



**Saddleback Gives New Meaning to High-end Distribution  
with SAP Business One and Vision33**



**Vision33**



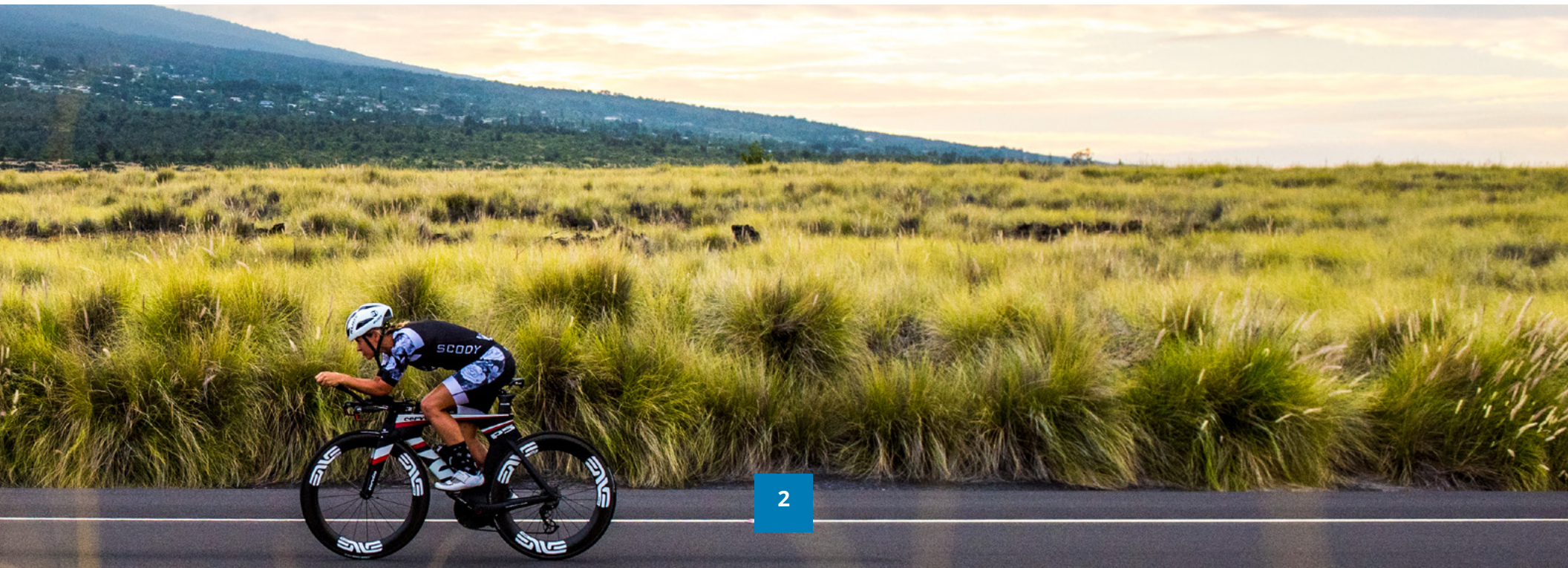
## About Saddleback

With a portfolio of the world's leading road cycling and mountain biking brands, Saddleback is the United Kingdom's home of elite performance products. Founded in 2004 and run by a passionate team of riders, Saddleback brings consumers the finest cycling products and superior services to match. The company proudly serves as the UK's official source of 3T, Wolf Tooth, Castelli, Chris King, ENVE, Intense, Peaty's, PUSH, Sidi, Silca, Stages, and Troy Lee Designs.

Saddleback's mission is to clothe and equip riders with brands that are aspirational and say, "Go

# saddleback

out. Ride. Have fun – and do it with the absolute best products you can get, backed by a company with strong ethics and a laser focus on the customer experience." It's a highly appropriate message from a company whose people do the same riding as their extremely loyal customer base of riders.



# The Strategic Differentiators of Saddleback

Saddleback differentiates itself from other product distributors with three foundational elements that continuously position the company to best serve their brand consumers:

1

The establishment of Saddleback as a seamless extension of their brands, both in messaging and operational flow

2

Provisioning of value-added services that enable brands of any size to penetrate and succeed in key target markets

3

Implementation of strategic technologies to simplify and streamline distributor operations while optimizing the customer experience

Many of the high-end brands represented by Saddleback recognize that Saddleback offers a virtual turnkey market presence in customer relations, marketing, creative, PR, and distribution. For specialty brands that lack resources beyond their home country, Saddleback is the ideal distribution partner, providing low-risk, high value-add entry into markets throughout the UK and Ireland.

“In the world of high-end cycling, where everyone knows everyone, consistent delivery of this type of value-add sets Saddleback apart,” said John Wager, Saddleback’s

Manager of IT and Operations. “An Italian brand may have a conversation with a neighboring brand and share their experience of our service, they’ll then call us in order to obtain the same high-value experience”.

Based on such peer-to-peer interaction, Saddleback’s business has grown organically over the years and enjoys a solid foundation of dedicated brand consumers.



