

CASE STUDY Decora Blinds

MICROSOFT DYNAMICS™ NAV



Background

Decora Blind Systems is a local family business. Established over 26 years ago Decora is now one of the leading suppliers to the window blind trade in the UK and Ireland supplying manufactured products as well as vertical roller fabric, machinery and other components.

Due to its success throughout the UK and Ireland Decora has had to move premises three times to accommodate its expansion with the number of employees growing by 80% in the last two years alone. Decora now has a company turnover of 12m and plan to see further growth in the next 2-3 years as they embark on new projects and move into the European market.

Why Microsoft Dynamics™ NAV

Decora had to change its existing financial software as it was clear that they had outgrown their former system. The old system was unable to keep up with company's growth; a number of upgrades had to be designed to augment the systems shortcomings which resulted in the company no longer having any confidence in the package.

Decora had to explore the market for a new solution as there were no alternative development opportunities. They had to move quickly if they were going to sustain the accelerated growth of the company.

Alistair Speer, Operations Manager initially looked at eight packages. He narrowed these down to three. There were a number of factors that were paramount. They needed a solution that was cost effective, flexible and would be able to handle the company's growth.

Microsoft Dynamics™ NAV provided most of the required functionality off the shelf yet was also flexible and configurable to their requirements. The fact that Microsoft Dynamics™ NAV was a Microsoft product provided the confidence that this was a sound mid to long term investment.

"We chose Microsoft Dynamics™ NAV because of its core functionality but also because its ability to be easily and cost effectively adapted around our companies key business processes. We were also very impressed with how Sysco engaged with us to implement a solution that was aligned with our Business Objectives" commented Alistair Speer, Operations Manager

"Sysco from day one showed the commitment and dedication that we were looking for; none of the other suppliers took our business requirements as seriously," says Speer, Operations Manager

The Challenge

The biggest challenge was to move the whole company onto a single system. The old system had not been integrated with manufacturing and the report outputs were not up to the standard that was required; this had resulted



*Ian Topping,
Sales Manager,
Sysco with
Alistair Speer,
Operations
Manager,
Decora*

in users resorting to other means to manage their business processes, often only paying "lip service" to the computerised system. There was hence no real confidence in the old system.

Microsoft Dynamics™ NAV would be used throughout the company from the staff on the warehouse floor right up to Directors level. Microsoft Dynamics™ NAV would be fully integrated with manufacturing systems resulting in the company working as one instead of an artificial split between manufacturing and sales.

Sysco did much preparation to ensure that the transition went smoothly at all levels of the company. Warehouse workers provided the biggest challenge as they went from nothing to having a computer to input information!

"The ability to design each screen for each specific user's requirement and the way the system was implemented means that the data input is extremely straight forward and simple to use," says Speer.

Implementation

Decora had very aggressive timescales. Sysco's team work and dedication ensured that when it was time to go-live there were no major problems.

An immediate result from the implementation of Microsoft Dynamics™ NAV was the speed of transactions within sales and purchase ordering. The sales order processes did not only improve but they were able to cope with greater volumes of data. Purchase orders improved significantly when MRP was introduced, - on the old system four people were required to handle orders which could now be dealt with by only one person freeing up staff resource which can now be employed for smarter things resulting in greater job satisfaction.

Sales and manufacturing started to work together because they could see the whole picture, resulting in increased productivity, reliable information and a satisfied work force.

"Due to the success of the implementation we will be introducing eight new product lines within the next year. This is a massive increase as previously this number of new products would have been introduced over a three year period."

"Sysco's commitment to the project and implementation was excellent. Sysco staff worked out of hours ensuring that our deadlines were met and our go-live went smoothly," comments Alistair Speer, Operations Manager

Business Benefits

One of the main business benefits is that Decora now has a stable platform to grow. Microsoft Dynamics™ NAV improved user productivity, increasing work load while maintaining staffing levels. Business processes improved and sales information can now be retrieved more quickly. All of these have contributed to Decora now having a system that they can rely on to provide them with accurate up to date information.

Now Decora have one solution for their company they have full visibility of all areas. Functionality can be restricted for users where necessary and authorised users can have the ability to drill into transactions from anywhere. Decora Blinds now expect expense savings and a revenue increase during 2006.

"We are now coming into one of our busiest times of year and it is remarkable how little stress there is in all areas of the business compared to this time last year," says Speer.

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There have been a number of specific benefits in the two key areas of Decora:

Purchasing and warehousing:

- o Manufacturing Resource Planning (MRP).
- o Improved planning.
- o Gain an accurate view of what is in stock.
- o Better inventory control/churn.
- o Gain an accurate view of obsolete stock, slow moving stock and fast moving stock.
- o Improvements in supply chain management.
- o Better information flow to Sales Order Processing.

"Month end reporting has greatly improved we can now get reports out to our sales reps much faster on the old system. It used to take a good week to get the reports correlated and sent out to our sales reps which can now be done at the press of a button," says Speer.

Finance:

- o Up to the minute accurate reporting.
- o VAT and Intrastat produced by the system.
- o Better information flow to Sales Order Processing/Credit Control.
- o Budgeting.
- o Fixed Assets.
- o Audit log for traceability.
- o Multicurrency.
- o Dimensions/Account Schedules - More detailed reporting.

"Now that the information is readily available account schedules and dimension analysis is brilliant," says Speer.

The Future

Since "Go Live" in August 2005, Decora has already started to reap the rewards of a fully integrated and flexible system which can meet their requirements as they continue to experience growth in their manufacturing and wholesale operations.

Decora are now looking at full manufacturing integration. This was initially scheduled for 2007, but Decora have been so impressed with Sysco and Microsoft Dynamics™ NAV that they feel ready to move forward with this now.

Other areas they are considering include; enabling online access to "Web" based systems for employees, customers, suppliers and partners, providing customers and suppliers with self service capabilities, increasing efficiency, satisfaction and profitability, and providing financial information in multiple currencies.

"Communication has always been very good between Sysco and Decora and it continues to improve through regular review meetings. Our relationship with Sysco is more of a partnership", says Alistair Speer, Operations Manager.

For more information about Microsoft Dynamics™ NAV and Sysco, go to:

www.sysco-software.com