



Microsoft Improves Distribution Accuracy for Industrial Packaging Supplier Winson Group

Overview

Country or Region: Australia

Industry: Manufacturing and distribution

Customer Profile

Founded in 1968, Winson Group manufactures and supplies packaging products and prime labels to industry. It employs more than 200 people.

Business Situation

Winson Group faced constant pressure to provide faster and more accurate deliveries. It wanted to increase the automation of its marketing, sales, warehousing, manufacturing and distribution operations.

Solution

Winson Group implemented a supply chain management solution based on Microsoft Dynamics NAV, Microsoft SQL Server, Microsoft BizTalk Server, Microsoft Office 2003 Professional and Microsoft Exchange Server 2003.

Benefits

- Over 99 percent distribution accuracy.
- Web sales up by 60 percent.
- Remote access for staff.
- Scalable solution to keep pace with rapid growth.
- Cost savings passed on to customers.

“We now have more than 99 percent accuracy in order picking.”

Mark Brennan, Managing Director, Winson Group

Winson Group prides itself on its responsiveness to customers. The industrial packaging supplies manufacturer was under constant pressure to produce and deliver goods faster, more accurately and at lower prices. The company needed real-time visibility of shop floor operations, increased accuracy of order placement and the ability to integrate with business partners' systems. Winson Group asked Microsoft partner Tectura to provide a technology solution that would improve operational productivity and give the business a distinct competitive advantage. Tectura built a new solution based on an existing Microsoft Dynamics™ NAV platform with Microsoft® SQL Server 2005, Microsoft® BizTalk Server® 2004 and Microsoft® Exchange Server 2003. Since the implementation, Winson Group has enjoyed improved productivity, increased insight into customer needs and smooth data exchanges with partners.

Situation

Winson Group is a privately owned Australian company with two major subsidiaries: SIGNET and insignia. SIGNET is a leading distributor of packaging materials and manufacturer of industrial marking products, such as stencil spray, line marking paint and pallet wrap. The company operates its national call center from its head office in Wakerley, Queensland, and has distribution centers in Sydney, Brisbane and Townsville.

insignia is a prime label specialist whose products include custom-printed product labels, barcode labels and blank labels. It has manufacturing and warehousing facilities in Wakerley and Melbourne, with sales and service offices in Sydney and Adelaide.

With over 30,000 customers on its database, Winson Group's challenge was ensuring companies received the goods they ordered and that these were delivered promptly to the right place.

"In the industrial packaging supplies business, our customers demand one thing above all others: the lowest price," says Mark Brennan, Managing Director, Winson Group. "But on top of this, we need to have the product in stock, get the order right and make it easy to process the order so customers get what they ask for.

"Our daily challenge is to make information accessible quickly and easily, so people can do their jobs properly."

Since 1997, the group had been using Microsoft Dynamics NAV to manage its manufacturing, distribution and financial operations. By January 2004, it recognized the need to extend its use of Microsoft Dynamics NAV into every part of the business.

"We needed a single source of data that was accessible nationally and relevant to each different business process," says Brennan. "For example, marketing needs a significantly different view of the data to manufacturing, but it's necessary to provide the same core data to both groups."

The company lacked an integrated process to match products with customer orders. Store staff would pick and dispatch orders based on printed picking documents. This manual process led to frequent errors in picking, especially in relation to product size or product variant.

The company had also set high growth targets and needed to be confident its technology infrastructure would meet these demands.

"We currently have an annual turnover of about A\$70 million and employ more than 200 people," says Brennan. "We're growing at around 15 percent per annum and doubling our revenue every five years. We need products that can keep pace with that growth."

Solution

Winson Group engaged Tectura, a Microsoft Gold Certified Partner, to build a comprehensive enterprise resource planning (ERP) and supply chain management system based on Microsoft Dynamics NAV. Winson Group upgraded the company's existing Microsoft Dynamics NAV software to the most recent version and installed modules for general ledger, cash management, sales and receivables, purchases and payables, warehouse management, automated data capture, customer relationship management (CRM), manufacturing, human resources, business analytics, service management and an e-commerce gateway.

“Since the upgrade, our Web sales grew from A\$260,000 in June 2006 to A\$430,000 in February 2007. That demonstrates a great uptake of online sales from customers.”

Mark Brennan, Managing Director, Winson Group

Installing Microsoft BizTalk Server 2004 allowed supply chain integration with business partners' systems and helped automate business processes such as generating purchase orders and invoices and monitoring inventory levels. BizTalk Server 2004 enables a real-time connection between customers' systems and the company's database. Packaging and safety products can be dispatched on the same day as customers make the order.