## Growth and Expansion Drive the Need for Better Stock Control

As Saddleback's business began a rapid growth phase around 2010, company executives recognized the need to underpin the financial and operational aspects of the business with a true enterprise-level ERP system. The red flag signaling this need came from stock control. The company's deployment of Line 50 (now Sage Line 50) and a simple warehouse management system couldn't handle the company's expanded requirements.

"There were aspects of Line 50 and the warehouse system people liked, so inertia was something we had to overcome," stated Wager. "But in the end, a lack of absolute stock control could lead to mistakes and put our business reputation at risk as we expanded."

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# The Selection of SAP Business One

After evaluating several ERP systems, the Saddleback team selected SAP Business One as their new enterprise ERP system. They selected Business One for three main reasons:

- ✓ The system was proven, and many development partners had written validated add-ons that would enable Saddleback to continuously add to their capabilities
- ✓ There were robust add-ons for warehouse management
- ✓ SAP represented a further brand-level strategic maneuver

Wager said, “If you’re a brand performing due diligence on potential distribution partners and you see someone’s using SAP, you know they’re a serious business with a long term strategic plan”.

One of Saddleback’s first add-ons addressed their stock control issues. Leveraging SAP Business One and the Boyum Usability Pack, they quickly seized control of their stock tracking and movements while gaining benefits like easier pricing and currency translation functions.

“With SAP Business One, there are so many functions and benefits you don’t realize are there when you first evaluate it,” said Wager. “It’s nice to know we can add virtually anything our customers might need. That way, nobody’s running around in a panic, wondering if we can handle the next new requirement.”

Wager noted the backing from Saddleback’s executive team in purchasing SAP Business One and the needed add-ons. It showed that the company was standing

behind their commitment to deliver value-add and maintain strong relationships, even in the face of slightly higher costs. “It comes back to wanting to be a seamless extension of our brands. We don’t want anything to get in the way of our message or interrupt the flow of getting that beautiful pair of cycling shoes or amazing set of carbon wheels to customers who appreciate quality. SAP Business One is seamless to our business.”

## Saddleback's Continuous Investment in SAP Business One

Fast forward nine years to 2019, and Saddleback's continuous investment into SAP Business One is paying off. Thanks to the Boyum Usability Pack add-on, Saddleback is able to further automate parts of the business. Wager highlighted the ways the Usability Pack allows IT to add new fields and buttons to make nearly every process faster and more intuitive for users. "It makes everyone's life easier, and thus, seamless to the customer," said Wager. "It's then a simple matter to provide live stock data, back

order reports with realistic dates or automated invoicing. These nice-to-have functions have quickly become basic requirements."

As part of Saddleback's continuous improvement philosophy, IT & Operations went through an internal review process surrounding their ERP and warehouse management solutions. It was an opportunity to re-evaluate what was needed from their ERP solution – the support for SAP Business One amongst the people of Saddleback was unanimous. SAP

Business One continues to provide significant value. Through the review process they made a more concerted effort to leverage features that had been overlooked or that they had been too busy to fully utilize. Before auditors come in to look for errors, they're impressed with the system's accounting capabilities and traceability.



## Upping Saddleback's Operational Lead by Partnering with Vision33

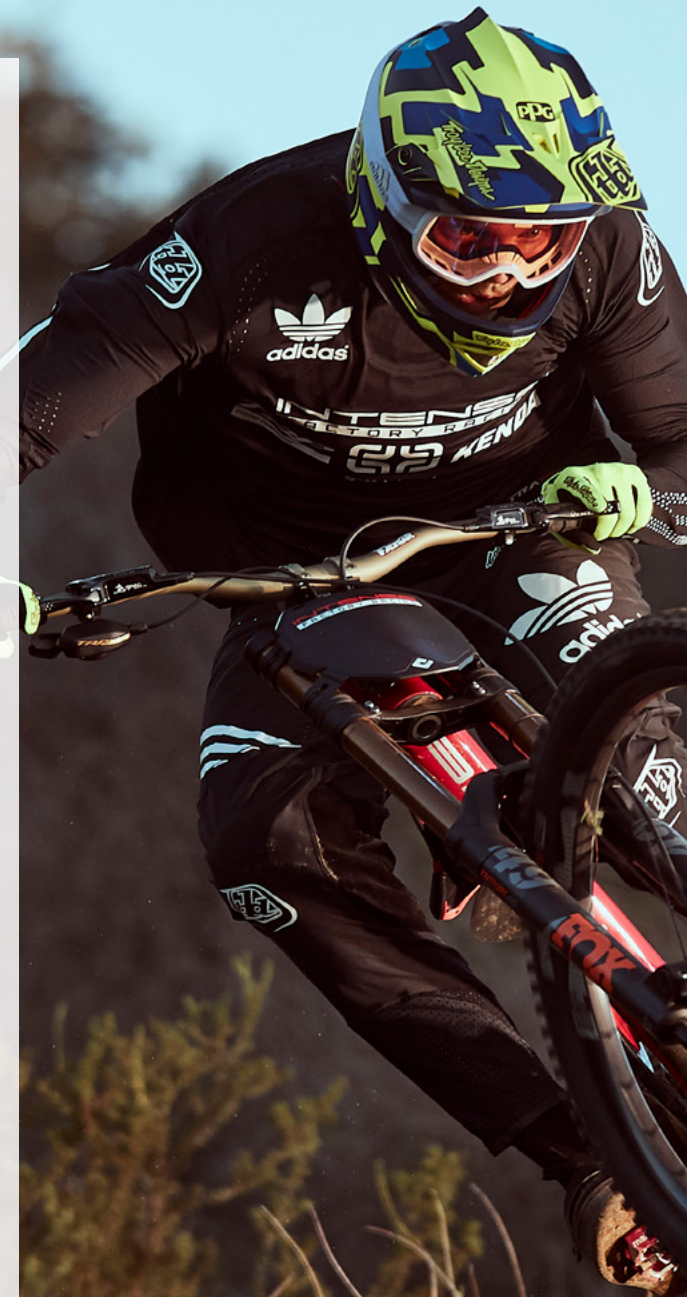
In late 2018, the Saddleback team performed another system evaluation to ensure they were doing their best for their brand consumers. After evaluating multiple products, they determined that the Produmex WMS, combined with an upgrade to Version 9.3 of SAP Business One, could significantly improve their distributor operations.

