

# CASE STUDY



Manufacturing

Microsoft Dynamics AX

 AlfaPeople



# Business transformation project for a future oriented Engineering-to-order

## Case Study

Reel Alesa

Manufacturing

Microsoft Dynamics AX

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## Project scope and business needs

Reel Alesa Ltd., a subsidiary of REEL International, is a Swiss engineering company with additional operations in Canada and France. The company was founded in 1967 and specialises in engineering and building complete material handling solutions which optimise companies’ processes and performances, including enhancing environmental performance. Reel Alesa’s primary focus is in providing customised solutions to the aluminium industry but their technologies are also supplied to diverse industries, including bauxite & aluminium, power, cement, steel & minerals, copper, iron ore, magnesium, nuclear, chemicals, fertilizer and food.

As part of a recent business transformation project, a reorganisation of the company was underway at the same time as the adoption of an upgraded central IT solution. The existing ERP solution, Microsoft Dynamics AX 2009 was used as the primary finance system and there was no PLM or document management system integrated.

This resulted in the need for large amounts of data to be inputted instead and meant that management was not supported sufficiently. The variety of businesses processes fed into disconnected and different solutions, were too time-consuming and held back Reel Alesa.

The organisation wanted to add modules in a new solution which would support Finance Management, CRM,

Sales, Project Management, SCM and Time Registration (shop floor control), and to:

- Standardise processes
- Automate task management
- Introduce a knowledge base for customer data
- Re-use data and documents
- Eliminate multiple data entries
- Centralise purchasing and optimise procurement processes

Lastly, Reel Alesa specifically wanted to use the new ERP solution to help it to expand and start competing in the spare parts business within the industries that it supplied.



“With AlfaPeople and Microsoft Dynamics AX, we have an unbeatable combination. AlfaPeople is a competent partner with know-how and global presence and Microsoft Dynamics AX is a platform which can cover each customer’s need.”

**Björk Ragnarsdóttir,**  
IT Manager at Reel Alesa

## Solution

After evaluation SAP and Microsoft Dynamics AX, the company’s knowledge and experience gained over 12 years in using Dynamics AX, was one key factor in the decision to upgrade to the latest version. The second was its existing relationship with AlfaPeople, which it had worked and collaborated with for 16 years - including a supervisory team based at AlfaPeople’s Switzerland office.

AlfaPeople’s knowledge of the client and all its processes created efficiency and saved time throughout the project.

Björk Ragnarsdóttir, IT Manager at Reel Alesa said: “With AlfaPeople and Microsoft Dynamics AX, we have an unbeatable combination. AlfaPeople is a competent partner with know-how and global presence and Microsoft Dynamics AX is a platform which can cover each customer’s need.”

The benefits of Microsoft Dynamics AX demonstrated to Reel Alesa that it was the right choice for compatibility with other Microsoft solutions and that it was flexible and customisable over time, like a kit which could be built up in the future.



Expectation for the project was high and as well as progressing with the overall business transformation project, daily operations had to be maintained in parallel, as Patrik Ernst, Managing Director for Reel Alesa explains: “Throughout the transformation Reel Alesa Ltd. wanted to be flexible enough to increase our daily controls and project management capabilities, develop project management skills and launch a spare parts business in a profitable way.”

The first challenge in the installation of Microsoft Dynamics AX 2012 was the integration of Bluestar PLM, a native AX PLM and the replacement of a whole host of manual processes which would instead feed automatically into the new ERP solution.

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**Patrik Ernst, Managing Director for Reel Alesa**

In addition to Bluestar, add-on's of Officeatwork and the migration of the current DMS/CRM solution (which was based on Lotus Notes), Sharepoint, MS Dynamics & Add on, were integrated into Microsoft Dynamics AX 2012. The new cloud-based solution was also rolled out the Alesa in France and Canada, so the whole company could input, access and use the improved management information and associated processes.

## **Benefits**

### **The costs-profitability relationship**

The rare ability to save costs and increase company profitability has been realised with the project that the AlfaPeople team has delivered. Thomas Lengacher, CFO at Reel Alesa said: “By replacing many stand-alone solutions with a centralised, agile one, we have the opportunity not only to reduce costs but also automate standard processes and increase transparency throughout the company on a ‘just-in-time’ basis. We’ve also been supported by one big partner and not lots of small partners.”

### **Added value**

The integration of native ISV solutions increased the performance of internal processes in the company enormously. By using Bluestar PLM, the CAD programs can communicate with the ERP system and vice versa. Whether the order is for a spare part or a whole machine, Reel Alesa is able to say exactly in a position where, when and which component was installed. Changes on AX Reporting are done by the operational team easily and quickly, which increases Reel Alesa's overall ability to deliver on a day-to-day basis.

### **Future oriented technology**

The full range of Microsoft technologies are future-proof and highly sophisticated, helping to make Reel Alesa more competitive. The integration of a portfolio including Office, Sharepoint and Dynamics CRM with Dynamics AX ensures that the company can adapt its processes very quickly, whilst remaining truly customer-oriented.

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