



Premier Race Track Runs Multiple Lines of Business on Integrated Business Solution

Overview

Country or Region: United States

Industry: Retail, entertainment

Customer Profile

The Indianapolis Motor Speedway, a world-famous race track located in Indianapolis, Indiana, uses technology to run its many business units, from ticketing to concessions and catering.

Business Situation

The Speedway's multiple lines of business were all using separate accounting processes and reporting. The Speedway wanted an integrated view of activity and, consequently, better customer service.

Solution

The Speedway implemented Microsoft® Business Solutions–Great Plains® along with Microsoft CRM, both now part of Microsoft Dynamics™.

Benefits

- Faster reporting
- Stronger accountability
- Improved customer service insight
- Reduced IT costs, complexities
- More cost-effective solution for parent company

“We needed to find out how we could get a more consolidated financial report. At one point, we had ten lines of business within one company—with ten databases and ten sets of procedures and reporting.”

Adrian Young, Director of Information Services, the Indianapolis Motor Speedway

World-famous for the Indianapolis 500, the Indianapolis Motor Speedway is a renowned race track in Indianapolis, Indiana. The Speedway depends heavily on technology to run its various business systems, from ticketing to concessions. However, because the Speedway was using multiple accounting systems for these disparate business units, reporting was a challenge. Speedway employees also needed a tool to help them provide top-level customer service across all business units. The Speedway implemented Microsoft® Business Solutions–Great Plains® along with Microsoft CRM, both now part of Microsoft Dynamics™. Now, the Speedway has streamlined its accounting and reporting processes and can provide better customer service and accountability. The Speedway's parent organization has also standardized on Microsoft Great Plains, choosing the Microsoft solution over SAP.

“All our lines of business use Microsoft Great Plains in some way—whether employees are creating purchases or downloading data to the General Ledger.”

Adrian Young, Director of Information Services, the Indianapolis Motor Speedway

Situation

The Indianapolis Motor Speedway is the location for the largest, single-day sporting event in the world. Races at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway include not only the Indianapolis 500, but also such premier races as the U.S. Grand Prix and the Allstate 400 at the Brickyard. Hulman & Company is the parent company that owns the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, along with several other businesses in various fields.

Within the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, there are also multiple businesses, including retail operations, food and beverage operations, ticketing, contract management, and sponsorships. For each of these operations, Speedway employees need to track and report the financial information in the most streamlined, accurate manner possible.

Additionally, the Speedway has always had a strong focus on customer service and wants to ensure they have an overarching view into customer activity across all the business units.

Until about two years ago, the Indianapolis Motor Speedway had been using multiple, separate accounting systems and infrastructures that were internally made for specific business units. Recognizing it needed a solution that would help consolidate financial systems, the Speedway began considering SAP and Microsoft® Business Solutions–Great Plains®, now part of Microsoft Dynamics™.

Because its financial reporting and accounting functions were not consolidated, the Speedway ended up with each line of business having its own system and database, as well as its own set of procedures and types of reporting. The listing of customer information was also not consolidated, each having separate customer

entries for every line of business and storing on separate databases.

The Speedway wanted one financial report with one database and one view of the customers across all lines of business. “We needed to find out how we could get a more consolidated financial report,” says Adrian Young, Director of Information Services at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. “At one point, we had ten lines of business within one company—with ten databases and ten sets of procedures and reporting.”

Solution

To consolidate financial data and reporting, the Indianapolis Motor Speedway implemented Microsoft Great Plains in February 2005. The implementation was enhanced by Deluxe Support from Microsoft Business Solutions (now Microsoft Dynamics). “Deluxe Support helped us resolve issues quickly, and they were available for us when we needed them” says Chuck Ferguson, Senior Director of Information Services and Telecommunications, the Indianapolis Motor Speedway.

The Speedway knew Microsoft Great Plains would be less expensive and easier to use and maintain than SAP, and it took those factors into account when it made its choice. The Speedway now has at its disposal a number of modules, including Report Writer, Payables Management, Receivables Management, Purchase Order Processing, Sales Order Processing, Inventory, and Fixed Assets Management.

Consolidated Accounting and Reporting with Microsoft Great Plains

The Indianapolis Motor Speedway uses Microsoft Great Plains to consolidate financial and accounting processes for many of its businesses, as well as Microsoft Business Solutions for Analytics–FRx® to

"SAP was a large, complicated system, offering more features and functionality than we needed, which would have driven up our licensing and implementation costs."

Chuck Ferguson, Senior Director of Information Services and Telecommunications, the Indianapolis Motor Speedway

develop customized reports for the executives. With this software, employees have extended reporting capabilities in addition to the Microsoft Excel® spreadsheet software capabilities they already have.

From start of day until end of day, all of the Speedway's lines of business are now being seamlessly processed with the help of modules within Microsoft Great Plains:

- For ticketing sales: an internal application populates the General Ledger, which in turn generates purchase records.
- For retail cash register sales: Sales Order Processing enables a once-a-day process in which transactions are downloaded, sales documents can be created, cash is applied, and receipts are processed.
- For the mail order side of the business: Sales Order Processing records all fulfillment and shipping order transactions.
- For concessions and catering purchasing: Inventory Control tracks food and beverages.
- For catering services: Sales Order Processing, Inventory, General Ledger, and Accounts Receivable manage transactions, from call center to food and beverage order fulfillment.
- For the on-site motel: Integration Manager for downloading data from separate systems into General Ledger.

