

CASE STUDY

LIVE PROTEIN/POULTRY PROCESSOR Food Manufacturing

"The work we accomplished is incredible. What began as an empty field is now the most highly automated poultry plant in the world; we changed the industry with this project. We built out an end-to-end solution with low overhead costs that was quick to set up and simple to deploy. It has scaled to all the different stages of growth for this project and this implementation will be used as a blueprint for future facilities."

Glenn Goulding, Director of Enterprise Sales
(Food/Beverage and CPG), Microsoft Dynamics 365, Alithya

To continue providing high quality, cost effective rotisserie and packaged chicken products to its customer base, a national grocery chain took ownership of its supply chain. The company embarked on a greenfield venture to build a state-of-the-art poultry processing facility, multiple hatcheries, and multiple feed mills. By utilizing new and innovative technology, the organization produces high-quality products which meet or exceed the highest food safety standards, while passing cost savings along to consumers.

This is the national grocery chain's first protein processing venture, and the success of this endeavor has led to expansion talks into similar footprints for its beef, seafood, and pork offerings.

Why Microsoft?

When it came time to consider which ERP system would best fit the needs of its future poultry facility, the logical choice would have been to leverage the national grocery chain's current corporate system, SAP.

Key Benefits

- > Most highly automated poultry plant in the world
- > End-to-end solution
- > Low overhead costs and decreased total cost of ownership with Azure
- > Quick to set up and simple to deploy
- > Template to use in future implementations
- > Financial data mapping to SAP structure via GL uploads
- > Improved budgeting and forecasting processes
- > Ability to work well with other solutions including MTech and Marel Innova

With time, cost, and complexity restraints, the grocery chain considered other options as well.

As the new facility was breaking ground, it needed a cost-effective ERP system, that was logical and easy to use, to be ready prior to the first chickens arriving at the door.

The new facility was looking to go in a different direction than the industry standard for production costing, so it was necessary for the ERP system to help with costing challenges, while at the same time, improving budgeting and forecasting processes. System integration was key, as the processing facility would be leveraging multiple, industry-specific point solutions that all needed to work well together. With a goal of the new facility owning its supply chain to minimize cost exposure, the company was also looking to ensure consistent quality and availability and better understand the economics of its supply chain.

Microsoft Dynamics 365 was ultimately selected due to its ability to handle the unique requirements of the industry, a lower total cost of ownership, ability to deploy faster, and ease of use compared to the complex SAP corporate solution. In addition, the grocery chain wanted to leverage the cloud and roll out a comparable, flexible, single instance, and multi-tenant solution. Dynamics 365 provides the added ability to scale to the different stages of growth for the project and map financial data to corporate's instance of SAP via a detailed monthly GL upload.

The national grocery chain was already leveraging Microsoft technologies including Azure, Office 365, and BI. With this implementation, it added on Dynamics 365 Supply Chain Management, Finance, and Warehouse Management, plus Dynamics 365 for Retail to run the plant cafeteria.

Working with Alithya

Alithya was brought in early to the engagement by Microsoft because Alithya offered the client a combination of industry expertise, experience working with SAP on the backend, and strategic industry relationships with the other engaged poultry industry point solution providers - MTech and Marel Innova.

The national grocery chain also reached out to several of Alithya's customers to confirm the benefits of working with Alithya and Dynamics 365 in the food processing industry.

As a green field facility, a core team was not in place during the implementation. Thus, the corporation relied on Alithya's team to provide expertise and guidance, as well as best practices for the industry. The Alithya team helped build out the ERP processing solutions with essentially no employees, as they were being hired in tandem with the implementation of the project.

Alithya also led the integration effort across all the partners involved. As the primary integration point, Alithya's team had to understand each of the solutions that would integrate into Dynamics 365 to ensure a cohesive and successful implementation. Another requirement was to reconcile the stringent, granular business requirements of the corporate office with the uniqueness of poultry processing.

The implementation consisted of three phases:

1. GL and Accounts Payable
2. Live Poultry Operations
3. Poultry Processing and Transportation Management

With Alithya's FoodXpress template for rapid deployment, the project was completed in plenty of time for the opening of the new processing facility with a successful and uneventful go-live.

Now, what started as nothing, is now the most automated protein/poultry plant in the world and will change the industry. Even with the challenges of COVID-19, the facility, unlike many of its competitors, was able to scale quickly and provide top quality product with a robust supply.

"I THINK THEY APPRECIATED OUR DEPTH OF INDUSTRY KNOWLEDGE AND COLLABORATIVE APPROACH. WE WORKED WELL WITH THE OTHER INTEGRATION PARTNERS WHICH LED TO A SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME. THEIR TEAM WAS SO PLEASED, THEY TOLD US THEY WOULD ADVISE OTHER PROCESSORS TO, 'NEVER STAND UP A CHICKEN PLANT WITHOUT THESE GUYS.' IT IS SO REWARDING TO BE ABLE TO SAY DYNAMICS 365 IS THE SYSTEM OF RECORD FOR TRANSACTIONS AND FINANCIALS FOR THE MOST HIGHLY AUTOMATED POULTRY PLANT IN THE WORLD."

– Beth Auza, Director of Professional Services at Alithya

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.