

# Luster Leaf Products, Inc.

## Cultivating a Flourishing Business



### Charting the Course for Home Gardening

Luster Leaf Products is famous for their 'Rapitest' brand which is one of the leading brands in electronic and chemical soil testers for Home Gardeners industry. Today, Luster Leaf Products, Inc. is focused on building a presence in garden centers, mail order companies and regional chains across the US. Their products can be found in almost every gardening retail store in the country.

### The Leaves Start to Wither

Luster Leaf Products was using Vision Point by Sage Software as their accounting system when they were notified that the product would no longer be supported. The company had used Vision Point since 1997, and even though it had provided the service that they needed for most of these years, the solution was not adequate to support the growing needs of their business. Larry **Holbein, President**, knew that, in order for Luster Leaf to continue growing, they needed a system that was scalable and would be supported by Sage Software.

### Braving the Weather

While researching alternatives to their old accounting system, Larry Holbein interviewed a short list of software consulting firms and selected Michael Ericksen, P.C. as their business solution provider. Impressed with Michael's capability to customize accounting software, Larry also valued Michael's accounting and programming background. These attributes, combined with his core expertise in the ERP software would prove to be the right combination for Luster Leaf Products to develop their business with the right software in place to support the company's growth. **Since they engaged Michael Ericksen's services, the company has made many minor customizations to Sage Pro ERP, resulting in tremendous improvements to their business processes.**

**Company Profile:** Luster Leaf Products, Inc.

**Line of Business:** Manufacturer of Soil Testers for Home Gardeners

**Problem:** Larry says, "We were spending over 20 hours each month updating the forecasting spreadsheet by extracting numbers from their accounting software. Unfortunately an hour after completing the process the spreadsheet was out-dated!"

**Solution:** Larry says, "Being able to access the forecasting report instantly on a daily, weekly or monthly basis was one of the biggest benefits of working with Michael Ericksen and Sage Pro ERP."

**Results:** The change has allowed the business to save over 20 hours a week as well as allowed them to grow by 20% in the last year. Some of the product lines have grown as much as 200% in the last year!

**System Profile:** Sage Pro Series

System Manager  
General Ledger  
Accounts Receivable  
Accounts Payable  
Inventory Control  
Purchase Orders  
Order Entry  
Customization Manager  
Production Entry  
Bills of Lading

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**“Being able to access the forecasting report instantly on a daily, weekly or monthly basis is one of the biggest paybacks for working with Michael Ericksen and using Sage Pro ERP.”**

One of these customizations is a Forecasting Report that Michael created within Luster Leaf Products, Inc’s accounting system.

**Larry recalls: “We were spending over 20 hours every month updating the forecasting spreadsheet by extracting numbers from our accounting software. Unfortunately an hour after completing the process the spreadsheet was out-dated!”**

With many of their products on different lead times, the staff was constantly trying to stay on top of tracking inventory and sales activity on a daily or weekly basis. Further, adding new products to the mix made things even more cumbersome.

## My Wish-list

Since Luster Leaf Products is a seasonal business it is essential for the company to keep track of sales activity of past months to forecast orders for future periods.

**Larry Holbein wanted to be able to plug-in a month in the system and have real-time access to the shipments that would be coming into the warehouse at that time. He also wanted to be able to look at the forecasting report on a daily, weekly and even hourly basis if needed.**

Based on Luster Leaf Products’ requirements, Michael created a report for Larry and his staff which allowed them to track current inventory, all current orders that were being shipped out, and each order’s ship date.

The program forecasts each item by month. The default forecast is the previous year’s sales revenue by month. After closing each

month the forecast can be updated with one click of a button. The forecast for each item can be edited by month at any time. Any changes made to the system can be documented using the “note” feature so other employees can review the changes made.

## Tis’ the Season

This change has allowed the business to save over 20 hours a week as well as allowed them to grow by 20% in the last year. Some of the product lines have grown as much as 200% in the last year!

By eliminating the shared spreadsheets across the organization when responding to customer requests, the staff is now able to access the information in a centralized location which has improved their customer service department.

**“Now if we get a call from a customer we are able to give them a very accurate idea about when the next order for a product will come in or when they will receive their order”, says Larry Holbein.**

Larry Holbein is pleased with the business relationship Luster Leaf Products has developed with Michael Ericksen’s company. Their thorough understanding of Sage Pro ERP, their programming skills and the time Michael takes to understand Luster Leaf Products’ business processes has been a real asset to his company.

“Being able to access the forecasting report instantly on a daily, weekly or monthly basis is one of the biggest paybacks for working with Michael Ericksen and Sage Pro ERP,” concludes Larry Holbein.

## About Us

### Luster Leaf Products, Inc.

In an effort to provide products for successful gardening, Luster Leaf continues to grow and change, offering a diverse group of products for indoor and outdoor gardening. Luster Leaf offers seed sowing aids, plant identification labels and ties, soil meters, soil testers and mosses, and continues with a profuse selection of plant supports and garden décor.

E-mail: [info@lusterleaf.com](mailto:info@lusterleaf.com)  
Phone: (800) 327-4635  
Website: [www.lusterleaf.com](http://www.lusterleaf.com)

### Michael Ericksen, P.C.

For over 20 years, Michael Ericksen P.C. has been assisting small to mid-sized businesses in the Chicago land area. We install, develop, service, train, and support customized software solutions. We serve companies in a wide variety of industries including retail, service, and manufacturing, helping them to run their organizations more efficiently.

E-mail: [mericksen@me-pc.com](mailto:mericksen@me-pc.com)  
Phone: (847) 605-1590  
Website: [www.me-pc.com](http://www.me-pc.com)

### WAC Consulting Group

A specialized team of Information Technology consultants with a wealth of industry knowledge, deep technical and business expertise; we specialize in tailoring small to medium sized business ERP software solutions that reflect the way a company does business, and that results in measurable improvements for your operations.

E-mail: [jillian.barrile@wacinc.com](mailto:jillian.barrile@wacinc.com)  
Phone: (508) 393-7731  
Website: [www.waccg.com](http://www.waccg.com)