

American Office Takes Strategic Approach with Sage Abra Suite

Since 1932, American Office has provided office environment solutions in the Baltimore, Washington, D.C., and Northern Virginia area. One of the most financially successful, stable contract office furniture dealers in the U.S., the company represents more than 300 manufacturers of quality freestanding furniture, seating, and office systems for a wide array of business environments.

To provide clients with a complete interior office solution, American Office handles sales, project management, delivery, installation, and customer service. The company also operates six locations, including a 60,000 square foot distribution center, a 30,000 square foot warehousing facility, and several showrooms throughout the region — as well as its own fleet of delivery trucks and vans.

Throughout much of its history, American Office maintained employment records manually. With personnel files dispersed throughout multiple departments, the HR department's ability to generate accurate, timely reports was limited. In 1999, the company sought to automate its HR processes. After investigating several software solutions, American Office selected Abra HR, part of Abra Suite. The solution is serviced and supported by a Best Software business partner. After working with Abra

HR for a few months, American Office implemented the full Abra Suite HRMS (Human Resource Management System).

Improving Productivity

According to Barbara Surran, American Office's director of HR, Abra Suite has put information at the fingertips of the company's HR and payroll staff, enabling the company to instantly report on all types of information and improve productivity.

"We've gained the power to automatically track and prepare reports on standard government requirements and issues specific to our organization," said Surran. "For example, I prepare a regular census report on the number of employees at each location, and track important certifications for our truck drivers, and property issued to employees. Using Abra Suite, we have a better level of control over all employee-related information, and spend less time trying to maintain it." Abra Suite's powerful reporting capabilities have rescued the HR staff from tedious manual counts. Added Surran, "The health insurance census report is one we look at several times per year. Because we have six locations, it used to take about five hours per report to collect the information for our insurance broker. Now, using Abra, it takes a matter of seconds."



CUSTOMER

American Office

INDUSTRY

Commercial office furniture dealer

LOCATION

Baltimore, MD

NUMBER OF LOCATIONS

Six

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

250+

SAGE PRODUCTS

Sage Abra Suite

- Abra HR
- Abra Payroll
- Abra Attendance
- Abra Train
- Abra Recruiting Solution

CHALLENGE

Automate HRMS processes to improve reporting capability and information sharing

SOLUTION

Abra Suite, the market leader in HR, payroll, benefits, and compliance solutions, targeting the needs of small to mid-sized companies

RESULTS

Gained better level of control over employee information; Added powerful reporting capabilities that put data at fingertips, improving productivity; Increased accuracy and flexibility in payroll processes.

Avoiding Payroll Outsourcing Costs

Abra Suite has helped American Office streamline several difficult payroll tasks, such as year-end W-2 preparation. "Using Abra Payroll, we've significantly reduced the time it takes to process W-2s, and, at the same time, increased accuracy. Plus, we've gained better product support and flexibility," said Michael Kuntz, CFO at American Office. "Abra Payroll's integration with Abra Attendance has also allowed us to show updated vacation, personal leave and sick time accruals on employee paychecks."

Additionally, by keeping payroll in-house, American Office saves the time and budget that would otherwise be spent managing an outsourcing relationship. "I've always preferred handling payroll internally — it allows the corporation to have a more flexible cash management program," said Kuntz. Abra Suite also enables American Office to save on payroll processing — by consolidating ACH files.

Gaining Control, Room to Grow

Abra Suite's tight integration provides accurate historical records to American Office. The company frequently relies on the software's audit trail feature. "It's very helpful to see when changes are occurring, and how data is entered — especially in payroll. Our previous system held us hostage, because only one person had access to payroll data. With Abra Suite, we can assign access rights so that certain staff can review information at any time, while also effectively securing sensitive payroll information," added Kuntz.

With Abra Suite, American Office has improved productivity, gained control over valuable employee data, and avoided costly service bureau fees. Surran concluded, "The HRMS is so rich in functionality that we continue to find ways it'll enable us to further improve productivity and reduce costs. We're excited about our future, and look forward to growing with Abra Suite."

About Sage

Sage North America is part of The Sage Group plc, a leading global supplier of business management software and services. At Sage, we live and breathe business every day. We are passionate about helping our customers achieve their ambitions. Our range of business software and services is continually evolving as we innovate to answer our customers' needs. Our solutions support accounting, operations, customer relationship management,

"We've gained the power to automatically track and prepare reports on standard government requirements and issues specific to our organization. For example, I prepare a regular census report on the number of employees at each location, and track important certifications for our truck drivers and property issued to employees. Using Sage Abra Suite, we have a better level of control over all employee related information, and spend a lot less time trying to maintain it."

Barbara Surran
Director of HR
American Office.

human resources, time tracking, merchant services, and the specialized needs of the construction, distribution, healthcare, manufacturing, nonprofit, and real estate industries. Sage North America employs more than 5,000 people and supports nearly 2.9 million small and medium-size business customers.

The Sage Group plc, formed in 1981, was floated on the London Stock Exchange in 1989 and now employs 14,800 people and supports 5.7 million customers worldwide. For more information, please visit the Web site at www.sagenorthamerica.com or call **866-308-2378**.