

# THOMS PROESTLER COMPANY

## Solution Overview

### Industry

Distributor—Groceries and Related Products

### Microsoft Business Solutions Partner

RSM McGladrey, Inc.  
Cedar Rapids, Iowa, USA

### Scenario

Thoms Proestler needed a business solution that would scale with their rapid growth and be flexible enough to meet needs unique to the industry.

### Company Profile

A specialty food distributor as well as a provider of institutional food, Thoms Proestler is an established, family-owned business in Illinois.

### Benefits

Microsoft Business Solutions provides easier, more complete reporting, a process that tracks and initiates vendor bill-backs and a strong operating platform.

### Software Used

Microsoft Business Solutions—Great Plains  
Financials  
Inventory and Order Processing  
Customization Tools  
Microsoft SQL Server™

### Demographic Information

Annual Revenue: \$230 million USD  
Number of Employees: 400  
Number of Users: 25

### Migrated from DOS and UNIX-based systems

***Microsoft® Business Solutions—Great Plains® has helped Thoms Proestler address issues unique to the food-grocery industry. With improved processes, employees can focus on providing the value-added services that have made the company successful.***

The Thoms Proestler Company is a specialty food distributor with 10,500 items as well as an institutional food line for restaurants, hospitals, hotels and company cafeterias. Since 1985, this fourth-generation, family-owned business, has grown in annual sales volume from \$38 million to more than \$230 million. Thoms Proestler's customer base also has grown dramatically each year. The company has encouraged and kept up with this rapid growth by focusing on key areas such as technology and value-added services.

## The Move to Windows

Thoms Proestler was using a MS DOS®-based PC system for their finances and was looking to move to an integrated Microsoft Windows®-based solution. The company determined that access to critical information in the old accounting system was a vital component for anything new. Also needed were order entry, inventory and accounts receivable—all previously maintained on a UNIX system—integrated into the new system. And finally, the new solution needed to eliminate redundancies when processing the purchasing and billing transactions.

## Implementing Strength and Flexibility

With the help of Microsoft Business Solutions reselling partner RSM McGladrey, Thoms Proestler implemented Microsoft Business Solutions—Great Plains. RSM McGladrey worked with the company to take advantage of the power and flexibility of the solution by designing specialized applications.

One of those specialized applications is a new transaction processing procedure that helps manage the complexities of a system in which many of Thoms Proestler's vendors also are customers, a need unique to the food-grocery distribution industry.

Thoms Proestler bills their vendors back for marketing programs and other deals the vendors set up with Thoms Proestler or their customers. If the bill is not paid in 30 days, Thoms Proestler deducts the bill from the next payment to that vendor. The application moves past-due billing over to accounts payable for deduction. Unlike the old method, the new process takes minutes and requires very little human involvement.

Another application is an industry-specific solution created to streamline the processing of vendor transactions. Thoms Proestler is able to integrate billing transactions into the accounting system, a procedure that eluded them prior to implementing Microsoft Business Solutions.

*“As a financial person, the ease in drilling down to account detail to answer senior departmental managers’ questions has been a time saver and allows me to work on more important tasks.”*

Tracy Bayne  
Controller  
Thoms Proestler Company

## Implementing Change and Saving Time

With the previous financial management system, accounts payable, accounts receivable and general ledger systems were very fragmented and independent, creating a general ledger with very little detail. Only a summary of period activity was available in the general journal entries.

Microsoft Business Solutions has transformed this process. “Now I can bring up an account balance, drill down to the period summary activity, drill down to the detail GL transaction and then drill down to the entry in the subsidiary module. The research time required under our old scenario was 15 minutes for a simple account, up to hours for an account with a great deal of activity. Now, this research takes minutes,” says Tracy Bayne, Controller.

## Return on Investment

Thoms Proestler’s investment in Microsoft Business Solutions is making an impact throughout the company:

- **Accounts receivable:** Using the Collections Management module and Explorer, analysts are able to create a modified report that includes only the items needing follow up, reducing the time spent sifting through the data from hours to minutes.
- **Integrated system:** By integrating the accounts payable, accounts receivable and general ledger, employees can drill down to view account information, a task that had previously been time consuming.
- **Time savings:** Because the components are integrated and previously manual processes like the vendor bill-back scenario are now automated, employees can work on more important tasks within the organization.
- **Enhanced reporting:** The improvements in business processes resulted in the elimination of many steps previously required by the accounting staff. Management is now able to extract better reports to help analyze business processes.
- **A strong backbone:** By establishing Microsoft SQL Server as the standard platform for packaged applications, Thoms Proestler can implement and maintain the kind of business solutions that will move them successfully into the future.

For more information about Microsoft Business Solutions, visit [www.microsoft.com/BusinessSolutions](http://www.microsoft.com/BusinessSolutions)

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