


CASE STUDY



Manufacturing

Microsoft Dynamics AX





Business transformation to the future fashion and retail needs.

Case Study

Ahlers AG

Retail and Fashion

Microsoft Dynamics AX

“We were looking for an international software, which covers our complete scope from purchasing up to retail. Similarly relevant was also the competence and soft skills of employees and the characteristics of our IT partner AlfaPeople.” Uwe Dubbert, Ahlers Managing Director & CIO

Project scope and business needs

Pierre Cardin, Baldessarini, Pioneer, Otto Kern. That's quite a roll-call of the best premium men's fashion brands available on the high street today. The one thing they have in common is they're manufactured and marketed to premium retailers across the world by Ahlers AG.

Ahlers one of the largest listed creators of men's fashion and although it's been operating for over 90 years, the business certainly has its eyes focused on clothing the modern man with pieces from exciting collections. It does this by being an innovative and flexible operator, agile enough to stay ahead of trends and changes in each of its markets and supported by a financially stable position built over almost a century.

With nine clothing brands in the portfolio which are supplied to countries throughout Europe, the numerous departments which support the company's operations mean the complex must be made simple. Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) is at the heart of any successful organisation and, as with Ahlers AG, enables it to retain a competitive edge in fast-moving marketplaces.

Because its customers are always demanding new, frequently updated items, Ahlers knew its ERP system needed to be renewed and upgraded from what was quickly become obsolete existing technology. It was to be an investment in high-performance software with functionality which could manage and deliver a myriad of business processes. The change had, in the words of Project Manager Michaela Kestner “ambitious aims”.

The potential was exciting: to empower every Ahlers employee to use a more detailed scope of work in running key business processes within the IT architecture and framework in place and evolve it. The group also intended to improve intercompany relationships, including back-office and front-office, fully integrate Office and offer access to the software to external partners.



Uwe Dubbert at Ahlers
Group explains:

“In our selection process, we conducted a targeted search for a standardized ERP application, which is suited to our industry, and which provides the conditions for internationalisation and is technologically future-proof.”

Solution

Technology changes faster than most other parts of everyday life these days, so setting a challenge to be “technologically future-proof” was not something to be undertaken lightly.

Ahlers’s final choice, Microsoft Dynamics AX along with IT partner AlfaPeople, provides Ahlers with the capability to comprehensively and confidently run the whole portfolio of businesses systems from one place, making the best of powerful cloud technology to drive agility and growth.

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Today the transparency and optimisation that Microsoft Dynamics AX gives to each business process enables faster decision-making and means, for example that certified accountants can gain a clearer understanding of the information they need by having access to it directly.

Real-time insights, merchandise management and alignment of technologies like mobile basket check-



out with full promotions integration, all combine with an intuitive and user-friendly interface to deliver business processes which meet the operational and functional demands of this fast-moving international business demands of this fast-moving international business.

The amount of data available for today’s top fashion retailers is overwhelming: transactions, supply chain, buying behaviours, trends, multi-channel sales and global coverage are just a few of the data sources companies can use. Power BI helps Ahlers to bring all various data sources in one place and keep the data current allowing the management to make the right decisions at the right time.



“We are continually moving our IT into the Windows world, with the familiar and uniform operability and integration with applications such as Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Outlook in place, which also presents numerous advantages for our employees.”

Uwe Dubbert,
Ahlers Managing Director & CIO

To engage with their stakeholder whether they are employees, customers or shareholders Ahlers has implemented Dynamics CRM to maintain long-term relationships by delivering exceptional experiences based on knowledge and trust.

Benefits

Full Microsoft Office 365 integration

Microsoft Dynamics AX integrates with the Microsoft Office 365 product, which is an essential piece of for software conducting Ahlers’s daily business. Simple tasks like exporting customer data to Excel spreadsheets and analysing it has become easier, instead of a barrier to working. Standard features like sorting and filtering that data really enables and provides tangible improvements to all the various internal business processes.

360-degree supply chain usability

A tangible benefit with this ERP software is that it enables customers, vendors or other external users efficiency and greater visibility, with access to the system. Requests like real-time delivery status, inventory positions or purchase orders are possibly more quickly and easily. As expected, the access provided to these groups is limited and role based, so that Ahlers can manage and facilitate a secure business portal. This powerful way of working makes it easy to share information or operate transactions, no matter the time of day or location in the world.

Planning for the future

It’s a challenge for any competitive and ambitious business today: to devise, implement and derive benefit from a technology solution which is flexible and adaptable to potential changes and for what the future may bring. Microsoft Dynamics AX is delivering value to the business more quickly than ever before. It allows Ahlers to concentrate on innovative improvements and scenarios which will deliver both dramatic results in terms of return on investment and transformative growth, knowing that it’s backed up by a genuinely useful, flexible, scalable and stable cloud technology made up of a combination of first-rate design, performance, functionality and delivering ease of use.

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