Depending on the industry, a distributor can have anywhere from 10 lines on an order to over 1,000. Saddleback goes the extra mile for their brands, breaking down orders by numerous factors, such as size, colour, and configuration. Luckily, SAP Business One has the flexibility to push the limits. With the right implementation partner, Wager knew his team could integrate Produmex (by Boyum) with SAP Business One to tailor the way they purchase, record, and track items. "Providing brands with detailed breakdowns helps them understand exactly what they need to do and how each of their products and SKUs are performing," said Wager.

But finding the right SAP Partner to perform the upgrade to Version 9.3 with the Produmex addition proved a challenge. "Many Value Added Resellers send in a

sales-oriented consultant who just wants to do a deal and implement what they think you want," Wager believes. "Vision33 came in and wanted to understand where we had been and where we were going as a business. Instead of being reactive, they were proactive in assessing the situation and recommending ways to improve."

With a solid understanding of Saddleback's history and mission, Vision33 translated their requirements into the right SAP Business One and Produmex processes to implement at the outset, along with a potential roadmap for ongoing improvements once the core system was in place. "It's great that our customer relationship manager from Vision33 sat with us, checked in frequently, and would ask, 'Well, what about this? Have you thought about that?'" It helped us prepare for what would come next," stated Wager.





## The Benefits of a Vision33 Implementation

As with nearly everything IT & Operations does at Saddleback, there are both strategic and operational benefits. Operationally, Saddleback warehouse personnel can book goods into the system much faster today. They leverage the handheld barcode-scanning capabilities of Prodimex and flow any combination of line items through to SAP Business One, so customers receive the information they need in the format they want. "This is one area where Vision33's expertise really paid off," said Wager. "They helped with Prodimex and SAP Business One and bridged the gap between some of the usability functionality, or lack of functionality, that we perceived as we moved from one WMS to another."

Wager credits the new WMS capabilities and advanced features in SAP Business One Version 9.3 with simplified business operations. He noted that Saddleback is currently the only cycling product distributor to expand into foreign markets with having to acquire any physical assets in that territory. "By running our own tight ship internationally, we eliminate the risks associated with foreign acquisitions, like people and cultural issues as well as process and technology integrations that slow the business."

Strategically, Wager underscored the value of having a partner that understands international business and how an advanced ERP system can enable expansion. Saddleback uses the system far beyond back-end warehouse and financial control. They also use it

for stress-free growth regarding enabling websites to offer instant views into pricing, stock levels, and currency translation, performing routine processes in multiple languages, and maintaining overall process control.

The advanced technology strategy continues to attract more brands to Saddleback. Utilizing the technological solutions and processes they've developed, the brand team can easily provide a smooth transition into the portfolio, and word of their success continues to spread. For new brands, it's a hassle-free step knowing that Saddleback can provide broad support across all areas of the business where they may not have the capabilities themselves to expand internally. We aim to become a seamless extension of the brand and drive this through the use of technology.

Saddleback executives and the IT & Operations team greatly appreciate the competitive differentiation they continue to build via their technology infrastructure, SAP Business One. "It would be an incredibly steep learning curve for any competitor to get to where we are today with ERP," stated Wager. "Our lead will continue to challenge the accepted way of doing things and the free flow of ideas between Saddleback and Vision33 is critical to this."





## About Vision33

Vision33 Inc. is a global IT professional services consultancy that solves customer business challenges through the promise of technology and the value it delivers. We partner with growing and large organizations in both the public and private sectors to understand their vision and help them reach it with the right blend of strategy, consulting, and technology. Vision33 global team of results-driven resources provide world-class experience through our office locations in North America and Europe. For more information about Vision33, visit [www.vision33.com](http://www.vision33.com).

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