

CASE STUDY IOVATE CPG – Food Manufacturer

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Norm Vanderee, Chief Financial Officer



Headquartered in Oakville, Ontario, Canada, **lovate** is a leading nutritional company with brands such as MuscleTech, Six Star Pro Nutrition, Purely Inspired, and Hydroxycut. With 6 national brands and over 250 employees, their products can be purchased all over the world.

Growing Pains

lovate implemented Microsoft Great Plains in 2008 and then re-implemented in 2010. Since that time, the transactional volume of the business has escalated rapidly due to very significant sales growth. In addition, lovate expanded significantly into international markets. This growth in the business meant that the previous ERP system was no longer able to keep up.

According to Meen Sathish, Director, Business Systems, “We clearly knew that we had been doing a lot of patchwork in Great Plains to survive the business growth but we got to a point where we knew it could not help us to grow further. We started an evaluation of ERP vendors, and Microsoft Dynamics 365 came out on top. We knew that was where we needed to go. It was clearly the right choice for us.”

Key Benefits

- > Improved business transaction processes
- > Ability to quickly access the right information to make better decisions
- > Optimized Microsoft based technology platform
- > Transformed the business to leverage information technology

Business Challenges

Due to the growth of the business and transactional complexity from a large product suite, it was inevitable that lovate would have to make a change in ERP systems. While there was a lot of manual intervention needed to keep Great Plains going, it was comfortable for the employees working with it, which led to the challenge of change management. The management team was able to overcome this challenge by helping employees understand that the investment was a necessary step to advance the business.

lovate was also unable to access information quickly, which is not acceptable in today's fast-paced business world. With a significant increase in the number of transactions related to the sales process, to the collection of cash receipts, to the production of products, to the payment of vendors, their system struggled to keep up.

According to Norm Vanderee, Chief Financial Officer, "We can now easily get the right information in the hands of the right people in sufficient time so they can use it to make better decisions, which we believe is a significant competitive advantage for our business."

Why Microsoft?

As lovate was predominately a Microsoft shop prior to choosing Dynamics 365, it was a natural choice for them. They also looked at other mainstream ERP solutions and when comparing the agility of the systems, state of the art infrastructure and the ability to extend it with the lowest cost possible, they found that Microsoft offered substantially more than the other solutions on the market.

A Long Relationship with Alithya

Typically, companies will evaluate multiple implementation partners, pick one, and then move on with the project. In lovate and Alithya's case, the process was more extensive. Instead of selecting Alithya and moving right into the project, Alithya worked with lovate for almost a year to understand the entire scope and all of lovate's business challenges, even while lovate evaluated other third party vendors.

According to Sathish, "We had this awesome relationship with Alithya from the beginning through the evaluation process to help us identify the right solution before starting the project. So, it's been a very long, excellent relationship with Alithya. It's one of the key reasons for the true success of this project." Sathish continues, "We were constantly challenging each other throughout the whole process. It was healthy in ensuring we focused on the right solution, as they asked things like, 'Why are you doing it this way? Why can't you do it differently?' To be honest, this type of discussion led us to complete the implementation out of the box with very limited customizations required to go-live."

In addition, Alithya has expert knowledge in lovate's field of food manufacturing, which also led to the selection of Alithya as the implementation partner. lovate also found benefits in the flexibility of the executive team at Alithya and their ability to influence Microsoft as far as functionality and features in future Dynamics 365 updates.

Vanderee adds, "Selecting a business partner to work with us on this project was very important. Certainly, fit was going to be important. I think what we really wanted was someone who was experienced, somebody who could tell us how to stay on track, what to focus on, and what to avoid, because everyone knows what can happen if you don't. So finding a partner who had done it before and who had a very good track record was critical to us. We really wanted our partner to be a partner who was willing to be candid and to tell us, based on their experience, what we should and what we should not be doing."

"WE USED ALITHYA AS AN EXPERT ADVISOR TO GUIDE US IN THE INDUSTRY'S BEST PRACTICES."

– Meen Sathish

Alithya is a leading strategy and digital technology company with over 2,000 highly skilled professionals delivering solutions across Canada, the US and Europe. Alithya's Microsoft practice covers a wide array of capabilities including Dynamics, Azure, business analytics, digital solutions, advanced analytics, application development and architecture. Focused on business outcomes, our combined companies have delivered Microsoft ERP, CRM, BI and digital solutions to over 1,200 clients. Alithya's global offering is to deliver strategy and digital technology services.