

H.M. STAUFFER & SONS, INC.

Solution Overview

Industry

Manufacturing – lumber and wood products

Scenario

H.M. Stauffer wanted an integrated system to provide employees with easier access to information and more accurate reporting to enhance customer service.

Company Profile

H.M. Stauffer manufactures trusses, panels, and treated lumber for construction and furniture making. They received the Governor's Award for Safety Excellence and Microsoft Great Plains Pinnacle Award.

Benefits

The implementation of Dynamics from Microsoft Business Solutions has resulted in access to information across the company so that employees can provide better customer service. Reports now are accurate and timely, pulling information across various applications.

Software Used

Microsoft Business Solutions Dynamics
 Financial Series
 Distribution Series
 FRx Financial Reporting
 Payroll
 Microsoft SQL Server 2000
 Microsoft Windows 2000 Server
 Windows XP Professional
 Microsoft Office XP
 Microsoft Exchange Server

Third Party Products

Horizons Manufacturing
 WennSoft Job Cost
 Paradigm Physical Inventory
 AnyView Creator
 Omni Tools
 Synex F9
 Professional Advantage Webhouse

Demographic Information

Annual Revenue: \$20 million
 Number of Employees: 130
 Migrated from: IBM System 36
 Number of Users: 35
 Number of Sites: 1

Manufacturer of lumber delivers top notch customer service with the implementation of Dynamics from Microsoft Business Solutions. Access to more accurate information across the company improves reporting and positions them for future growth.

Customers for H.M. Stauffer include retail lumber yards; building contractors who require wood trusses for housing developments, churches and other large construction projects; and regional business owners – particularly the Amish – who require high-quality treated lumber for manufacturing play sets, outdoor furniture, and gazebos. Taking care of their customers is the key to H.M. Stauffer's success, and they wanted an integrated system that would enable them to more easily access information and in turn provide better customer service.

Positioned for Future Growth

H.M. Stauffer & Sons, Inc. previous IBM system had become outdated and no longer met their needs. Information was stored in different places which made reporting difficult.

David Kramer, Vice President and CFO at H.M. Stauffer, notes "The old system had very limited inventory tracking or analysis capability. Purchasing was completely manual. There was no bill of material system, and no effective means to correlate inventory with production. Even worse, the IBM System 36 and the underlying software were no longer supported by IBM, and the consultants who wrote all the customizations for us were long gone. We were stuck in the past, without any pathway to generating real-time, useful information and to upgrading for additional functionality."

When H.M. Stauffer & Sons, Inc. began searching for a new system they turned to Cargas Systems, Inc. to help them in their decision. Cargas Systems specializes in business systems and has been a long-time Microsoft Great Plains Partner and winner of the Customer Care Award. H.M. Stauffer was looking to leverage Microsoft technologies, and Dynamics enabled them to integrate with products that were developed and supported on these technologies.

"Dynamics was able to bring together all key parts of the business—including information still generated and stored in other software programs—and still offer the reporting tools to make business decisions. Dynamics was an affordable solution, and having a local reseller such as Cargas Systems make appropriate recommendations and have the skills to implement the new system was critical to our success," stated Kramer.

Access to Information

H.M. Stauffer now has access to information to make better informed business decisions. The combination of Microsoft Business Solutions and 3rd Party solutions enabled them to put together a highly customized, effective system oriented toward concurrent "make to stock" (treated lumber) and "make to order" (trusses) manufacturing and inventory control processes. The inquiry windows, drilldowns, and Explorer tools allow them to easily find answers to questions with an easy-to-use interface. By understanding their complex

“Using Microsoft technologies has been a real strength. By investing in Dynamics we know we will always have a leading edge by utilizing the latest technology.”

Tom Wurster
Vice President of Operations
H.M. Stauffer & Sons, Inc.

inventory needs, they are better able to purchase the right raw materials in the right quantities. “The benefits of being able to see, and inquire into, all the elements of the business cycle are enormous”, say both Kramer and Wurster.

H.M. Stauffer bought the Collections Management module, because they wanted to have a consistent approach to analyzing customer payment performance, and to be able to make that information available throughout the Company. “We were looking for a better way to communicate internally regarding past-due accounts. Now that we communicate better and more consistently with salespeople and other employees, we can better track what we’ve done and haven’t done. So it’s helped us help ourselves, and thus to serve our customers better,” states Kramer.

Increased Productivity

Employees are able to access the same information so that they can quickly answer all customers with consistent and accurate information. They are able to accomplish much more work in less time which equates to increased efficiencies, time savings, and better customer service.

“Our Account Receivables clerk wanted to cut back on her hours. Implementing Collections Management is one of the main reasons she was able to do that. She went from working 40 hours a week down to 20 hours a week, managing the same volume of work in half the time,” adds Kramer.

Kramer states, “Accounts payable process time has been halved allowing our one-person department to take on a significant portion of the general accounting functions. This has allowed me to assume product line management responsibilities and expand the product line without having to hire a product line manager – a significant cost avoidance. We are confident that our company will be able to grow significantly without having to add a proportionate number of employees to handle the increase.”

Leveraging Service and Support

H.M. Stauffer & Sons, Inc. can access a Microsoft Website called “CustomerSource” for all types of technical data, and are usually able to answer their own questions.

CustomerSource is an online database that is available to Microsoft Customers enrolled in a service or enhancement plan. Key to their success has been taking the time to learn the product. They have occasionally called into corporate support, but find that many of their questions can be answered utilizing this Web support tool.

H.M. Stauffer & Sons, Inc. has also attended Convergence—an annual conference for Microsoft Customers. Convergence provides them with the opportunity to network with other Customers, talk with Microsoft team members, and provide feedback on products.

“Microsoft is a progressive company and is committed to its customers and in improving its products,” shares Kramer. “One of the things we liked best about the reliability of our Dynamics implementation and our relationship with Cargas is that we can function extremely independently. We are almost completely self-sufficient, because of the easy to use product and the tools available to us,” notes Wurster.

For more information about Microsoft Business Solutions, visit www.greatplains.com

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