RIVERBANK GROUP

Chemical Company Streamlines Processes for Future Growth with Upgraded ERP

Riverbank Chemicals Pte. Ltd. has one foot in the past as it continues to honor a strong work ethic. Its other foot strides into the future as the company diversifies its services and expands its customer base throughout Southeast Asia. By 2012, company executives realized they needed a major upgrade to its legacy ERP software to improve its inventory management, finance reporting, and other tasks. Microsoft Dynamics NAV 2013 R2 has streamlined processes, resulting in improved customer services and increased productivity.

Benefits
- Staff can easily access inventory in terms of actual stock available
- Empowered employees are less bogged down in paperwork so can make better-informed decisions
- With the same number of employees, company can increase market share and diversify its services

Industry
Process Manufacturing & Resources – Chemicals

Country or Region
Singapore, Malaysia, Myanmar & Vietnam

Customer Size
150 employees

Number of Users
17 full NAV users

"With the same amount of staff we are able to perform more functions and are able to do more expansion in terms of diversification. We are able to get other businesses and increase our market share."

Shen Zitian, Corporate Manager, Riverbank Chemicals Pte. Ltd.

Business Needs

From its origins as a paint shop in Singapore in 1985, Riverbank Chemicals has grown into a leading solvent distributor throughout Southeast Asia, with incorporated companies in Singapore, Malaysia, and Vietnam. The company offers many services, including freighting and distribution, and creating and packaging specific products. Riverbank Chemicals executives take pride in ensuring that safety and care for the environment are integral to the firm's culture. By 2012, the company was poised for growth, with hopes of expanding to other countries in Asia.

In order to grow, Riverbank Chemicals needed immediate access to real-time data so its employees could react effectively to market forces. Even though an older version of Microsoft Dynamics NAV software had been installed in the 1990s, most employees had not been taking advantage of the software's functionalities, and were manually keying in data. A simple report could take days to compile, as crucial information was scattered across many information silos in different countries. For example, chemical shipments would come in different packing sizes, with different units of measurement, making standardization very difficult. "Much crucial information was only obtainable from the person who had access to a particular record," recollects Shen Zitian, Corporate Manager, Riverbank Chemicals. Key data was not getting shared with others, so staff in all three countries were duplicating huge amounts of information.

Microsoft Dynamics

Even compiling gross profit reports was a cumbersome task, due to lack of real-time data. Commodity chemical prices fluctuate weekly or even daily, so the company needed immediate access to real-time average costing "Often we could not produce accurate gross profit reports because we could not even make out what are the average costs," states Mr. Shen.

Executives realized that access to real-time, streamlined data, readily available to employees, was crucial for success. An upgrade on the company's legacy ERP software was needed to usher in an exciting era of growth.

Solution

In 2012, Riverbank Chemicals executives began to discuss such a possible upgrade. Cost was an issue, and upper management had to be convinced that the company would see a positive return on its investment. Management also needed to ensure that the program would be user-friendly so staff could easily transit from Excel to ERP. Since employees were accustomed to using programs in the Microsoft Office Suite, the implementation team was optimistic that staff could readily learn to use the upgraded software, Microsoft Dynamics NAV 2013 R2. Equally importantly, the company had plans to diversify their services and increase their presence in Southeast Asia. Hence, the planning team wanted a scalable, flexible solution that would grow as the company grew. After much discussion, the committee decided to upgrade its ERP system in Singapore and Malaysia; its Vietnamese company will undertake this procedure by the third quarter 2015.

Upgrading its legacy ERP software to Microsoft Dynamics NAV 2013 R2 was a daunting task. Company executives knew the upgraded software would need many features specific to the chemical industry, and the executives selected Microsoft Gold Certified Partner Winspire Solutions to help them make the transition. Winspire undertook a major software requirements specification study in order to learn about the company's many rigorous processes and requirements. During the upgrade, members of the Winspire and Riverbank teams underwent a challenging learning curve. Riverbank Chemicals staff often were familiar solely with their own job scopes, so only during the implementation phase did it become evident that much crucial information was not being included in the upgraded software. Achieving this upgrade in two separate countries also offered its own set of challenges as the Winspire team had to integrate varied information from two different locations.

Team members persevered, however. Most of the upgrade took between 18 to 20 months total, and members of the Winspire team are still working on some functionalities to this day. Today, Riverbank Chemicals is reaping the benefits of this demanding transition.

Microsoft

Riverbank Chemicals' Technology Environment	
Servers	SQL Server
ERP system	Microsoft Dynamics NAV 2013 R2
Business database	MS SQL
Line-of-business systems	NAV
Desktop systems	Windows 7

Benefits

Getting real-time, accurate data can be as volatile a task as the chemicals themselves. However, with Microsoft Dynamics NAV 2013 R2 providing key, centralized information, staff is able to work more efficiently, the customers benefit from that efficiency, and Riverbank Chemicals can embark confidently on its plans for expansion.

The Customers Benefit

Inventory is a key component for Riverbank Chemicals. Using Microsoft Dynamics NAV 2013 R2, staff can easily access physical inventory data in relation to committed orders. "My colleagues now can foresee whether we are running down on stock, even if we have high physical inventory," states Eric Ho, Export Manager. This access to information has translated into more on-time deliveries. Having to cancel orders due to lack of stock is becoming a thing of the past.

The Staff Benefits

Now that financial, sales, and storage information is centralized, staff is dealing with much less physical paperwork and filing. Access to this information means they can make better-informed decisions. For example, the system will tell them if a customer is on credit hold, and employees can decide whether an order can be released.

The Company Benefits

"In the past, employees needed several days to compile a report," notes Mr. Shen. "Now, at the click of a button, they can have information regarding sales forecasting, inventory figures, and committed orders." Mr. Shen estimates that the upgraded software has cut down approximately 20 to 30 percent of staff downtime. "With the same amount of staff we are able to perform more functions and are able to do more expansion in terms of diversification. We are able to get other businesses and increase our market share."

Next Steps

- Connect with Microsoft Dynamics
- Become a Dynamic Business
- Learn about partner solutions available in the Microsoft Dynamics Marketplace

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

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