



Allan Candy sweetens sales, streamlines IT using Microsoft Dynamics™ GP

Overview

Country or Region: Canada

Industry: Manufacturing

Customer Profile

The Allan Candy Company Ltd. is a leading North American manufacturer of quality chocolate and sugar confectionery products.

Business Situation

A former division of Cadbury Adams, Allan Canada became a stand-alone entity that needed to shift from a legacy environment to an IT solution, agile enough to handle rapid growth and leaner manufacturing and distribution processes.

Solution

Working under tight migration deadlines, Allan Canada worked with Microsoft® Gold Certified Partner TGO Consulting Inc. to develop a robust, scalable IT platform based on Microsoft Dynamics GP.

Benefits

- Deeper business insight
- Streamlined IT processes
- Foundation for growth

“The move to Dynamics GP is playing a key part of our business transformation into a more results-oriented and performance-driven company.”

Steve Diakowsky, President, Allan Candy Company Ltd.

The Allan Candy Company Ltd. is a leading North American manufacturer of quality chocolate and sugar confectionery products. A former division of Cadbury Adams, Allan Candy became a stand-alone entity that needed to quickly shift from a complex SAP-based enterprise resource planning (ERP) environment to an out-of-the-box business solution that supports rapid growth and leaner manufacturing and distribution processes. Facing tight deadlines, Allan Candy worked with Microsoft® Gold Certified Partner TGO Consulting Inc. to develop a more flexible and scalable financial and operations solution based on Microsoft Dynamics™ GP. Today, Allan Candy benefits from improved inventory management, streamlined distribution and lean manufacturing processes.

Situation

Allan Candy Canada Ltd. represents a Canadian success story that is as sweet as the candy that bears its name. Established in the 1950s, the Mississauga, Ont.-based company is known for its trademark Allan logo and for iconic brands like Big Foot, Hot Lips, Twirls, and Trebor. Today, the Allan Candy business generates more than \$100 million in sales and manages a strong portfolio of product offerings in bulk candy, count goods, retail bags, and seasonal offerings for Easter and Christmas.

Through a series of business mergers and acquisitions that began in 1995, the Allan Candy operation became a division of Cadbury Adams, Canada's largest confectionery company. In order to improve its competitiveness in Canada, Cadbury decided to focus its efforts and investments on a smaller range of the larger and more profitable core brands.

As result, Cadbury put the confectionery business up for sale and sold in 2006. With two manufacturing plants in Granby, Que. and Hamilton, Ont., this new stand-alone unit produces more than 250 Allan Candy and other products.

Allan Candy depends on enterprise resource planning (ERP) software to monitor inventory, customer shipments, purchasing and invoicing. In order to remain competitive and improve customer service delivery, this data must be made available to key executives as quickly and efficiently as possible. While under Cadbury, Allan Candy was operating within an SAP ERP environment, which the company determined was too complex and couldn't scale quickly enough to meet its new business continuity requirements.

The goal, according to Steve Diakowsky, President & CEO, Allan Candy Company Ltd., was to improve and streamline its IT and lean

manufacturing processes, and become more results-oriented and performance-driven along the way. For example, staff at Allan Candy needed a faster method of processing purchase orders and managers sought more real-time access to financial data.

"Now more than ever it is vital to differentiate ourselves within the competitive confectionery marketplace. When it comes to developing leaner distribution and manufacturing capabilities, we're firm believers that technology innovation is key to our growth," says Diakowsky.

As a new business unit, the company needed to quickly migrate to an independent IT infrastructure while ensuring business continuity. It also needed an ERP solution that was easy to implement and able to meet its unique distribution and manufacturing requirements.

"Our business was threatening to buckle under the 800 pound weight of our legacy system. The future of the Allan Candy operation relied on doing things differently – deploying the right technology infrastructure would be the first step along this path," says Diakowsky.

Solution

Allan Candy was seeking an agile, scalable and easy-to-use ERP solution that could integrate with its desktop and server-based applications. Wanting to quickly address its business challenges and streamline its manufacturing processes, Allan Canada worked with Microsoft® Gold Certified Partner TGO Consulting Inc. to develop and deploy a new technology environment. Markham, Ont.-based TGO works with Canadian firms like Allan Candy to implement and deploy ERP software solutions and supporting technologies.

