



## Glass Repairer Scales to Meet Natural Disaster

### Overview

**Country or Region:** Australia

**Industry:** Glazing and Glass Repair

### Customer Profile

Express Glass provides emergency glass repairs across Australia. Its customers include companies that maintain the commercial premises of large corporate clients, such as banks.

### Business Situation

Express Glass used different applications for order processing and accounts which meant that data had to be transferred between them manually. Glaziers relied on written orders to quote for and complete jobs.

### Solution

Express Glass worked with Microsoft Gold Certified Partner Tectura to create an integrated back-office system based on Microsoft Dynamics NAV. This included automatic data transfer using digital pens.

### Benefits

- Automated pricing and invoicing
- Reduced data entry
- Better data capture from field staff
- 35% increase in staff productivity

“The storm created unprecedented demand for emergency glazing. We were handling three-and-a-half times our usual level of business but at no stage did we start generating a backlog.”

Adrian Grocott, Managing Director, Express Glass

Express Glass provides emergency glass and window repairs throughout Australia and to the offices of some of the country's biggest companies. By early 2007, Express Glass had outgrown its back-office systems. It used separate applications for order processing and accounts management, and the lack of integration between the two meant office staff were swamped in data entry chores, taking valuable time away from calculating quotes for incoming repair jobs. With the help of Microsoft Gold Certified Partner Tectura, Express Glass used Microsoft Dynamics NAV to automate its back-office functions, reduce data entry requirements and pave the way for further innovations. These include equipping glaziers with digital pens that transmit job and order information back to head office in real time. This keeps Express Glass office staff up-to-date, increases the amount of work the company can handle and has improved their ability to respond and meet the needs of their customers

“When a bank storefront is shattered in an ATM robbery, people don't want to haggle. They want the problem fixed.”

Adrian Grocott, Managing Director,  
Express Glass

## Situation

Founded in 1984, Express Glass provides emergency glass and window repairs throughout Australia, fixing everything from small suburban backyard windows to the vast panes of reinforced glass found in metropolitan skyscrapers. Its core value proposition is speed.

Over the years, the company's customer base has grown dramatically. Express Glass currently services many of the third-party facilities managers that run corporate offices and the retail networks occupied by some of Australia's largest companies.

Most glass replacement jobs are coordinated from the Express Glass head office in Sydney, where the company employs 40 full-time staff, and from a smaller branch office in Melbourne. The company also relies on a nationwide network of subcontractors to perform onsite repair jobs at very short notice.

“Our business is reactive maintenance,” says Adrian Grocott, Managing Director, Express Glass. “When a bank storefront is shattered in an ATM robbery, we have to be onsite within the hour. This means a constantly changing work schedule which is a complication that doesn't exist in most other maintenance companies.

“The speed of our internal processes is equally important. Our customers often can't afford to wait so by providing instantaneous quotes we are generally in the box seat to receive the order.”

By early 2007, Express Glass was outgrowing its back-office systems. The company was running separate programs for order processing and accounts management, and office staff

were becoming bogged down transferring data between systems.

“We would enter jobs into our system, print the work orders and these would be handed to tradesmen,” says Grocott. “Those tradesmen would go out into the field, perform the repair work, bring the paper back and someone at the office would enter that data.”

Grocott wanted Express Glass to have a real-time ordering system that would allow glaziers to provide quotes and other information while on a job site.

“One of our ultimate goals was to have real-time workflow,” he says. “We wanted a system to always reflect the current status of work happening in the field, both for our own order tracking and invoicing, and also so we can keep our clients up to date.”

But there was a large obstacle in the company's way: the complex pricing structure inherent to glass repair work, which glaziers would never be able to calculate and present to a customer on the spot.

## Solution

Grocott consulted Tectura, a Microsoft Gold Certified Partner, about creating a system that could accommodate the glass repair industry's variable pricing structure. He eventually settled on an enterprise resource planning solution based on Microsoft Dynamics NAV with a mobile interface to provide connectivity across the company's workforce.

There were several key factors behind Express Glass's choice of Microsoft Dynamics NAV, but Grocott says

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Adrian Grocott, Managing Director,  
Express Glass

flexibility and adaptability were the most important.

“We would need to automate pricing in a way that matched the complicated pricing matrix in our industry,” says Grocott. “Microsoft Dynamics NAV was the only application we looked at that could make it happen.”

