees have a lot of pride that they are making the cartons here in America. One of their favorite things is when I bring in a customer who had a bad experience buying overseas. They love that they can make it right, and better, for that customer,” comments Seastrom.



ELECTROWARMTH PRODUCTS

A family-owned business located in Danville, Ohio, that produces heated mattress pads, massage table warmers, and 12-volt bunk warmers for trucks, RVs, and boats

Heated mattress pads are contagious, according to Larry Grindle, owner of [ElectroWarmth Products](#). **“Many of our customers love them so much that after they buy one for themselves, they will buy another for their parents, then their kids, then their friends,”** he says, with a smile in his voice. And it’s no wonder, as his customers tout the benefits of heated mattress pads as including a better night’s sleep, easing tired and sore muscles, and lowering energy bills.



SAGE 50 HELPS MANAGE SEASONALITY, INVENTORY, AND DISTRIBUTION

The company produces thousands of mattress pads, massage table heating pads, and 12-volt bunk warmers each year. Its manufacturing equipment includes what is essentially a huge sewing machine that has 94 needles, for quilting the pads, which come in all sizes, including unique sizes such as a “short queen” or a “split king.” **“We can also create a custom pad for any size bed. It’s one of the niche things that we can do, because we make them from soup to nuts. We quilt it, wire the warmers, and hook up the controllers,”** Grindle explains.

Grindle says that Sage 50 inventory and assemblies help him keep track of the finished and raw materials for the 30 different items that they manufacture. The company also relies on Sage 50 to manage multiple different price levels and shipping requirements for various sales channels. **“Our main channel is through distributors, but we also sell direct to smaller stores. And we sell online with Amazon, Overstock, and on our own website. The prices are all different, but with Sage, we know what each particular customer should pay because we can specify based on the type of customer they are,”** says Grindle.

“I have looked at other systems, but they didn’t have what I needed. Sage 50 has been very flexible and is a great fit for the business.”

When the competition heats up, quality and safety are the answer

One of the ways ElectroWarmth competes is by producing quality products that are safe and dependable. The company’s products are ETL approved, which is proof of product compliance to North America safety standards. **“If something does malfunction, our controls sense the problem and shut the pad off before it overheats or even discolors the cloth. They also have an auto-shut-off built into the warmer,”** notes Grindle.

“We hear many times that people bought an electric blanket that only lasted two or three years. Our mattress pads are very dependable and last a long time,” Grindle says. **“People tell us that they are the best thing since sliced bread.”**

HARPSWELL HOUSE, INC.

Located in Lisbon Falls, Maine, creates custom plaques, awards, and gifts from domestic slate and natural wood products

Not too many companies can claim that they have created awards and gifts that have been bestowed on Princess Diana, Mikhail Gorbachev, and Michael Jordan. Yet [Harpswell House](#), maker of custom donor recognition plaques and awards, has done just that, as well as crafting its products for many other noteworthy and influential people.

According to owner Karen Brown, the reason people choose her company to create gifts of distinction is that everything Harpswell House produces is unique. "Whether we are making a donor wall or an executive desk accessory, no two items are exactly the same. So we may be making 25 plaques to the same specifications, but each one will have its own idiosyncrasies, such as the veining or the markings from minerals in the slate," she explains. "Everything is handmade in our shop by people who pay attention to every detail and are truly dedicated to their craft."



GETTING IT RIGHT-SIZED WITH SAGE 50

When Brown joined the company, it had an accounting system that was very expensive and designed for larger companies, and it required individual modules, purchased separately, for different functionality, such as inventory.

“We switched to Sage 50 because it had the ability to manage our inventory, as well as create sales orders and track back orders . . .

Brown notes. She especially appreciates the assemblies capabilities as it helps her track and manage raw materials. **“You wouldn’t think that an urn would have many pieces, but there are several that go into making our urns. In addition to the slate, they include boxes and bags used for shipping and delivery. We make about 30 a week and always try to have urns in stock, and Sage 50 lets me know when I need to order more materials, but not too many,”** she says.

Made in Maine. Made in America.

For 50 years, Harpswell House has been crafting unique, distinctive, and elegant products from the red and green slate of Vermont and grey and black slate from Eastern Pennsylvania. **“The different colors of slate are determined by the color of the mud that was present at the time it was formed,”** Brown explains. **“Where and when the slate is formed contributes to its beauty and character, and that’s what makes our products so special.”**

“You can get an urn or a plaque from a company overseas. But, what we have found, and what our customers tell us, is that the quality and craftsmanship of our work just doesn’t compare to an import. We have great customer service, and we are easy to work with. Everyone who works here understands how important each project is to our customers.”

Let Sage 50 Quantum Accounting help you get it *Made in America*

From planning to assembly to delivery, manufacturing is a complex industry with many moving parts. Even small manufacturers must expertly manage inventory, fulfillment, and customer expectations in order to be successful and profitable.

With **Sage 50 Quantum Accounting**, you get all the core accounting features you need, plus powerful and flexible tools especially for manufacturing-related businesses. These tools include:



**Robust inventory
management**



**Improved control and
tracking of assembly jobs**



**Industry-specific
reports**

—all designed to save time, increase accuracy, and help you be more profitable from start to finish. Sage 50 Quantum Accounting gives you strategic insight into your business and opens up new areas for growth. This secure, reliable desktop software has the flexibility to add online and cloud applications as needed.

Sage 50 Quantum Accounting comes with unlimited access to North-America-based phone support, automatic updates, and the freedom to add the right services for your business—payroll, credit card payments, even an app to help you make sales on the go.

For more information about Sage 50 Quantum Accounting, visit
<https://www.swktech.com> or call 877-979-5462.