



Food Processing Manufacturer Chooses Microsoft Dynamics AX for Global ERP Deployment

Founded in 1919, Griffith Laboratories brings science to the food industry, helping its customers to make better food products, enhance flavors, improve functionality, create faster and more efficient processing, reduce costs, and find and utilize safer alternatives.

Goals

- Drive efficiencies
- Improve supplier and vendor relationships
- Improve insight through BI, analytics, and reporting

Industry

Food Manufacturing

Country or Region

United States

Customer Size

3,000 employees

Number of Initial Users

500

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Griffith Laboratories

With the vision to make the world's food better, Griffith Laboratories is constantly working both to bring science to the food industry and to run its own operations as efficiently as possible.

The company recently found its efforts to streamline operations hindered by an aging MRP Type-II system, which lacked the flexibility to meet changing needs—in particular, the requirement to support hybrid discrete and process manufacturing. Because the legacy system could only handle materials and labor for a single location, Griffith was forced to maintain separate databases to support its US sites and corporate operation.

In 2012, Griffith Laboratories set out to replace the aging system with a more modern ERP that would provide integrated end-to-end capabilities, could be easily tailored to meet specific food process manufacturing requirements, and would provide better insight into the business and improve operational efficiency.

John McCarville, Senior Vice President of Global Supply Chain and IT for Griffith Laboratories, recalls, "Our main driver was to deliver a consistent experience to our customers, suppliers, and business partners worldwide. With so many disparate systems and tools in place, we didn't have the proper technology platform needed to do that."

Choosing Microsoft Dynamics AX

To support a business that operates 20 manufacturing facilities worldwide to service customers in 30+ countries, Griffith Laboratories knew it would need a system that had localization capabilities, was easy for both IT staff and end users to learn and use, and could be backed by a vendor with global reach. After a thorough review process, the company selected Microsoft Dynamics AX over both Lawson M3 and SAP.

McCarville explains, "Microsoft was the only company that could offer us everything as an integrated system—from the ERP, CRM, HRM, and business intelligence tools to the reporting platform, operating system,

database, and even the portal. We're not a software company, so we purposely wanted to limit the burden associated with integrating tools. With Microsoft, this work has been largely done for us so all we have to do is leverage it."

Microsoft Services

The opportunity to work directly with experts from Microsoft Services also helped fuel the company's ability to deploy Microsoft Dynamics AX. Says McCarville, "I wanted our software vendor to have skin in the game. And by working with Microsoft Services, we have that. I have been impressed that such a large company can give us such individual attention. They are committed to making sure we succeed."

McCarville goes on to add, "Some of our locations are very small; they would be hard-pressed to get the kind of attention they can now get from Microsoft Services."

Initial Deployment

Scheduled to go live in May 2014, Griffith Laboratories' initial rollout of Microsoft Dynamics AX will span five plants in the United States and the company's headquarters in Alsip, Illinois. The company aims to then onboard each additional location based on its multi-year global rollout plan.

The solution will initially serve the needs of 500 people across finance, planning, purchasing, quality control, and sales functions. "Eventually we will take the solution to the floor via tablets," says McCarville. "We also want to quickly leverage the system's CRM and HRM capabilities, as well as its portals for BI and customer self-service. Microsoft Dynamics AX gives us a platform for continuous improvement to support all areas of our business. We don't have to sit around and think about what software to buy."

Expected Benefits

By transitioning to a single, "OneGriffith" global ERP deployment, Griffith Laboratories aims to provide a consistent customer experience. Says McCarville, "With Microsoft Dynamics AX, we have created a common chart of accounts and codified over four-hundred business steps that are trainable and repeatable. As our business units adopt the system, we will more effectively operate as one company and more efficiently report on our business performance from a global perspective."

"In the future, we will even be able to expose the system to our suppliers and customers," McCarville goes on to say. "This will allow us to perform more efficient transactions, for instance through customer and supplier portals."

With the new system in place, Griffith Laboratories also expects to improve planning, reduce dump expenses, eliminate expedited freight, and optimize inventory and outside warehouse space. The company also expects to reduce manual processes and decrease the strain on IT by eliminating a number of systems.

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Looking at the future growth of the company, McCarville says, "With Microsoft Dynamics AX, we feel confident that we will be able to scale our resources in a manner that will greatly limit the costs associated with growth. In addition, we know Microsoft Dynamics AX will continue to evolve with us. Microsoft commits over a billion dollars a year in research and development to the products associated with the Microsoft Dynamics platform, and therefore we plan to leverage this investment to accelerate our business."