



ERP IMPLEMENTATION CASE STUDY


HOW CHROMASCOPE MAKES CULTURE A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

USING ABAS ERP



TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 01 Introduction
- 02 Meet the ChromaScape Team
- 03 A Culture of Integrity, Quality and Customer Value
- 04 The Need for ERP
- 05 Improving Customer Experiences Through Forecasting and Coordination
- 06 Revitalizing Inventory Management with Mobile Apps
- 07 Understanding the Big Picture
- 08 Reinforcing a Culture of Constant Improvement
- 09 Sustaining Growth at ChromaScape



**CHROMASCAPE IS SUPPORTING
SOME OF THE WORLD'S LEADING
BRANDS AS THEY WORK TO
CREATE UNIQUE MATERIALS AND
ENGAGE CUSTOMERS.**

Introduction

Have you ever walked past a flower bed and noticed how vibrant the mulch looked? Or picked up a few bags of brown, black, red or another color of mulch from your local nursery or big box store? There's a good chance it was the team at ChromaScape who made the perfect colorant for that mulch and kept it looking good for months on end.

As one of the world's most innovative color dispersion and additive manufacturers, ChromaScape and its family of brands create coloration solutions to meet the needs of diverse industries. From everyday products like colorants for mulch, pavement, asphalt and cardboard shipping boxes to the extraordinary, like the black color used to make the stealth bomber invisible to radar, ChromaScape is supporting some of the world's leading brands as they work to create unique materials and engage customers. To do this, ChromaScape runs four factories, one each in Ohio, Texas, Kentucky and Arizona.

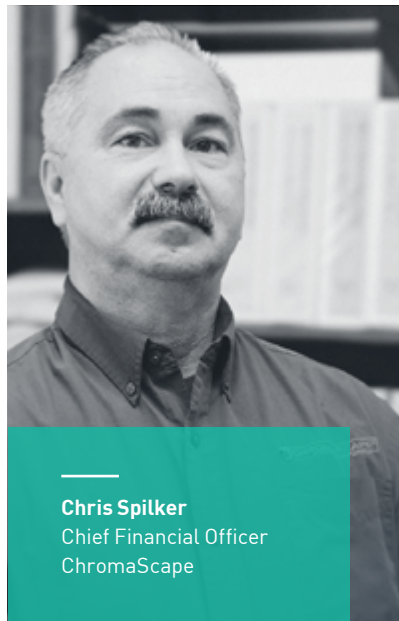
Beyond managing four distinct locations, the ChromaScape organization includes a family of brands, Amerimulch, ChromaPave, Innotech and Solution Dispersions. The result is a comprehensive combination of coloration services.

With such diverse operations in place, ChromaScape relies heavily on careful coordination across teams and locations. To this end, the company has refined its operations with the use of abas ERP to bolster its corporate mission. ChromaScape is a manufacturer with high expectations for its ability to meet customer demands.

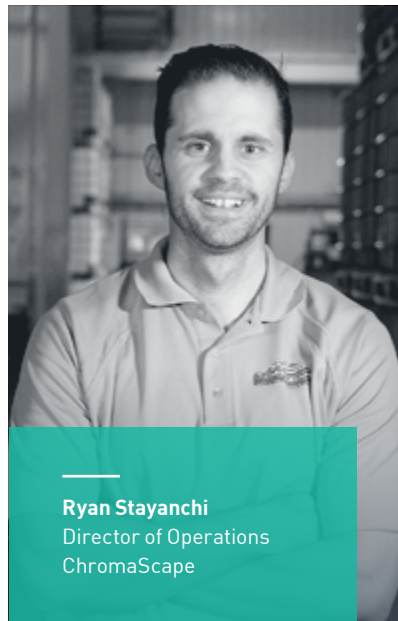
"What differentiates us from the competitors is what we call Real Tangible Value," said Jason Thomas, ChromaScape's Manager of Customer Service and Inside Sales. "It's the value we bring to our customers. We really care about them and give them the best customer service in the world. Our customers put in an order, and they know we're going to take care of that order."