After investigating several different ERP packages, Allan Candy determined that migrating to Microsoft Dynamics™ GP was the best fit for its growing technology needs. Designed for rapid time-to-benefit and low cost of ownership, Microsoft Dynamics GP is a global financial and business management application for midsize organizations.

Marg Wilson, a Senior Account Executive at TGO Consulting Inc. credits the swift and successful migration to the strong integration and ease-of-use capabilities of Dynamics GP.

“Allan Candy was facing intense business pressure to implement its new IT processes. With this in mind, the company was looking for an out-of-the-box IT solution that would quickly help streamline workflow, increase data visibility and provide more efficient use of internal IT resources,” says Wilson.

“It was extremely important that the new ERP implementation operate on time and on budget. With Dynamics GP, no customization was required, and staff were particularly pleased that it has the same look and feel and our existing Microsoft-based software,” says Diakowsky.

In particular, Allan Candy is using Dynamics GP to simplify the manufacturing and distribution processes – as defined by the previous legacy ERP environment – to meet the specific IT needs of the new stand-alone business unit. For example, staff are now taking advantage of the customizable reporting and workflow features of Dynamics GP to improve inventory and distribution processes.

“Due to the recent business changes, we were working under ridiculously tight deadlines and were ultimately pleased with the level of flexibility and scalability that Dynamics GP provided,” says Diakowsky.

Benefits

By developing a new IT infrastructure based on Dynamics GP, Allan Candy has successfully made the transition to a stand-alone entity. The company is now better positioned to streamline warehouse processes, better manage inventory and distribution, and improve accuracy, efficiency and customer service levels. Staff training provided by TGO Consulting has been comprehensive, and will be an ongoing IT support component as Allan Candy looks to extend the new CRM platform for future growth.

Deeper business insight

The new flexible and scalable Dynamics GP-based business solutions platform allows employees to update information in real time and take advantage of new monitoring tools that help ensure inventory data is accurate and up-to-date. Via automatic notifications, managers can now better track and monitor business-critical activity – including brand inventory, customer shipments, purchasing and invoicing.

“Allan Candy leveraged Dynamics GP to revamp its operational workflows within a short timeframe,” says Wilson. “Not only is the company developing stronger business insight for better decision making, they are now realizing a lowered total cost of ownership as well.”

Streamlined business processes

With Dynamics GP in place, staff at Allan Candy are defining new processes around tighter budget control and enhanced reporting tools. This helps staff to reduce redundant data entry, which had previously led to confusion and costly reconciliations.

Tasks such as payroll are more efficient because of automatic data population and, according to Diakowsky, training costs have decreased considerably. For example, project

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status reports that took managers several days to produce can now be generated in real-time, improving staff productivity considerably.

“From a total cost of ownership and user experience perspective, Dynamic GP helps us run much leaner distribution and manufacturing processes. The out-of-the-box solution has better positioned us in the highly competitive confectionary industry,” says Diakowsky.

Foundation for growth

With the Dynamics GP-based business solutions platform in place, Allan Candy is moving forward with several projects that will boost sales and drive even more efficiency and business intelligence.

“We needed the flexibility to quickly adapt to new business demands and our new Microsoft-based environment allows us to do that. The move to Dynamics GP is playing a key role as we transform our business into a more results-oriented and performance-driven company,” says Diakowsky.

Microsoft Dynamics

Microsoft Dynamics is a line of integrated, adaptable business management solutions that enables you and your people to make business decisions with greater confidence. Microsoft Dynamics works like familiar Microsoft software such as Microsoft Office, which means less of a learning curve for your people, so they can get up and running quickly and focus on what's most important. And because it is from Microsoft, it easily works with the systems that your company already has implemented. By automating and streamlining financial, customer relationship, and supply chain processes, Microsoft Dynamics brings together people, processes, and technologies, increasing the productivity and effectiveness of your business, and helping you drive business success.

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Software & Services

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