



Microsoft Services Customer Solution Case Study



Customer: Diamond Plastics Corporation

Web Site: www.dpcpipe.com

Customer Size: 600 employees

Country or Region: United States

Industry: Manufacturing—building and construction

Partner: Maverick Technologies

Customer Profile

Diamond Plastics Corporation is one of the leading PVC pipe producers in the world, with annual revenues of approximately U.S.\$350 million. The company has 600 employees and eight facilities nationwide.

Software and Services

- Microsoft Dynamics™
 - Microsoft Dynamics AX 4.0

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PVC Pipe Producer Achieves Smooth, Efficient Implementation with Services Engagement

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Dan Werner, Director of IT, Diamond Plastics Corporation

Business and Technology Need

Diamond Plastics Corporation started in 1982 as a small agricultural irrigation specialist with facilities in Texas and Nebraska. Since that time, the company has grown to include a nationwide network of professional manufacturing facilities that provide PVC pipe products for agricultural, industrial, and municipal applications.

To manage the financial aspect of its business, Diamond Plastics relied on Aplus Accounting software that was installed on an IBM AS/400 server. After years of customizations, the company was unable to upgrade to newer versions of the software. The existing system also could no longer accommodate the company's continued growth. For example, it was nearly impossible to integrate the accounting system with some of the company's internally developed shipping and shop-floor systems.

Diamond Plastics needed to implement a new accounting and business management system. After considering a range of enterprise resource planning systems, including SAP, Adonix, Infor, Intenia, iQMS,

Made2Manage, Minotaur, Ramco, and SSA Global, the company decided that Microsoft Dynamics™ AX 4.0 best met its needs.

“We chose Microsoft Dynamics AX because it supports our business processes without introducing excessive complexity and costs,” explains Dan Werner, Director of IT for Diamond Plastics Corporation. “The solution is easy to implement, use, and maintain. We can also customize Microsoft Dynamics AX without jeopardizing our ability to complete future upgrades.”

After selecting its new business management system, Diamond Plastics faced a second challenge. With a lean IT department that consists of two people who support more than 600 employees, the company needed assistance with deploying and maintaining its new system. Diamond Plastics decided to get help with the implementation process and invest in ongoing support for Microsoft Dynamics AX. In doing so, the company was confident that it would achieve a successful implementation and accommodate its business needs.



Solution

To implement Microsoft Dynamics AX, Diamond Plastics contracted with Microsoft® Gold Certified Partner Maverick Technologies—a next-generation engineering, systems integration and operational consulting business headquartered in Columbia, Illinois. Maverick Technologies is also enrolled in the Partner Foundation Plan for Microsoft Dynamics, which gives the company access to the Microsoft Dynamics Sure Step Methodology. This end-to-end implementation methodology encompasses proven methods, templates, and tools that ease the challenging process of implementing a new business management system. As such, it was a good match for Diamond Plastics.

With the Microsoft Dynamics Sure Step Methodology, Diamond Plastics gained access to a dedicated team of experts at Microsoft who helped integrate Microsoft Dynamics AX with the company's existing systems and operations predictably, flexibly, and efficiently. Chandru Shankar, Program Manager for Business Applications for Microsoft Services, led the implementation team. "With Chandru, we had one-on-one guidance through the entire life cycle of implementing a major software package. He helped us make architecture decisions and led us through the entire process," explains Werner.

Microsoft Services and Maverick Technologies also leaned on Microsoft Global Services India to develop customizations that are specific to business practices at Diamond Plastics. This blended team approach worked seamlessly, largely because the Microsoft Dynamics Sure Step Methodology provides a strategic process to follow.

Over a seven-month period, the Microsoft Services and Maverick Technologies teams

worked with Diamond Plastics to customize and roll out Microsoft Dynamics AX. These customizations included two interfaces: one that enables the existing shop-floor equipment monitoring system to send purchasing, receiving, and production transactions through Microsoft Dynamics AX, and another that enables status updates from the existing order fulfillment system to be sent to and reconciled in Microsoft Dynamics AX for invoicing purposes. The team also customized the system to ensure it matched the company's purchasing business model.

Today, Diamond Plastics uses Microsoft Dynamics AX to support all of its accounting functions to enter sales orders, create purchase orders, and track items through receiving and production. Diamond Plastics also has plans to integrate its payroll system with Microsoft Dynamics AX.

Benefits

With the Microsoft Dynamics Sure Step Methodology for Microsoft Dynamics AX, Diamond Plastics was able to efficiently and effectively complete a near-flawless transition to Microsoft Dynamics AX.

Personal Guidance

The personal touch offered by Microsoft Services was paramount in enabling Diamond Plastics to achieve a successful implementation.

"Microsoft Services was very responsive," says Werner. "Our project manager was on site throughout the entire implementation and helped answer questions, resolve issues, and set up conference calls. We never had to wait."

This high-quality support has continued beyond implementation. Today, Werner has

status meetings with Microsoft Services every other week. Through these meetings, the team from Microsoft Services can monitor Microsoft Dynamics AX and keep Diamond Plastics informed about product updates and security issues.

Efficient and Effective Implementation

By working with Microsoft Services, Diamond Plastics was able to implement a complex and customized business management system on time and within budget.

"The implementation experience was absolute value for our money," says Werner. "I cannot imagine achieving a successful implementation within the allocated time or budget by using a third-party consultant or completing the job in-house."

Successful Transition

The Microsoft Dynamics Sure Step Methodology enabled Diamond Plastics to roll out Microsoft Dynamics AX with no complications. Says Werner, "It's apparent that the Microsoft Services team did their jobs well, because we have not encountered any serious issues since implementation."

When questions do arise, Diamond Plastics has access to multiple resources. In addition to having a dedicated Microsoft Services representative, the company can take advantage of a Web site that offers helpful information and the latest downloads needed to resolve minor issues.

"Overall, we're very happy with our implementation of Microsoft Dynamics AX. We like the fact that it's backed by Microsoft—a company that is not going away—and we feel that Microsoft has invested a lot in Microsoft Dynamics AX," concludes Werner.