CASE STUDY: DYNAMICS AX IN THE CLOUD RESHAPES AFFINITY

Overview

Affinity Apparel, a leader in the uniform-manufacturing industry, engaged a third party to implement the Microsoft Dynamics AX ERP and e-commerce in the cloud, but issues during implementation resulted in sluggish technology and a system that crashed multiple times daily.

For Affinity, the deployment was teetering on the verge of project failure. The company needed help from experts, and quickly.

Market Reality

Affinity's story dates back over a century, with success measured by creating quality apparel, providing strong customer experiences and shipping orders rapidly.

Affinity wanted to secure its leadership role by implementing Microsoft Dynamics AX 2012 and e-commerce in the Microsoft Cloud.

By efficiently running operations, finance, customer service and sales on one platform, Affinity sought to deliver seamless customer interactions, boost productivity, create flexibility for growth and generate business intelligence to drive performance. When that didn't happen, Affinity enlisted Fusion's help.

Business Opportunity

Affinity reported that its systems became almost unusable soon after the ERP deployment (before Fusion came on board).

Warehouse workers trying to access an order or print an invoice waited 30 seconds to minutes for a response. Website orders couldn't be processed efficiently, if at all, for fulfillment once the transaction entered Dynamics AX.

Other key issues involving purchase orders, invoicing and warehouse functionality were inhibiting Affinity's lifecycle of cash.

Affinity's Solution

Fusion partnered with Affinity to perform a technology rescue to stabilize the environment. After an assessment, Fusion immediately repaired critical architecture, increased capacities and

Objectives
- *Analyze Microsoft Azure and Dynamics AX configuration*
- *Speed up system processing and ensure system reliability*
- *Reduce costs and restore efficient processing of orders*

Approach
- *Re-architect and implement entire infrastructure in new Azure datacenter*
- *Migrate operations and ensure interoperability of devices*
- *Configure Dynamics AX to conform to best practices*
- *Identify and remediate inefficiencies*

Business Impact
- *Increased units shipped from 3,000/day in Month 1 to 7,500/day currently*
- *Reduced 2.5 hours of AX downtime per day to 75 days without any AX-related system outages*
- *Increased units per container from 1.4 to 3.5, restoring freight revenue to pre-implementation levels*
- *Restored customer confidence through seamless, engaging experience*
- *Created scalable system with flexibility for growth*

Keys to Success
- *Affinity's trust in Fusion's expertise increased agility of project*
- *Quick decision making and turnaround throughout implementation*
- *Fusion's development background and adherence to best practices led to sound guidance*

improved inefficient custom code.

Fusion performed additional fixes and process improvements, including migrating Affinity's entire Dynamics AX ERP system from one Microsoft datacenter to another. This transition improved database performance instantly and ensured the interoperability of devices in Affinity's warehouses and fulfillment centers.

Fusion re-architected and configured the new environment to adhere to Microsoft best practices for Dynamics AX deployments. Customizations in the original implementation that caused over $1 million in orders to be hung up in the system were discovered and fixed.

Fusion also removed thousands of dollars of unneeded costs that were generated by misconfigured transportation management.

The impact was tremendous. System performance improved by a factor of 10. Batch processes previously taking 40+ hours were reduced to 10 hours or less. Other performance factors within the cloud-based, end-user software increased individual productivity exponentially.

With Affinity back in the black, Fusion continues to be a trusted partner and advisor, driving further innovations and efficiencies, particularly in the Warehouse Management System and through customized websites deployed for their e-commerce platforms.

"With Fusion as a trusted partner for our implementation, we have been able to stabilize our IT architecture, optimize our AX warehouse module and enhance our website capabilities to move from an extended implementation to growing our business. Fusion's talent pool has broad expertise with all modules of Dynamics AX, cloud infrastructure architecture, application development and excellent support framework – all key contributors to turning a distressed implementation into a stable business platform. Fusion is a reliable, responsive and effective company that we are looking forward to partnering with long term," said Affinity CIO Steven Belongia.

What Other Companies Can Learn

Affinity was able to overcome seemingly insurmountable problems and return attention to its core business. Microsoft Dynamics AX in the cloud is a powerful tool that must be implemented according to Microsoft best practices and recommendations.

Affinity leveraged Fusion's development and cloud background to gain technology insights that the other firm couldn't deliver. Fusion took time to partner with and learn Affinity's business objectives in order to ensure a solution that would align with Affinity's vision.

AFFINITY APPAREL
A GREAT UNIFORM COMPANY

About Affinity Apparel
Affinity Apparel specializes in designing and embroidering uniforms for the employees of hundreds of companies, including airlines, fast-food chains, gas stations and pharmacies. Each day, more than 400,000 people go to work wearing Affinity-made apparel. The company's roots go back to the late 1800s in Dayton, Ohio and Moultrie, Georgia.

Fusion Alliance

About Fusion
Fusion Alliance delivers actionable insights, customer experiences and human-driven technologies that transform the way our clients envision and shape their businesses.

That's why businesses across multiple industries have relied on Fusion's expertise and partnership for over 25 years. Fusion Alliance is the catalyst that moves your ideas to execution.

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