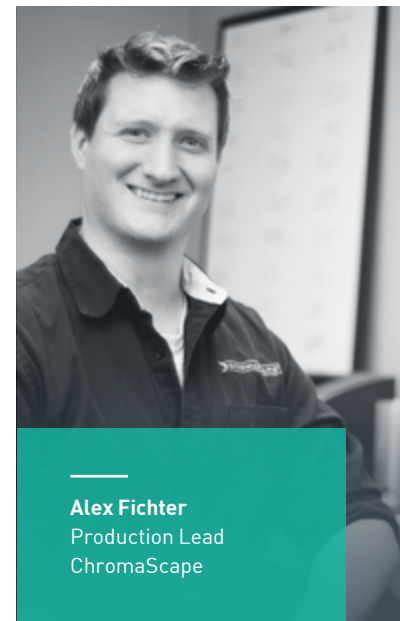
—
Joe Majewski
President and CEO
ChromaScape



—
Chris Spilker
Chief Financial Officer
ChromaScape



—
Ryan Stayanchi
Director of Operations
ChromaScape



—
Alex Fichter
Production Lead
ChromaScape

Meet the ChromaScape Team

Joe Majewski, President and CEO

Chris Spilker, Chief Financial Officer

Ryan Stayanchi, Director of Operations

Alex Fichter, Production Lead

Casey Jones, Master Scheduler

Jason Thomas, Customer Service and Inside Sales Manager

Eric Saunier, Corporate Accounting Manager

Doug Clouse, Inventory Manager

Mary Croft, Accounts Payable Specialist



"I'M A BIG BELIEVER THAT FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES, VALUES AND THEN HOW WE BEHAVE IS WHAT DEFINES CULTURE"

Joe Majewski
President and CEO, ChromaScape

A Culture of Integrity, Quality and Customer Value

Everything ChromaScape does is built around a central theme of Real Tangible Value[®], a phrase that is repeated like a mantra throughout the organization. In customer service, every interaction should aim at creating a distinctly positive experience that is directly beneficial to the customer. In production, it means reducing costs and improving efficiency to keep product prices down while still driving innovation. In sales, it comes down to offering accurate shipment estimates that provide predictability and reliability for clients.

"Any product that we make, we like to put Real Tangible Value into it – something the customer can appreciate, something that makes their job easier," said Ryan Stayanchi, Director of Operations. "So we go out to our customers and talk to them to find out what exactly they're doing with our product, what we can do to engineer or manufacture our product in a way that would make it easier for their use."

This philosophy even extends into the laboratory. Imagine a typical dye. Put it up against some wear and tear – water, direct sunlight, extreme temperatures, etc. – and you're bound to find a great deal of fading, running or discoloration. ChromaScape works to fine-tune its mulch pigments so they can withstand the rigors of real-world exposure to the elements without problems. Nobody wants to design a landscaping project around a vibrant mulch that contrasts with the foliage only to have it fade after a few rains.

Real Tangible Value also comes into play with big-picture environmental concerns, as ChromaScape manufactures all of its dyes with non-toxic materials that can be used in diverse settings without an adverse environmental impact.

The emphasis on high-quality materials and persistent R&D laboratory work can create high costs. However, ChromaScape's value-focused philosophy extends to pricing, and it has worked to optimize its processes to ensure customers get what they need in a cost-efficient way.

None of this success would be possible without a strong culture and identity that extends throughout the business. Every department, across all four locations, needs to be working toward a common goal and with a shared identity. This strategy, focused on culture, ensures that all employees strive to use best practices.

"I'm a big believer that foundational principles, values and then how we behave is what defines culture," said Joe Majewski, ChromaScape President and CEO. "So we spend a great deal of time making sure leadership is applying those values and living by those values and behaving that way every day. A big part of that is making ChromaScape a great place to work, ensuring people have work-life balance, that they are being treated fairly, and that we operate with integrity."



The Need for ERP

When Majewski came to the company, he was transitioning from an organization that had spent more than four years implementing a new ERP solution. The deployment at the time was expensive and painful, but it made an impression on Majewski. He saw how an ERP platform can coordinate data and connect operations in a business, and he quickly knew it would pay dividends for ChromaScape. The question wasn't whether implementing an ERP solution would work. Instead, it was a matter of choosing the right solution.

