

MAAX SPAS, INC.

Solution Overview

Industry

Manufacturing

Microsoft Business Solutions Partner

ePartners, Inc. – Arizona
Phoenix, Arizona, USA

Scenario

MAAX Spas wanted a solution which would allow them to open up the visibility of the manufacturing systems to their dealers and internal personnel. They needed to integrate three manufacturing facilities while improving manufacturing, inventory and financial processes.

Company Profile

MAAX Spas is among the top four spa manufacturers and produces products under various brand names.

Benefits

Microsoft Business Solutions opens the visibility to factory operations, reduces data entry time, increases efficiencies and monitors inventory in real time.

Software Used

Microsoft Business Solutions—Great Plains
Manufacturing
Field Service
Financials
Inventory and Order Processing
Microsoft SQL Server™

Demographic Information

Number of Employees: 160
Number of Sites: 3
Number of Users: 33

MAAX Spas, Inc. needed to differentiate itself in a competitive industry with superior customer service while driving down their costs of manufacturing. They needed improved manufacturing and financial systems to easily integrate information from three separate manufacturing facilities located throughout North America. Microsoft® Business Solutions—Great Plains® proved to be the right solution for the company's business issues.

MAAX Spas, Inc. manufactures hot tubs and spas under various brand names—Coleman Spas, Infinity Spas and California Cooper. The company has multiple distribution channels—from big-box retailers such as Home Depot to over 200 dealers throughout North America from three manufacturing plants.

Integration Benefits the Entire Company

MAAX Spas' three manufacturing plants are spread out across North America and each utilized two or three independent, non-integrated systems. According to Bill Conati, manager of information systems for MAAX Spas, "The same information had to be entered into multiple systems and then rolled up into our corporate systems so that we could understand where we were going—it was very inefficient." While solving this integration issue, the company also needed to improve manufacturing and financial processes.

MAAX Spas teamed up with Microsoft Business Solutions reselling partner, ePartners, to find a solution for the company's business issues and decided on Microsoft Business Solutions—Great Plains. "We chose [Microsoft Business Solutions] because it satisfied a lot of needs right away, without a lot of custom programming," Conati says. "It allows us to get up on line and to work with a system—and be more productive—much faster than we would with any other product."

Improved Manufacturing Processes

The Manufacturing series benefits MAAX Spas in several different ways. "Prior to [Microsoft Business Solutions], we had numerous problems in understanding where our products were on the line," Conati says. "Our dealers didn't know—we didn't even know. It was very difficult for us to understand that, besides going out and manually trying to find out where the products were on the manufacturing floor. Now we and our dealers have the ability to understand where the spas are at. The dealer has the ability to pick up a pocket PC and look at our available inventory in real time."

Readily Available Data

The available data benefits the entire company. "The software allows us to realize our potential because it enables us to get information out of the system when we

"With Microsoft Business Solutions we have the potential to be great. We are not only going to revolutionize our company but revolutionize our industry, by offering information to our dealers that allows them to be more competitive and to make the sales that they need to make with the consumer base."

Bill Conati
Manager of Information Systems
MAAX Spas, Inc.

need it," Conati says. "There are a lot of software packages out there, but the Microsoft Business Solutions technologies allow us to see everything we need to see and build tools around it to enhance the core product. That's where it really gets exciting, I think, because we're able to build business layers to give information to dealers that they didn't normally have and to be more competitive in our industry."

Decreased Time and Errors

MAAX Spas' financial solution enables the company to save time and benefit from reduced data-entry errors. "Things like bills of materials, for example. In the past we had three different formats. Each of the divisions within the sector had its own way of doing things. Now we enter the information one time and it's visible across the sector," says Ron Hill, vice president of operations for MAAX Spas, "Certainly it cuts down on entry errors. It cuts down on the time it takes to enter the materials. It can be reviewed by multiple people at the same time. Now, part numbers are the same across the sector. We all see the same part numbers which, again, drives that efficiency of knowing of exactly what to look for."

Hill concludes, "One of the things we believe in here is having fun in your job. With our efficiency gains that we've seen—faster throughput of the product, the improvement in the gross margins—these are the things that put a smile on our face and they're here now with Microsoft Business Solutions."

Return on Investment

Microsoft Business Solutions provides MAAX Spas with many benefits, including:

- **Increased Efficiency**—"In the Arizona facility, our efficiencies were in the 80 percent range and we are now approaching 100 percent efficiency in this facility. Our British Columbia operation again is running very high percentages, pretty close to 100 percent and our Beamsville operation is improving," says Hill.
- **Manufacturing Resource Planning Process**—"We've already developed business alerts that give us information that we didn't normally have—the ability to see exactly what's on the floor and to see how long it's been there," Conati says.
- **Inventory Tracking**—"We can manage the expectations of the end users, to say yes, we have from the stock available, I can order that now, and be assured that it's going to be there for them," Conati says.
- **Room to Grow**—Conati says, "I have the potential now to develop an information system based on the Microsoft technologies that allows our company to grow, and provide excellent customer service to our dealer base."

For more information about Microsoft Business Solutions, visit www.microsoft.com/BusinessSolutions

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