The backbone of Winson Group's new technology infrastructure is Microsoft SQL Server 2005. It provides a reliable database software platform, enterprise-class data management and integrated business intelligence tools. Employees can access critical data quickly, analyze it and generate reports. SQL Server 2005 is engineered to reduce downtime and manage disaster recovery. This scalable infrastructure will meet the company's plans to double its revenue every five years.

The solution was deployed to 160 terminals running the Microsoft® Windows® operating system and Microsoft Office 2003 Professional and 15 wireless hand-held barcode readers across eight sites.

As a result of a recent acquisition, Winson Group added another three remote sites to its network. With the server infrastructure already in place, the company was able to roll out the system with less than a day's installation at each site.

Benefits

Order Accuracy Improved Dramatically

Increased organizational productivity and improved decision making through better data access are the direct results of implementing the new ERP and supply chain system.

“Across our three major distribution centers we pack about 600 orders a day at an average of four parcels per order,” says Brennan. “By using an integrated scanning process, where each product barcode is scanned and matched to a unique barcoded dispatch label, we now have more than 99 percent accuracy in order picking.”

“Increased accuracy saves money,” adds Ross Pickard, Client Account Manager, Tectura. “If a customer returns an order, that means lost profit and non-billable time. Automating the order process using Microsoft BizTalk Server 2004 has reduced process variability and made Winson Group so much more competitive.”

Efficiencies in the supply chain can be passed on to customers as lower prices.

“We can provide low prices and transactional costs for customers,” says Brennan. “With Microsoft Dynamics NAV, we have the processes in place that allow us to have the goods in stock and ensure our customers receive accurate orders and timely delivery.”

Faster Access to Information

Client data is accessible quickly through Microsoft Office 2003. “Office now has smart tags, so if you click on a customer's name in an Office Word document, it connects to Microsoft Dynamics NAV and all their account details pop up,” says Pickard.

Manufacturing processes such as packaging orders and capacity planning are completed quickly with Microsoft Dynamics NAV. All employees can view shop floor operations and advise customers of how their orders are progressing.

“Using Microsoft technology has given us a strategic advantage,” says Brennan. “Our people now feel empowered as that they can

access the order processing information they need through Microsoft Dynamics NAV and make more informed decisions.”

Increase in Web Sales

The e-commerce gateway module in Microsoft Dynamics NAV enabled Winson Group to streamline its commercial interactions with business partners and customers.

“Since the upgrade, our Web sales grew from A\$260,000 in June 2006 to A\$430,000 in February 2007,” says Brennan. “This demonstrates great uptake of online sales from customers.”

Switched-on Mobile Sales Force

Winson Group’s sales force now uses smartphones to access customer information when away from the sales and dispatch center. They can also feed up-to-date data into the CRM module of Microsoft Dynamics NAV from any location.

“Wherever staff are, their email is live,” explains Matthew Bowler, IT Manager, Winson Group. “They can access customer histories and invoices. After meeting a customer, they can write details of the interaction straight into the system, allowing all system users to be up to date on customer issues.

“We didn’t have to buy any additional products for the handheld solution; we used existing Microsoft applications. There were no expensive outlays for a developer to come in. Staff have reacted very positively, so we are soon going to double the number of mobile sales users.”

For More Information

For more information about Microsoft products and services, call the Microsoft Sales Information Center at (800) 426-9400. In Canada, call the Microsoft Canada Information Centre at (877) 568-2495. Customers who are deaf or hard-of-hearing can reach Microsoft text telephone (TTY/TDD) services at (800) 892-5234 in the United States or (905) 568-9641 in Canada. Outside the 50 United States and Canada, please contact your local Microsoft subsidiary. To access information using the World Wide Web, go to: www.microsoft.com

For more information about Tectura (Australia) products and services, call (612) 9409 0400 or visit the Web site at: www.tectura.com

For more information about Winson Group products and services, call (617) 3364 2100 or visit the Web site at: www.winson.com.au

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.

For more information about Microsoft Dynamics, go to: www.microsoft.com/dynamics

Software and Services

- Products
 - Microsoft Dynamics NAV
 - Microsoft BizTalk Server 2004
 - Microsoft SQL Server 2005
 - Microsoft Exchange Server 2003
 - Microsoft Office 2003 Professional

Hardware

- Dell PowerEdge 750 and 2850 servers
- Dell Dimension 4600 desktops
- 180 Wyse thin client terminals

Partners

- Tectura (Australia)

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