“At the time, the ChromaScape team was using accounting software. They could track sales and revenues, then replenish goods only once the items were sold. This meant that they were producing without clear awareness of future demand, resulting in some items sitting unsold for months at a time while others were under produced.

On top of this, the four locations each had their own systems and methods to manage operations and data.

“Life before abas was disconnected,” said Stayanchi. “We have four manufacturing facilities and they were all tracking and capturing data and planning things on their own system – be it an Excel spreadsheet or be it a napkin. Things were being written down, they weren't being collected, and they weren't coming together.”

ChromaScape wanted an ERP system that would align with its growing demands. Majewski's past experience made it clear that costs can escalate quickly as new add-ons and customizations became necessary. In many cases, a sticker price for an ERP platform quickly increases as the project takes shape. As a mid-sized manufacturer, ChromaScape needed to keep costs down and get as much value out of the solution as possible without customization. This was one of the reasons they decided to select abas ERP for such an important piece of their business.

“We wanted to use as much out of the box as we could,” said Majewski. “That minimized costs on our end and got us to get the foundational pieces of the company in place so we could start to capture better data. Then we took that information and asked, ‘where is the next biggest return on investment we can get?’”



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AND AVAILABLE PRODUCTS AT
EACH SITE AT A GIVEN TIME.

Improving Customer Experiences Through Forecasting and Coordination

At any given time, each location is going to be prepared to handle different work orders, have its own inventory and prioritize separate tasks. Without careful coordination, these diverse conditions and priorities can disrupt the business.

“Before we had abas, each manufacturing site would basically schedule their own production,” said Master Scheduler, Casey Jones.

“abas allows all four of our facilities to interface with each other in real time, on a daily basis.”

The varied processes meant that it was difficult to forecast the supply of raw materials and available products at each site at a given time. With the abas forecasting app in place, the sales team can now view what’s present at each site in real time while on the phone with a customer. As a result, users can quickly determine when they’ll be able to fulfill an order and put the proper procedures in place. Instead of having to estimate or ask a customer to wait for a shipping quote, the work can be done in real time.

“abas allows all four of our facilities to interface with each other in real time, on a daily basis,” said Mary Croft, accounts payable specialist. “Before, you may have been relying on information to be faxed or called in, or you were looking at a report at the end of the week. Now we can pretty much gather that information in real time.”

This cohesion between locations creates the visibility needed to make better forecasts and offer Real Tangible Value to customers during initial sales calls.



"OUR INVENTORY ACCURACY HAS GONE WAY UP WITH ABAS. INSTANTLY, WHEN A BATCH IS BEING MADE, THAT IS GETTING RECORDED INTO ABAS."

Alex Fichter
Production Lead, ChromaScape

Revitalizing Inventory Management with Mobile Apps

Like any manufacturer, ChromaScape must keep tabs on a large number of goods and ensure they are properly prepared for shipping and distribution. The company's inventory management system needs to track goods coming into each facility, assets traveling between locations and products being delivered to customer locations.

"This variety can make something as simple as a cycle count a complex process, but ChromaScape has eliminated unnecessary manual processes using abas' mobile ERP apps.

In the past, a typical cycle count was completed by printing out a form, checking the shelves and recording inventories, delivering the sheet to the correct stakeholder and having that person enter data into a legacy system. The time-consuming and error-prone nature of such processes has been transformed using tablet computers.

Now, workers move through the warehouses with iPads, scan items and have the information automatically delivered across the ERP system in real time. The data is synchronized and

coordinated across facilities, ensuring that the sales teams doing forecasts or procurement teams managing inventory levels all have the information they need.

"Our inventory accuracy has gone way up with abas," said Production Lead Alex Fichter. "Instantly, when a batch is being made, that is getting recorded into abas. Years ago, it was put off for a couple days, and then all the data was collected at once. In that time, a lot of that data would get jumbled together and would be incorrect and very inaccurate. Now, though, we know it's always right where it needs to be. The information is always correct."



Understanding the Big Picture

When operations and data are siloed between locations or business units, companies can put a great deal of time and effort into simply gathering reports at the end of each month and quarter. This isn't the case at ChromaScape.

Part of providing Real Tangible Value is getting proactive about preventing problems and anticipating demand.