"All our lines of business use Microsoft Great Plains in some way—whether employees are creating purchases or downloading data to the General Ledger. A lot of the systems we develop are also built around Microsoft Great Plains. Now we have one place to store multiple pieces of information," says Young.

Microsoft Great Plains Complements Other Microsoft Technologies

The key to a totally integrated and successful solution is utilizing complementary technologies. The Indianapolis Motor

Speedway also uses other Microsoft products and technologies—all of which have been designed to work together.

Sales people at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway now use Microsoft CRM for contract management to develop quotes, leads, and sales orders. "We use Microsoft CRM as a fulfillment database for our Client Services group," says Young. "If visitors in a suite want certain food or music, a contract is drawn up and put into Microsoft CRM, and it's automatically sent to the Client Services group so they can make sure to fulfill the contract by having the suite and tickets available."

Both Microsoft Office SharePoint® Portal Server 2003 and Microsoft SQL Server™ 2000 are part of the Speedway's solution, as well. SQL Server is the primary database, so the Speedway stores data from ticketing, inventory, and payroll all in one server.

Employees use SharePoint Portal Server 2003 to connect all the different parts of business in its organization. For example, the legal department uses SharePoint services to collect and store Certificates of Insurance for vendors and different groups that are renting space or suites. Young says, "Now, each department has its own portal to share and process information."

Benefits

The Microsoft Great Plains solution allows the Indianapolis Motor Speedway employees to streamline their accounting and reporting processes for better efficiency and accountability. With Microsoft CRM, the Speedway is better able to service its customers across all business units with a high-level overview. Hulman & Company, the Speedway's parent company, chose Microsoft over SAP based on business needs as well as cost of ownership.

Faster Reporting

Streamlining accounting and reporting processes with one system across all lines of business has reduced effort required to prepare reports, leading to productivity increases among the accounting staff. "Reporting that used to take us days can now be done in hours with Microsoft Great Plains," says Young.

Stronger Accountability

Accountability is also improved with the Microsoft Great Plains solution. "Employees now can provide customized, easy-to-use reports that give upper management a better view of financial data so that they can make more informed and confident decisions," adds Young.

Increased Customer Service Insight

By using Microsoft CRM, the Indianapolis Motor Speedway now has one place for customer information, and this integration has helped enable customer service employees to respond more quickly to customer requests, as well as provided a higher-level overview of customer data. "By enabling us to see all the customer information, we expect we will be able to be more proactive in meeting customers' needs," says Young.

Reduced IT Costs and Complexities

By deploying one business management system, Microsoft Great Plains, the Indianapolis Motor Speedway has been able to cut costs and complexities associated with IT and speed development and deployment of software and services. Young adds, "We're a 99.9 percent Microsoft shop now, and this helps us use our IT resources more effectively with less downtime and speedier deployment of new systems."

More Cost-Effective Solution for Parent Company

Standardization on Microsoft Great Plains also extends to the Indianapolis Motor Speedway's parent company, Hulman & Company. Hulman & Company chose Microsoft Great Plains 7.0 over an SAP system, based on cost of ownership and the ability of Great Plains to meet the unique needs of the organization. Compared to the Microsoft Great Plains solution, SAP would have required a much larger initial investment for operations and maintenance, and the continuous availability of dedicated IT staffers. Additionally, for the company's people, Microsoft Great Plains, with its familiar, comfortable user interface is much easier to learn and work with than SAP would have been.

"SAP was a large, complicated system, offering more features and functionality than we needed, which would have driven up our licensing and implementation costs. We thought our interests were better served building on Microsoft Great Plains," says Ferguson.

For More Information

For more information about Microsoft products and services, call the Microsoft Sales Information Center at (800) 426-9400. In Canada, call the Microsoft Canada Information Centre at (877) 568-2495. Customers who are deaf or hard-of-hearing can reach Microsoft text telephone (TTY/TDD) services at (800) 892-5234 in the United States or (905) 568-9641 in Canada. Outside the 50 United States and Canada, please contact your local Microsoft subsidiary. To access information using the World Wide Web, go to: www.microsoft.com

For more information about the Indianapolis Motor Speedway products and services, call (800) 822-4639 or visit the Web site at: www.brickyard.com

Microsoft Dynamics

Microsoft Dynamics is a line of integrated, adaptable business management solutions that enables you and your people to make business decisions with greater confidence. Microsoft Dynamics works like familiar Microsoft software such as Microsoft Office, which means less of a learning curve for your people, so they can get up and running quickly and focus on what's most important. And because it is from Microsoft, it easily works with the systems that your company already has implemented. By automating and streamlining financial, customer relationship, and supply chain processes, Microsoft Dynamics brings together people, processes, and technologies, increasing the productivity and effectiveness of your business, and helping you drive business success.

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



Software and Services

- Microsoft Dynamics
 - Microsoft Business Solutions for Analytics-FRx
 - Microsoft Business Solutions-Great Plains
 - Microsoft CRM

- Microsoft Windows Server System
 - Microsoft SQL Server 2000.
- Microsoft Office System
 - Microsoft Office SharePoint Portal Server 2003

Hardware

- HP Servers
- IBM desktops and notebook computers
- Compaq desktops and notebook computers