



Specialty manufacturer Kureha America Inc. needed a platform on which to manage business processes and intercompany transactions among its five operating units. As it evaluated ERP solutions, a primary criterion was that the solution be in the cloud, enabling Kureha to minimize its investment in hardware, software, and staff required to deploy and maintain its IT infrastructure. With help from Microsoft Certified Partner Bestborn Business Solutions, Kureha implemented Microsoft Dynamics NAV, hosted in the cloud by SaaSPlaza.

Results

The solution has dramatically improved productivity of customer service reps and provides sales staff and executives with visibility into operations and performance.

Industry

Specialty Manufacturing

Country or Region

United States

Customer Size

3972 employees

Number of Users

40 employees

www.kureha.com

Cloud-Based ERP Streamlines Intercompany Processes and Restores Work-Life Balance

"Orders move through the system faster. People are happier and less stressed. The benefits are driven by quality-of-life as well as by hard numbers. And that's good for the business."

Fred Daniell, President, Kureha America LLC

After nearly 40 years operating as the North American subsidiary of Japanese manufacturing giant Kureha Corporation, Kureha America has experienced a recent surge of expansion and acquisition, and remains poised for additional growth. With the addition of two manufacturing facilities, Kureha's business far outpaced the capabilities of its Peachtree accounting software and ad hoc business processes. The specialty manufacturing company needed to implement formal, structured workflows, especially in its manufacturing facilities, and streamline intercompany transactions among its five business units and outside trading partners.

"Over the last five years, our revenues have tripled," says Fred Daniell, President of Kureha America LLC. "We brought a new plant online, and the number of transactions we're managing has grown at least five-fold. We couldn't do this on Peachtree anymore; we simply outgrew it. We needed a proper platform and infrastructure to run the business."

Cloud Solution Minimizes Infrastructure Costs

Company leaders recognized the need for an enterprise-class ERP system—but were unwilling to assume the overhead and infrastructure that often accompany major software deployments. So, when the company began evaluating ERP solutions, one of its chief criteria was that the system be hosted and managed entirely 'in the cloud.'

"We're a specialty chemical and plastics company," explains Daniell. "Computer hardware and software is not our expertise. It's not a part of our business strategy to invest in the hardware or people necessary to maintain that kind of system onsite; it doesn't make sense, especially at the rate the technology is moving. To us, it's not a good investment."

Working with technology consultants Bestborn Business Solutions, Kureha evaluated several options, including Microsoft Dynamics NAV, Epicor, Oracle, and SAP, which was already in place at the company's Japanese parent company. "We quickly determined that SAP would be vast overkill given the size of our operation here in America," says Daniell. "And cost was certainly an issue with Oracle. But the biggest driver was the maturity of the cloud offering. While the other solutions were just beginning to offer cloud options, Microsoft Dynamics NAV had the demonstrated track record on the cloud platform."



Bestborn believes that the partner you choose is as important as the system you choose. With vast experience across a range of industries and deep experience with Microsoft Dynamics NAV, Bestborn ensures you get the maximum value from your ERP investment.

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SaaSPlaza serves the Cloud platform needs of Microsoft Dynamics Partners. With offices, data centers, and staff across the globe—US, the Netherlands, Singapore, China—SaaSPlaza is truly global and #1 in Cloud Dynamics. With a per-user/per-month pricing model and the ability to free companies from infrastructure and maintenance requirements, SaaSPlaza delivers on the true flexibility and scalability promises of the cloud.

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Kureha America implemented Microsoft Dynamics NAV in its four business units, including two manufacturing facilities in Pittsburgh and West Virginia and its holding company in New York. The solution was implemented at all three sites by Bestborn and is hosted in the cloud by Microsoft Certified Partner, SaaSPlaza.

Structured Processes

Microsoft Dynamics NAV has dramatically streamlined internal order processing, enabling Kureha to centralize accounting among its four US subsidiaries. Previously, each operating unit had maintained its own accounting system, and purchase orders were re-entered up to six times as intercompany transactions flowed among the subsidiaries. With Microsoft Dynamics NAV, orders are entered once, reducing redundant work and opportunity for error. The ability to accept EDI transactions from retail trading partners has also reduced sales order processing time by 75%, allowing customer service people to reclaim up to 12 hours per week.

"Everything was done by hand," recalls Daniell. "When we received an order from a customer, we had to manually enter it into the accounting system, check a spreadsheet for inventory status, put together shipping instructions to the warehouse, wait for confirmation, generate an invoice, and then manually update the accounting systems. Today, all these things are tied together. Orders just flow through the ERP system, and all those touches go away."

Restoring Work-Life Balance

While the productivity gains resulting from the Microsoft Dynamics NAV solution are measurable, Daniell emphasizes the significance of the more intangible benefits. Before Kureha implemented the solution, he recounts that Kureha's dedicated customer service staff routinely worked 12-hour days. "They basically had no lives," he says. "As the guy who's running the business, that's *my* responsibility. Today, I have much happier employees. Folks can leave when they're supposed to leave—and they're much more productive when they're here."

Connecting Sales to ERP

Centralizing inventory and order information also makes life easier for Kureha's sales staff, who now have visibility into product and account information through Microsoft Dynamics NAV. In the past, the sales team relied on phone calls to Kureha's customer service representatives for updates on inventory and order status. If a service rep was out sick or on vacation, customer inquiries could go unanswered for days. Today, direct access to this information enables them to sell more efficiently, and to interact more effectively, with their customers and accounts.

Achieving Visibility into Performance

Kureha executives also enjoy increased visibility into operations as a result of consolidating data in Microsoft Dynamics NAV. One-click reporting has replaced days of manual data entry and local spreadsheets, including custom reports for sales performance and forecasting. Financial reporting is similarly automated, facilitating reporting between Kureha America and its Japanese parent corporation.

For more information about Microsoft Dynamics, go to: www.microsoft.com/dynamics

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