



Microsoft Dynamics Customer Solution Case Study



Software Solutions for Real-Time Success™

Customer: Wonderware
Web Site: www.wonderware.com
Number of Employees: 760
Country or Region: North America
Industry: Professional services—IT
Partners: Hitachi Consulting—HSO

Customer Profile

Established in 1987, Wonderware is a leading provider of real-time operations management industrial software. It operates through a network of 160 authorized distributors in 180 countries, plus 3,500 partner vendors.

Software and Services

- Microsoft Dynamics
 - Microsoft Dynamics AX 4.0
 - Microsoft Dynamics AX 2009
- Microsoft Office
 - Microsoft Office Excel
- Windows

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Global Technology Vendor Improves Business Management, Saves 400 Hours of Labor

“Microsoft Dynamics AX...supported country-specific accounting and financial rules easily—it’s difficult to find any other business management solution that can provide such high-quality localization features.”

Shauna Watanabe, Vice President of Customer Licensing and Operations, Wonderware

Software provider Wonderware wanted consistency in accounting procedures at its regional offices across the world. Working with Microsoft® partners, it implemented Microsoft Dynamics® AX 4.0 on a global scale. As a result, standardized finance operations help it save up to 400 labor hours a month and the IT department saves U.S.\$125,000 a year in operating costs due to ease of managing the system. Wonderware expects full return on investment within the next 18 to 24 months.

Business Needs

Established in 1987, Wonderware is a business unit of United Kingdom-based international technology enterprise Invensys. A Microsoft Gold Certified Partner, Wonderware provides real-time operations management software based on the Windows® operating system for the manufacturing and infrastructure market. In 2006, it extended the integration of its open software solutions to Microsoft Dynamics AX. By 2008, more than 125,000 plants and facilities across the world were using its software.

The organization has grown rapidly by building a strong network of 160 distributor offices worldwide. With its headquarters in California, it also has regional sales offices throughout North America, Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe, Middle East and Africa, and Asia Pacific.

However, by 2006, financial management of such widespread operations had started to prove difficult for the software provider. The key reason was disparity in the IT systems used by various offices. Jim Favero, Business

Systems Manager at Wonderware, says: "Each office used different technologies. It was difficult to integrate their systems with the core infrastructure and provide technical support."

More importantly, it was a challenge to consolidate accounting information from sales offices because each country complied with different accountancy protocols and prepared reports in individual formats. Jon Harrison, Controller at Wonderware, says: "Head office staff manually consolidated this information into corporate reports using Microsoft Office Excel® spreadsheet software—which took up to 80 hours a month for each regional office."

The variety of business rules for each country also made it difficult to train new employees. Shauna Watanabe, Vice President of Customer Licensing and Operations at Wonderware, says: "For example, at one of our German units, it took months of on-the-job training for an accountant to learn to work on the finance management software."

She adds: "To sustain the growth of the company, we needed to manage our business more efficiently by making financial operations more consistent across all offices."

Solution

In early 2006, Wonderware decided to implement a business management solution based on a global model that followed uniform accounting processes in all countries and used standardized software and hardware.

After an eight-month period of evaluating technology options available on the market, the company chose to implement Microsoft Dynamics AX 4.0. Watanabe says: "We needed a solution with enterprise-class features, but at a cost suited to medium-sized organizations. Microsoft Dynamics AX matched these requirements perfectly. Moreover, it supported country-specific accounting and financial rules easily—it's difficult to find any other business

management solution that can provide such high-quality localization features."

In the first stage, Wonderware worked with Microsoft Gold Certified Partner Hitachi Consulting and implemented the Microsoft Dynamics AX financial and order management modules in its two offices in North America. The partner went live with the system in December 2007—within just six months of starting the project.

Satisfied with the performance of Microsoft Dynamics AX in North America, Wonderware embarked on the next stage of deploying it in its five offices in Germany, Italy, Scandinavia, Denmark, Sweden, and Norway. Microsoft Gold Certified Partner and manufacturing industry specialist HSO used Microsoft Dynamics Sure Step Methodology for implementation and launched the system at the same time in all five offices in April 2008.

Wonderware has moved to the third stage of this global-scale project and is currently implementing the Microsoft Dynamics AX trade, logistics, and financial modules in its Latin American offices—scheduled to go live by the end of 2008. The next phase covers business units in Asia. The software provider also plans to upgrade to Microsoft Dynamics AX 2009—the latest version of the business management solution.

Benefits

The business management solution in Wonderware offices in North America and Europe has completely solved the problem of disparity in accounting practices followed in each country, leading to significant productivity benefits. The finance department saves up to 400 hours a month and the time required to train a new employee has reduced from months to just days. Watanabe says: "The architecture of Microsoft Dynamics AX is specially designed to accommodate the requirements of a multinational firm such as ours. We had to do only minor customization to the product—

any other software solution would have required more effort and time of the development team."

- Head office now accesses financial data from regional business units in real time. The system automatically consolidates sales information into corporate reports—helping the Wonderware finance department save up to 80 hours a month for each entity, resulting in total savings of 400 hours for all five European offices.
- Due to the intuitive user interface and the user-friendly tools of Microsoft Dynamics AX, user acceptance as well as the adoption rate for the solution was 100 percent from day one.
- Time required to train new employees on the finance management system has also reduced from months to just days.
- Staff queries submitted to the IT helpdesk on using the system features are 75 percent less compared to the previous solution.
- With standardized software and hardware across all offices, the IT team based in North America can provide technical support to European offices remotely. In future, it will also extend it to Wonderware offices in Latin America and Asia.
- Ease of managing the technology helped Wonderware free 50 percent of the enterprise resource planning system support staff to work on value-adding, business development projects rather than day-to-day maintenance tasks.
- Efficient IT administration has resulted in annual savings of U.S.\$125,000 in operating costs and Wonderware expects full return on investment within the next 18 to 24 months.