"We had three legacy systems operating prior to implementing abas," said Majewski. "When you're closing a month out or trying to get accurate timely data, it's obviously very cumbersome and not very efficient, very reactive, not very proactive. It's not real time at all. We saw an immediate impact using abas."

Part of providing Real Tangible Value is getting proactive about preventing problems and anticipating demand. This outcome is possible only if company leaders have a deep understanding of the company's financial health, inventories and production capabilities at any given time.

However, in the past, this process was particularly difficult for ChromaScape for two reasons: The company works to get all deliveries

to customers within 72 hours of an order, and the brand uses real-time processing to handle orders to do so. Implementing an ERP solution has offered the visibility necessary.

"We are not a batch processor," said CFO Chris Spilker. "We are basically entering transactions as they come in throughout the day and reporting production, shipments and receipts as they happen. At any point in time, I can look at a snapshot of where the company's performance is."

Real-time visibility isn't the only advantage here, as reporting has been simplified within the organization.

"abas makes my life easy by having all data right at my fingertips whenever I'm looking for a report that needs to be run. I may need to change one or two variables, then I get precisely the information that has been requested by my supervisor or any executive," said Eric Saunier, Manager of Corporate Accounting.



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"WE PRIDE OURSELVES ON
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OVER AND OVER AGAIN"

Eric Saunier,
Corporate Accounting Manager
ChromaScape

Reinforcing a Culture of Constant Improvement

ChromaScape is growing quickly and bolstering its role as a leader in its industry. The company's focus on customer service means that many clients come back year in and year out. But the organization has found this success by never being satisfied with the status quo. In its push to offer Real Tangible Value, the manufacturer has continually refined its processes, technologies, partnerships and capabilities to fuel consistent growth.

The move to work with an ERP system has only furthered this mission.

"We pride ourselves on consistency and making sure the process is followed and repeated over and over again," said Saunier. "Doing that with abas we are able to consistently obtain the results we are looking for on a day-to-day basis."

Thomas, who leads the company's customer service unit, explained that the logistical advantages offered using abas ERP have created efficiency benefits that are allowing him to spend more of his time interacting with customers.

"abas is great. For me, it's very user friendly," said Thomas. "Over the years, since we've been using it, it's come a long way in helping us make our process as simple as possible, as user

friendly as possible. When I put in the order, I can see what we have available, I can see date of manufacture, all these things that prior to abas I didn't have the ability to do."

These types of everyday benefits have come together to help ChromaScape achieve its cultural vision and establish an operational setup in which users always have what they need to get the job done.

"Implementing abas allowed us to integrate a lot of our systems, make process improvements within those integrated systems and provide information everybody sees on a timely basis," said Spilker.



Sustaining Growth at ChromaScape

The move to integrate abas ERP into operations is part of a larger effort to ensure consistent expansion at ChromaScape. Like many mid-sized companies, growth is exciting, but it brings new challenges. Historically, ChromaScape has used partnerships to grow and expand and had to struggle through major data integration hurdles to get value out of the strategy.

“I really appreciate abas as a tool that we’ve come to use and depend on,” said Clouse. “It’s really changed things for the better.”

With an ERP system coordinating data across operations and integrating systems, that hurdle is no longer present. The result is a smoother path to growth as ChromaScape explores its options moving forward. Of course, all of this centers around the core principle of Real Tangible Value.

Delivering value to customers is achievable when technology and processes are aligned to help employees work at their best.

“One thing that makes ChromaScape successful is that we have very dedicated, talented people as well as an ERP system that helps us utilize people’s talents and generate information for us in a very timely fashion. It helps us make sound financial and business decisions,” said Spilker.

This emphasis on using technology to help workers was brought to life into ChromaScape’s focus on internal culture and customer value. Doug Clouse put it simply:

“I really appreciate abas as a tool that we’ve come to use and depend on,” said Clouse. “It’s really changed things for the better.”

Many manufacturers today are facing pressure to put service-based operational models into place as customer expectations shift and the need to support custom product delivery increases. ChromaScape provides a prime example of how improved coordination and data visibility across the business can take cultural ideals regarding client experiences and turn them into real-world, competitive advantages.

abas USA, Inc
45999 Center Oak Plaza
Suite 150
Sterling, VA 20166
USA
info@abas-usa.com
www.abas-erp.com

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