



CASE STUDY: ASHLEY FURNITURE EMPLOYS MICROSOFT DYNAMICS FOR E-COMMERCE

Getting back on track with a little help

Overview

Ashley Furniture had completed a Microsoft Dynamics AX and Sitecore implementation, but the production environment did not meet Ashley's expectations. Instead, it resulted in poor user experiences, extended periods of downtime and loss of revenue. Frustrated by these negative outcomes, Ashley reached out to Fusion Alliance for an architectural assessment of the Dynamics AX and Sitecore installation and an actionable plan to resolve the performance and reliability issues.

Market Reality

Ashley Furniture is the leading provider of furniture in the United States. The company understood that its online presence would be critical to continued growth. A key factor in that equation

would be incorporating an ERP in e-commerce. Like many enterprise organizations, Ashley Furniture selected Microsoft Dynamics to efficiently drive its operations, finance, customer service and e-commerce platform. However, the implementation did not follow best practices, which subsequently led to issues.

The reality is that no complex platform is plug and play, and often businesses invest with the best intentions but lose the value if the environment is not set up correctly. Ashley Furniture took action by quickly identifying the issues and seeking outside advice and expertise to rectify the problems.

Business Opportunity

The poor production performance of the existing Dynamics implementation

Objectives

- Assess existing installation of Microsoft Dynamics AX and Sitecore
- Evaluate enterprise readiness of the production e-commerce environment

Approach

- Examine underperforming implementation and utilized best practices for Sitecore and Microsoft Dynamics AX to maximize performance and business reliability
- Create a holistic solution focused on short term stabilization and long term support

Business Impact

- Awareness and prioritization of opportunities for improvement
- Improved performance and increased revenue

Keys to Success

- Key leadership participation in driving strategic vision
- Extensive Microsoft Dynamics AX and Sitecore knowledge and experience

affected customer support and resulted in lost revenue opportunities.

Ashley was determined to strengthen its e-commerce presence, improve system performance and customer support, reduce risk and provide a more

stable foundation for the company's online platform. The company took time to more closely evaluate the system to make improvements and, ultimately, better serve its customers.

Ashley's Solution

When its website crashed on a major holiday, Ashley Furniture knew there was an underlying issue that needed to be resolved. The company asked Fusion Alliance to complete an architectural assessment to solve the major business issues of downtime and poor system performance at checkout on the e-commerce site, both of which led to lost revenue opportunity. Fusion evaluated the existing system configuration and performance characteristics against both Microsoft and Sitecore best practices.

The high-level, symptomatic issues that needed to be rectified included:

- ▣ Slow or erratic loading of pages on the website
- ▣ A lengthy checkout procedure that would sometimes time out, causing customers to abandon the online shopping cart
- ▣ Unreliable checkout process
- ▣ Extended system downtime required to perform maintenance and updates

With the evaluation, complete, Fusion developed a detailed roadmap of recommendations and a suggested implementation for Ashley Furniture. The recommendations addressed performance, stability, operations and efficiency. Each recommendation was categorized by:

- ▣ Expected usefulness
- ▣ Implementation timeframe
- ▣ Implementation risk
- ▣ Resource commitment

These classifications allowed Ashley Furniture to prioritize enhancements based on business importance and impact. Fusion advised which

configuration and deployment changes would result in immediate performance or stability enhancements, with a view toward long-term support of the platform.

With the roadmap in hand, Ashley Furniture was able to evaluate the system to make the changes necessary to support its strategic vision with e-commerce. After completing the recommended action items, the company was able to maximize the potential of Sitecore and Microsoft Dynamics AX and also leverage data and content in a more efficient, more effective way.

Relevant Takeaways

- ▣ Planning your roadmap and then reassessing at milestones is very important. If you made a mistake, don't throw good money after bad. Objective prioritization is fundamental to making progress. Get more than one opinion. Don't be afraid to fail fast or to make tough decisions like tearing down and rebuilding if you are not getting the results you expected.
- ▣ Microsoft Dynamics requires close adherence to best practices when implementing and configuring the system. When integrating it with other applications, such as Sitecore, businesses must adhere to those applications' best practices, as well. Only then can organizations gain the full power and benefits of the Dynamics platform and the applications it integrates with.



About Ashley Furniture

Ashley Furniture Industries was established in 1945 and is currently the largest furniture manufacturer in the world.

The company is headquartered in Arcadia, Wisconsin, but manufactures and distributes furniture across the United States, Canada, Mexico, Japan, Central America and South America.



Microsoft Dynamics AX
Gold Enterprise Resource Planning
Gold Application Development
Gold Cloud Platform

About Fusion

Fusion Alliance is a Microsoft Gold Dynamics ERP and CRM partner with longstanding roots in the cloud, specializing in digital, data and technology. Fusion is highly regarded as an enterprise solution provider, delivering the practical insights, engaging 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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