

CASE STUDY

THE SHEPHERD COLOR COMPANY Chemical Manufacturing

“Microsoft Dynamics has the flexibility to grow with our company. It improves our customer engagement and customer service.”

Craig Lutsi, Dynamics AX and CRM Product Specialist and Analyst



The Shepherd Color Company is a fourth-generation, family-owned business dedicated to producing world-class complex inorganic color pigments since the 1930s. From its headquarters in Cincinnati, Ohio, and from sales offices around

the world, Shepherd supplies millions of pounds of high-quality pigments annually to customers around the world.

Multiple, Disparate Systems

In the past, Shepherd Color was using multiple, disparate CRM and ERP packages. “A lot of these applications were installed many years ago and were reaching the end of their life, if they were even still in use at all,” explains Craig Lutsi, Dynamics AX and CRM product specialist and analyst for Shepherd. “We also had a lot of custom applications that were expensive to maintain and support,” continues Lutsi.

Shepherd’s goal was to select a single ERP and CRM platform that could be utilized across its company to reduce support costs and modernize applications. Shepherd engaged an independent ERP selection consultant to help choose the right solution for its needs.

Shepherd selected Microsoft Dynamics AX 2012 integrated with Microsoft Dynamics CRM. The first reason was flexibility. “We felt that Microsoft Dynamics would provide us with the flexibility to manage our existing business processes while maintaining the service levels that we deliver to our customers,” says Lutsi. “We also felt that Microsoft Dynamics would allow us the opportunity to improve what we offered to our customers at a reduced cost,” says Lutsi.

Additionally, the team at Shepherd was familiar with other products in the Microsoft stack such as Office, SSRS, and SSIS. “We felt our familiarity with Microsoft would help us to decrease our organizational change management burden,” describes Lutsi. Lastly, Shepherd selected Microsoft Dynamics based on its lower total cost of ownership compared to competing products.

Key Benefits

- Standardized, integrated solution across its company
- Eliminated costly, redundant systems and custom applications
- Better, more accessible information supports more informed decision making
- Improved business processes and design of best practices
- Reduced cost and increased benefits provided to customers
- Improved data stewardship and business intelligence
- Reduced organizational change management burden by selecting familiar Microsoft products

"We selected Alithya based on a recommendation from the independent ERP selection consultant, the company values and leadership style which aligned with ours at Shepherd, and their familiarity and expertise with Microsoft Dynamics and process manufacturing," says Lutsi.

From the start, Shepherd received two major benefits from implementing Microsoft Dynamics. First, the company standardized its applications across the company. Second, Shepherd modernized and reduced its redundant systems and custom applications, thereby reducing IT support costs.

"Microsoft Dynamics has positioned us for the future by allowing us to better share information across our functional departments," says Lutsi. He continues, "this information has allowed us to make better decisions to address our business needs. Dynamics AX and CRM have also provided us with a more complete set of functionality and design of best practices for both our business processes and our informational system processes."

By reducing IT costs, Shepherd can remain competitive in a global marketplace—increasing benefits provided to customers such as continuous improvement of technical applications, quality products, and innovation. Shepherd is now able to better serve customers with an integrated front- and back-end ERP solution.

More efficient data sharing has contributed to increased data stewardship and business intelligence at Shepherd. Shepherd is also more effectively converting data into information.

A Flexible Solution

"Microsoft Dynamics has the flexibility to grow with our company," says Lutsi. "It improves our customer engagement and customer service," continues Lutsi. Additionally, Shepherd can take advantage of the familiar, flexible Microsoft stack for increased user adoption and decreased total cost of ownership.

Shepherd can support its 98% on-time delivery target to its customers, and customer service excellence with an integrated Microsoft Dynamics solution.

Lower Total Cost of Ownership

"Shepherd selected Microsoft Dynamics based on a lower total cost of ownership compared to other competing applications." – Craig Lutsi

Microsoft Dynamics AX 2012 provides chemical manufacturers like Shepherd tools to help control and maximize assets, minimize operating costs, and monitor the impact of decisions on orders, production, inventory, and distribution.

Shepherd can now effectively manage all the variables involved in engineering and delivering products that follow custom formulas. Microsoft Dynamics provides Shepherd with insight into its entire operation, so it can improve capacity and drive continuous process improvement. From a simple user interface, Shepherd can now define, manage, and cost multiple outputs, such as coproducts and by-products, from a single production process and always know the correct inventory status for any given item.

Microsoft Dynamics CRM provides the Shepherd sales team with tools to become more productive and focused on building customer relationships that deliver.

**"STANDARDIZING ON ONE SOLUTION
ALLOWS US TO INCREASE THE
VALUE THAT WE CAN PROVIDE
OUR CUSTOMERS WHILE REDUCING
OUR COSTS AND INCREASING OUR
UTILIZATION AND EFFICIENCY BY
IMPLEMENTING A CORE BUILD FOR
OUR COMMON BUSINESS PROCESS
ACROSS THE COMPANY."**

– Craig Lutsi

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