

CASE STUDY



Public Sector

Microsoft Dynamics AX





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Project scope and business needs

The public services company, Aguas de Manizales SA, was founded in Columbia in 1996 with a remit to conserve and ensure the sustainable use of water resources using water purification treatments, water sanitation, hydrographic basins and other technological processes. Today it carries out the critical task of supplying services to more than 100,000 households in the country and additionally invests in developing the economic, social and cultural aspects of the region. As part of its Corporate Responsibility programme, Aguas de Manizales helps to preserve local forests and forest plantations, thereby supporting the country's natural ecosystems and wildlife.

A recent surge in company growth highlighted some gaps in the level and quality of information held within the business, as well as identified potential improvements in operational efficiency. Aguas de Manizales and its IT department decided to upgrade the existing technology platform, Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) Amerika.

At the time, the solution was not performing consistently across the business. It required different platforms and architectures to run and used third-party solutions which together were not integrated adequately enough. Issues such as duplication of operations, process inefficiencies and inaccurate or missing information were to be addressed.

The goals of the upgrade were threefold:

1. Better support business operations and management decisions at both a strategic and tactical level, by making use of more advanced technology services and solutions which could supply the company with real-time information.
2. Improve operational efficiency throughout the entire business lifecycle, from purchasing, budget control, accounting and finance and storage.
3. Provide a range of complementary tools within a single system, in order to track and control the processes associated with cost and budgets throughout the business.



“AlfaPeople’s experience in helping companies to vastly improve the management of complex processes in the public sector came to the fore, as the brief also included automating a number of existing support processes.”

Solution

After an internal review was completed in June 2014, an RFP was created and a shortlist of technology solutions from Oracle, Seven and Microsoft were assessed. Aguas de Manizales chose Microsoft Dynamics AX, in part due to the integration to Public Budget, which is Microsoft partner AlfaPeople’s, vertical solution in the sector.

Another factor was AlfaPeople’s proposal of a referential ROI, where variables and projected costs were provided to the client at regular times throughout the project.

The project delivery was split into two phases. The first phase would involve all the financial processes, including modules in General Ledger, Fixed Assets, Bank Management, Portfolio, Treasury and Cost Accounting.

It would also include Public Budget including Projects and Contracts, Supply, and Human Resources. The most complex element of this phase was Public Budget, a module created to manage and control the entire budget chain of the organisation, which needed to quickly adapt and respond to any Government changes in industry regulation. The second phase would involve activities including Billing, Sales and Marketing, Projects and HSEQ (Health, Safety, Environment and Quality).



The solution would be a unified platform, powered by Microsoft Dynamics AX, to add value and support all areas of business activities and their needs. The IT department was designated as the project management team and Financial Management as overall sponsor and project controller.

As Aguas de Manizales’s ERP system, Microsoft Dynamics AX needed to deliver native integration with existing technological architecture, including the SQL Server, collaborative Microsoft tools like Outlook and Office 365 as well as Microsoft SharePoint.

AlfaPeople’s experience in helping companies to vastly improve the management of complex processes in the public sector came to the fore, as the brief also included automating a number of existing support processes. Many of these used macros and templates in Excel, which couldn’t provide control and visibility of information.

“At a day-to-day level it created better operational efficiency through automated, real-time and integrated business processes and ultimately more autonomy for users.”

Easy-to-use automation was necessary in order to enhance and support the organisation’s rapid growth. In no other area was this automation more vital than for HSEQ, which covered and implemented the entire ‘Safety and Health at Work Management programme’ and ensured that the business adhered to the Colombian environmental law, ‘1443 Decree’.

Benefits

Highly advanced process flows

The new sophisticated and effective cloud-based Microsoft Dynamics AX tool enabled advanced process controls and associated cost control of activities through every business process flow within Aguas de Manizales.

Enhancing efficiency to support growth

Improved operational efficiency in the areas of purchase planning, budgetary control, logistics and financial and accounting control enabled faster and more accurate profitability analysis.

Empowering user autonomy

A single platform solution provided significant support to the activities and management functions of Aguas de Manizales. At a day-to-day level it created better operational efficiency through automated, real-time and integrated business processes and ultimately more autonomy for users.

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