Dynamics AX Implementation Helps Save More Than 60% Operational Costs

CHAMPION

Customer: Champion Windows

Size: >2,000 employees

Region: Ohio, USA

Industry: Manufacturing and Distribution

Profile: Champion Windows is a leading manufacturer and marketer of windows, doors, sunrooms, and roofing and siding products for home and corporate improvement projects.

Services: Microsoft Dynamics AX

Business Need

As a leading provider of custom-designed and custom-manufactured home improvement solutions, Champion Windows operates in over 77 locations nationwide, and has over 50 showrooms.

Champion used several legacy systems to manage various business processes – 52 sales systems, 52 accounting systems, and 2 different manufacturing systems. These systems were not integrated with each other. Due to this, users had to spend a lot of time working on certain processes e.g., to generate a sales order, users had to enter information not only into the sales system, but also into accounting and manufacturing systems. Furthermore, the systems were too expensive to manage and maintain, and did not provide the necessary visibility to effectively run their business. With the goal to standardize processes throughout the organization, get complete visibility into operations, and reduce costs, Champion

implemented Dynamics AX 2012 R2 system through a third party provider.

The implementation did not allow Champion to reap the ERP's full benefits. They were facing several issues such as cumbersome financial reporting, problems with purchase and sales invoicing, complexities in payment processing, and more. In addition to this, some of their operations such as inventory management, finance, procurement and sourcing, and sales and marketing were still carried out manually or through legacy systems.

In order to improve the operational efficiency, Champion wanted to implement relevant functional modules in their existing AX 2012 R2 environment.

Champion was in search of a new Microsoft Partner with in-depth domain and customization knowledge, who could not only provide them with comprehensive

> "Indusa's (now Synoptek) Dynamics AX services has helped us standardize processes throughout the company and achieve complete visibility into our operations. For the first time ever, all of our operations can be managed with a single system. Under Indusa's guidance, we are able to save between 60 and 75% of the operational costs as compared to previous partners. If you want a trusted business partner who takes your success as seriously as you do, and who does so in a cost-effective manner, it's Indusa."
>
> **Dave Hofmeister (CIO), Champion Windows**

AX support services, but also renovate their AX 2012 R2 system by implementing additional modules.

Later, as Champion experienced rapid growth and high demand, they sought an even more sophisticated solution that would enable their team further extend and transform their business.

Champion wanted to upgrade their existing Dynamics AX 2012 R2 system to R3 CU 11 to effectively manage projects, resources, finances, and customer base all in a single solution and maintain high degree of service excellence.

According to Dave, **the primary reason of upgrade was the availability of Transportation Management module in R3.** They wanted to eliminate manual processes used to manage transportation activities, and get full visibility and control through R3's transportation planning and execution capabilities.

Champion also wanted to implement the Production Control and Warehouse Management modules available in R3 to effectively manage and track production activities, and streamline warehouse monitoring, respectively.

In addition to upgrading and implementing additional modules, Champion wanted to integrate AX 2012 R3 system with their other business systems such as product configurator software, newly implemented CRM Online, Power BI, and banking and treasury software to develop a flexible, comprehensive infrastructure that would help users easily and quickly drill down to the required level of detail.

Solution and Approach

To help Champion Windows gain deeper insight into the business, Synoptek (formerly Synoptek) worked closely with Champion in order to provide Dynamics AX support, system upgrade, and module implementation services to ensure their business goals were met.

1) Dynamics AX support with additional modules implementation

Synoptek provided a support plan that included both functional and technical (onsite and offshore) support, to address the challenges Champion was facing.

Synoptek helped Champion in rolling out functional modules such as:
- Inventory Management
- Procurement and Sourcing
- Intercompany Transactions
- Sales and Marketing

2) Financial consolidation
Synoptek worked with Champion to combine financial data from their different retail affiliates and implemented Finance Management module. The key features implemented include:
- Purchase and sales invoice booking
- Centralized payment processing
- Cash and bank management
- Customer and vendor management
- Financial reporting

3) Upgrading AX 2012 R2 to R3
Synoptek helped Champion upgrade their existing Dynamics AX 2012 R2 system to R3 CU 11 to get the additional functionalities specific to managing transportation, inventory and supply chain.

After carrying out deep dive sessions with their SMEs, Synoptek followed a complete approach to upgrading Champion's Dynamics AX right from installation, custom code upgrade and data migration. The key activities involved were:
- Database backup
- Development of replica of the production server
- System upgrade involving standard code upgrade from R2 to R3
- ISV solution upgrade
- Customized code upgrade and code conflict resolution
- Data upgrade and making it R3 compatible by running scripts (data upgrade cockpit)
- Functional testing
- User testing on UAT server
- Production server upgrade, installation, and configuration

- Issue resolution occurring on the production server

The entire upgrade process was carried out with a relatively shorter downtime.

4) Module implementation, customization and integration

After upgrading to R3, Synoptek helped Champion in rolling out Transportation Management, Production Control, and Warehouse Management modules.

Customization was carried out to enhance Champion's business processes with the help of extensive features available in R3 such as:
- Bank reconciliation with inbound port
- Budget management
- Report creation and documentation
- Purchase invoice creation

The existing AX 2012 R3 system was seamlessly integrated with Champion's other business systems:
- Product configurator software (WTS Paradigm) that manages BOM and route operations
- Dynamics CRM Online
- Power BI
- Treasury automation suite
- Shop floor machine integration with AX
- Barcode integration

Business Results

A single, flexible Dynamics AX system provides Champion with greater visibility into every aspect of their business. It gives them the freedom to operate across various locations by standardizing processes and helping them comply with regulatory requirements.

Synoptek's highly dedicated support services ensured that Champion achieved highest value out of their AX investment.

As the support plan was tailored according to the specific requirements of Champion, it not only helped them quickly solve system issues, but also accelerated their business performance.

As Synoptek performed the entire upgrade process with a relatively shorter downtime, this ensured zero disturbance to their business operations and lower total cost of upgrade.

As the solution integrates sales and purchasing processes with other key functional areas such as production, inventory management, and financials, Champion could achieve better cost control and accurate inventory valuation.

The solution allows Champion to enhance the efficiency of their financial operations and enable strategic planning activities – they can effectively manage cash flow and perform fast and reliable accounting, financial reporting, and analysis.

When it comes to budgeting, the solution offers Champion the ability to define budget amounts and track budget to actuals as well as forecasts to actuals.

With procurement processes configured toward Champion's specific business needs, it is easy for them to manage all the steps: from identifying the need for product and services through procuring the product, receipt, invoicing, and processing of payment with vendors.

Transportation management in R3 facilitates intuitive enterprise transportation planning, multimode and multi-segment planning and execution capabilities, advanced shipping notices management, appointment scheduling for docks, configurable rating structures, freight reconciliation, routes management, and more.

With the rollout of Production Control module, Champion is able to unify manufacturing process across different business units. The solution gives them real-time insight that helps them increase both their production efficiency and profitability.

AX-WTS paradigm software integration has removed overhead costs for Champion, as when the systems communicate back-and forth, users no longer need to reenter any order information; AX
CRM integration provides them with a 360-degree view of their customers; AX-Power BI integration helps them

make sense of their data which further allows them to make vital decisions irrespective of their location.

Users now enjoy working with the AX system as it has become simpler and more productive. As Champion CFO, Eric Sweitzer points out, "Synoptek facilitated multiple training sessions, both locally and remotely, and it actually all worked out wonderfully."

Overall, with a proactive approach and range of Microsoft Dynamics AX services, Synoptek has helped Champion **save between 60 and 75% of the operational costs** they were spending before.