

CASE STUDY

Tobermore Concrete Products

MICROSOFT DYNAMICS™ NAV

USING SLOW OR INEFFICIENT TOOLS TO DO WORK CAN CREATE STAFF FRUSTRATION AND POOR CUSTOMER SERVICE. BUT BY APPLYING THE RIGHT TECHNOLOGY THAT CAN BE ADAPTED TO SUIT YOUR BUSINESS PROCESS, IT'S POSSIBLE TO BECOME MORE RESPONSIVE TO CUSTOMER NEEDS AND IMPROVE HOW STAFF OPERATE AND SERVE THE COMPANY.

BACKGROUND

Tobermore Concrete Products are one of Ireland's leading manufacturers of rectangular and interlocking paving blocks for the landscape and building sectors. Trading for 65 years with 220 employees, the company owes its name to the location of its head office in Tobermore, with five branches in Bangor, Dublin, Galway, Cork and Leyland in the UK.

Tobermore got their fingers burned with another accounts software upgrade in the recent past and hence any new system had to fix these problems and demonstrate a future proofed solution. "We were in a nightmare situation, lots of problems, significant daily downtime, poor support, implementation and training, hence we went to the market to rectify this bad situation" recalls Glenn Robinson, General Manager of Tobermore

According to Glenn, the company wanted a system that could handle the growing volume of orders Tobermore received, while making it easy for staff to input these orders immediately. "We wanted to enhance the customer experience and make the whole order processing aspect of doing business with Tobermore much slicker. We also needed reliability and a product that would support our long term growth with a company behind it to provide the necessary support. Basically we could not continue as we were, so we commissioned Sysco, who clearly demonstrated they could manage our requirements."

WHY MICROSOFT DYNAMICS™ NAV

Tobermore began shopping around for a new solution in May 2006 reviewing several options prior to whittling down to two bidders - Sysco Software Solutions, which proposed Microsoft Dynamics NAV, along with a rival reseller pitching a different product.

"We made it clear that we were going to be a very difficult customer based on the negative experience that we had," says Glenn. "But we said, if your company can deliver, there's a very lucrative order on the table. Sysco really stepped up to the mark. By the end of the presentation to the team at Tobermore, they were streets ahead of the



Ian Topping, Sales Manager, Sysco, pictured with Glenn Robinson, General Manager, Tobermore Concrete Products inspecting the Tobermore fleet

competition. They were able to present a prototype in a day of how they could meet our needs. Ultimately, that swung it."

Tobermore decided on Microsoft Dynamics NAV at the end of August and the system went live on 4 January 2007. "It was a very tight implementation because of the scale and the number of different processes that each department has," says Glenn. "The key thing from the outset was a good project plan to work towards. We set out a series of dates and times and key performance indicators that by certain dates had to be implemented."

Sysco delivered against all of those requirements and Microsoft Dynamics NAV now runs all of Tobermore's core business functions, including stock control, order processing, financial, purchasing, logistics planning, production with clever text messaging and email confirmations streamlining and improving day to day activities. Tobermore cleverly utilise the flexibility of Dynamics NAV to optimise productivity and ensure a return on their investment.

The software had much of the functionality Tobermore needed out of the box, but over the course of the project Tobermore introduced specific configurations to suit its business processes and make the customer ordering process easier. Sysco delivered staff training in November and December. The company currently has 65 Microsoft Dynamics NAV users spread across its six offices.

BENEFITS

Ease of use

"From previously only having a small number of people who could enter orders, now everyone on the sales team can do it and check the schedule. The benefits from an administration point of view have been tenfold," says Glenn. Moreover, the product is easy to administer - users only get the menus and options they need.

Flexibility

Dynamics NAV has proven to be extremely adaptable to suit the requirements of the business, Robinson states. "Whenever the staff saw the flexibility in the product, they were saying: 'can you do this or that'. They suddenly realised, they had a product where they could ask for a change and it would happen and would improve their job". That snowball effect has meant employees have been able to suggest improvements to make the business process more efficient, which have been incorporated into Dynamics NAV. "Our staff never had everything like this before. It was a breath of fresh air," Glenn declares.

Improved business efficiency

Using the software has allowed Tobermore to take many of the manual processes out of its business and improve customer service at the same time. In addition, the same data in head office can be accessed by staff in real time in any of the company's branches. Glenn recalls "In the past Tobermore relied on paper with little information to hand so you could not handle a customer enquiry immediately. We had to find the paperwork check the order and phone the customer back. Now, orders taken over the phone are inputted directly into Dynamics NAV at Head Office and at our branches. I can track orders on the system and customer enquiries are handled immediately on the phone".

Greater productivity

"Obviously, it's spreading the workload and in terms of staff perception, it's a lot more reliable than what they were used to," says Glenn. "In the space of the first few months of running the product, confidence blossomed and everyone says we made the right decision."

Faster business decisions

Timely availability of data through Dynamics NAV has eased the burden on management and staff, helping them to become more efficient. "We set out a number of different reports we wanted. It's just so easy to use. I can check current order status and it's so comfortable and easy to navigate around," Glenn says. "Ultimately, I would not wind back the clock to take back what we had in the past. You have a lot of live information, it's not processing data at the end of the day. The speed of information is much more beneficial. We're no longer working a day behind."

Reduced need for IT support

"We tend to do a lot more things via email. Previously, we'd have been on the phone every day to the IT support company. We save a lot of time, staff are no longer waiting on the system to do things. You can't put a figure on that," says Glenn.



"From a business point of view, it's really aligned our software plans within the business, delivering benefits we only dreamed of before."
Glenn Robinson,
General Manager

Technology aligned with company strategy

Tobermore is in a significant growth phase in the business. From a sales and despatch point of view, customers need to get products as soon as possible. Because Microsoft Dynamics NAV has made the company more efficient, Tobermore hasn't needed to recruit additional staff to handle the extra volume of sales.

THE FUTURE

Applying the right technology to your business can boost efficiency and productivity and its money well spent. "I would say it's a huge step forward for us, in terms of improvement of efficiency to the business and staff overall, it will pay for itself within two to three years. From a business point of view it's really aligned our software plans within the business delivering benefits we only dreamed of before. With our processes in place and well supported by Dynamics NAV and Sysco, we are confident of delivering the next phase of our business plan. Nothing is holding us back now" states Glenn Robinson.

For more information about Microsoft Dynamics™ NAV and Sysco Software Solutions, visit www.sysco-software.com

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