Grocott envisioned a system that would allow glaziers working in the field to send information about their repair jobs back to head office remotely, and in real time. He initially investigated PDAs and other handheld devices, but soon discounted them because he did not relish the prospect of having to equip and train thousands of subcontractors around Australia.

A chance encounter with an air-conditioning repairman at his home alerted Grocott to the availability of a new digital pen, produced by Destiny Australia, which could be used in conjunction with specially made paper to transmit form data back to the central office using a regular mobile phone.

Fortunately, Microsoft Dynamics NAV integrated smoothly with the digital pen technology. This would enable Grocott to fulfil his goal of enabling Express Glass workers to import data from the field into the company’s back-office systems. Tectura was asked to help modify Microsoft Dynamics NAV and integrate the digital pen interface.

“Glaziers from Express Glass write job details on forms made of special paper and use the digital pen to upload that information to a mobile phone using a Bluetooth connection,” says Ross Pickard, Client Account Manager, Tectura Australia, who helped manage the

implementation. “The data from the form is then forwarded to their office in a format similar to an email message with an attachment.

“The information on the form is automatically uploaded into Dynamics NAV, which in turn updates the job status and calculates pricing. This all happens within a few seconds of the glazier completing the form and allows for instantaneous quoting and invoicing.”

## Benefits

The integrated solution went live in 2009 and before long proved its worth. The elimination of manual data between systems and between the glaziers and the office increased the volume of work that Express Glass can manage. This improved business capability was dramatically tested within months, in the aftermath of a locally unprecedented natural disaster.

### Increased front-line productivity

According to Grocott, the volume of work Express Glass can handle with Microsoft Dynamics NAV has grown about 35 percent. However, the company has not had to employ any new staff in either the front line service team – which answers phones and allocates jobs – or, more importantly, the back office.

“Before Dynamics NAV, our back office was really stretched,” says Grocott. “Now we have a significant competitive advantage – especially with regard to scalability.”

### Scaling to meet disaster

This increased ability to react was emphatically demonstrated just months after deployment. In March 2010, Melbourne was battered by a fierce

## For More Information

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To access information using the web, go to:

[www.microsoft.com/australia/dynamics/](http://www.microsoft.com/australia/dynamics/)

For more information about Tectura Pty Ltd products and services, call 02 9409 0400 or visit the website at:

[www.au.tectura.com](http://www.au.tectura.com)

For more information about Express Glass products and services, call (02) 9335 2222 or visit the website at:

[www.expressglass.com.au](http://www.expressglass.com.au)

hailstorm. Hailstones, up to 10 centimetres in diameter, pelted the city and surrounding area, causing hundreds of millions of dollars in damage to homes, cars and businesses. Tens of thousands of windows were smashed and in the days following the storm, insurance customers lodged more than 40,000 claims worth around \$500 million.

"The storm created unprecedented demand for emergency glazing. We were handling three-and-a-half times our usual level of business but at no stage did we start generating a backlog. Our new system coped. Of course, our people put in a lot of time, but we wouldn't have been so successful if we didn't have an automated system underpinning what was happening on the front line."

### Sound strategic investment

Grocott says that after seeing how Microsoft Dynamics NAV helped Express Glass manage this dramatic spike in demand, he was convinced the company had made a sound decision and had received an excellent return on its investment.

Furthermore, the company is likely to invest in further adaptations and customisations.

"Now that they've had the system in place and can see what it can do, they're in a position to add more customisation around the edges," says Pickard. "They want to explore other tools they can deploy and integrate that will increase their competitive advantage, which is a nice position for any business to be in."

## Microsoft Dynamics

Microsoft Dynamics is a line of integrated, adaptable business management solutions that enables you and your people to make business decisions with greater confidence. Microsoft Dynamics works like familiar Microsoft software such as Microsoft Office, which means less of a learning curve for your people, so they can get up and running quickly and focus on what's most important. And because it is from Microsoft, it easily works with the systems that your company already has implemented. By automating and streamlining financial, customer relationship, and supply chain processes, Microsoft Dynamics brings together people, processes, and technologies, increasing the productivity and effectiveness of your business, and helping you drive business success.

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### Software and Services

- Products
  - Microsoft Dynamics NAV 5.0

### Partners

- Tectura