



MICROSOFT DYNAMICS AX - A SCALABLE SOLUTION FOR A GROWING START-UP



The Company

Formed in 2007 as a start-up company following a management buyout of a division from a larger organisation, Aspen Concepts Limited is a business specialising in nationwide shopfitting and high quality joinery solutions.

As a business in its start-up stage, Aspen was unsure as to the degree of business functionality the company would need moving forward. Therefore, it was crucial that the company selected a flexible ERP system that could scale with the business and adapt to its changing requirements. Following in-depth consultation with Ardent Solutions, Aspen Concepts selected the Microsoft Dynamics AX solution and has since found it to be a contributing factor to the successful maintenance of its market share within the tough economic climate.

Aspen Concepts produce a range of products from individual bespoke joinery to complete shop fit-outs. The company is based across three sites in Swindon, Birmingham and Durham, employing installation crews throughout the UK with a manufacturing workforce of around 25 people.

The Challenge

Provoked by a fast-changing business environment, the decision to implement a scalable ERP system led Aspen Concepts to Ardent Solutions. Steve Oram, IT Manager at Aspen Concepts, explains, "When the company was formed in 2007, we were looking for a system that could effectively manage our business requirements and help us to build a successful company. Originally we were looking at a Sage solution, and contacted Ardent Solutions at their Chippenham office to discuss the project. However, following a number of in-depth consultations with Ardent, it soon became clear that Microsoft Dynamics AX would be a better fit for our business."

Steve continues, "As a start-up company, we required a solution that could scale with our business as we became successful and began to grow within the market".

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IT Manager
Aspen Concepts

The Solution

With Ardent's expertise and help Aspen Concepts identified the Microsoft Dynamics AX solution, which looked to be a much better fit for the business. Not only is the system widely scalable and flexible, but it is also able to meet the in-depth reporting needs of one of the company's largest customers. Previously Aspen Concepts were required to supply a number of reports on a regular basis in an Excel format. The ability to extract this information quickly and easily from AX and transfer into Excel is a huge and important benefit.

The initial consultation process for Microsoft Dynamics AX began with Ardent Solutions in July 2007. Ardent Solutions gained first hand knowledge of Aspen's business processes. After five and a half months of planning, customisation and consultation, Aspen Concepts went live with the AX solution in January 2008.

The Benefits

"One of the major benefits that we have noticed since implementing the AX solution is a substantial improvement in our stock control processes. Prior to the implementation our stock processes were not very effective. With the new system we now have an intelligent front end which enables us to pre define screens and build in rules to automatically fill in information cells to increase speed and accuracy of call offs. This has dramatically increased the efficiency of the ordering process, which has had a positive impact across the whole company in terms of stock and sales."

Steve continues, "Having experienced a number of IT implementations in the past I can say with confidence that Ardent's implementation of the AX solution was first class. The whole process was extremely straightforward and went very smoothly. I think this was mainly due to the time spent by Ardent Solutions on site getting to know our processes and exact business requirements. The testing process was also carried out in a very structured manner to ensure that when we went live there were no major problems".

The Future

Following the successful implementation, there are now further plans for Aspen Concepts to continue working with Ardent Solutions. "We are currently in talks with Ardent Solutions discussing how to automate further reports through links to AX. This will bring further time savings and help to make our processes even more efficient. We are also looking at implementing a second phase to the AX project – giving our customers access to data via a web-portal".

The company is also looking into introducing handheld devices to installation crews so that 'real-time' job information can be received and relayed back to the customer via the portal; mitigating the need for the current paper trail.

Steve concludes, "We have a great relationship with Ardent Solutions, and have been extremely impressed with the way they have continually delivered on time and on budget. We are extremely pleased with the AX solution and in these difficult economic times, it has worked well to ensure that we have maintained our current market share".

**For further information call us now on: 0844 880 6146 or email us at:
info@ardentsolutions.co.uk**



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