



Microsoft Dynamics Customer Solution Case Study



Oven Manufacturer Accelerates Processes with Robust Business Management Solution

Overview

Country or Region: United States

Industry: Manufacturing

Customer Profile

Since 1991, TurboChef Technologies has used its patented technologies to design, manufacture, and market a variety of speed-cooking solutions. TurboChef is based in Atlanta, Georgia.

Business Situation

As TurboChef grew its product line, achieved international reach, and moved from a private to a public company, it also needed a robust solution that would support its business management needs.

Solution

TurboChef teamed with Microsoft® Gold Certified Partner I.B.I.S. and rolled out Microsoft Business Solutions–Great Plains®, now a part of Microsoft Dynamics™ to over 30 employees located in both Dallas and Atlanta.

Benefits

- Supports accelerated company growth
- Saves time with integration
- Improves business insight
- Accommodates targeted business needs

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Jim Harris, Business Applications Manager, TurboChef

TurboChef Technologies produces a powerful line of commercial speed-cooking ovens. In 2003, the company initiated significant business changes that would enable a rapid expansion of its product line into the global market. To guarantee that its growth would be supported from a technical standpoint, TurboChef, with the help of Microsoft® Gold Certified Partner I.B.I.S., replaced its existing business management solution with Microsoft Business Solutions–Great Plains®, now part of Microsoft Dynamics™. Microsoft Great Plains provides a scalable business solution that easily supports the company's rapid growth. Integration with other business systems enables TurboChef to shorten down to 30 minutes tasks that once took days. Finally, Microsoft Great Plains provides a flexible solution that TurboChef has extended to meet all of its business needs.





Figure 1 The TurboChef Tornado

“[Microsoft] Great Plains supported us through our accelerated growth period without requiring us to make any major system changes. This really speaks to the flexibility and scalability of the solution.”

Jim Harris, Business Applications Manager,
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Situation

Imagine that you could prepare Châteaubriand in eight minutes, baked potatoes in six minutes, chocolate soufflé in three minutes, and asparagus in 50 seconds—the concept of “fast food” would take on an entirely new meaning. For thousands of chefs and food service operators worldwide, regardless if they prepare five-star meals or hotdogs at baseball games, this twist on fast food is very real—all because of TurboChef Technologies’s drive to accelerate the world of cooking.

Based in Atlanta, Georgia, TurboChef designs, develops, manufactures, and markets speed-cooking ovens. Using patented technologies that combine high-speed, forced-air convection heating with microwave energy, the company’s commercial ovens prepare “cook-to-order” food products at faster speeds and higher quality standards than conventional cook methods.

Beginning in 2003 and continuing into the present, TurboChef has undergone several major business changes. First, production work that had once been contracted out was moved in-house. Second, the company went public. And third, TurboChef expanded its product offerings from one domestically produced oven line with two models, to three oven lines with over 60 distinct models. As a result, the company questioned whether or not its existing business management solution, Epicor Software, would be able to accommodate the company’s new business model.

Al Cochran, Chief Financial Officer for TurboChef explains, “The business atmosphere at TurboChef was changing drastically, and we were preparing to go through a significant period of expansion. As such, it was vital that we implement a business management system that would support both our rapid growth and new

financial reporting requirements. In addition, we needed a solution that would improve our product forecasting and material tracking capabilities.”

Solution

To begin, TurboChef evaluated its needs along with other solutions on the market. After the evaluation, the company determined that Microsoft® Business Solutions–Great Plains®, now part of Microsoft Dynamics™, would fulfill all of its business management needs.

John Pamplin, Chief Technology Officer for TurboChef, explains, “We needed a solution that interacted with our existing systems, was backed by a major player, and had a modular architecture for customization and functional enhancements—[Microsoft] Great Plains was the only application that met those needs.”

In addition, Microsoft Great Plains provided the robust, comprehensive functionality the company needed to track and manage financial, sales, and manufacturing data. And, because the company already used Microsoft products, Microsoft Great Plains provided a familiar user interface that employees would be comfortable using.

To assist with the deployment of Microsoft Great Plains, TurboChef teamed with Microsoft Gold Certified Partner I.B.I.S.—an Atlanta, Georgia–based company that provides customers with total enterprise business solutions.

The Microsoft Great Plains deployment was divided into two phases. During the first phase, TurboChef implemented the financial and supply chain management functionality of Microsoft Great Plains so that employees could use the software to track and manage data related to accounting and sales order processing tasks. During the second phase, TurboChef implemented the manufacturing



Figure 2 TurboChef headquarters in Dallas, Texas

functionality of Microsoft Great Plains. The company also integrated Microsoft Great Plains with a pre-existing, Web-based warranty tracking system and implemented two add-on solutions: I.B.I.S.'s TaxAssist ensures the appropriate sales tax is charged to each customer. The other add-on, from Data Presentation Products, Inc. (DPPI), Xcelerator for SmartLists, accelerates the speed with which data is imported from Microsoft Great Plains into Microsoft Office Excel® 2003 spreadsheet software and automates the creation and formatting of Excel 2003 workbooks.

Today, approximately 30 employees (both in Atlanta and Dallas) are connecting with Microsoft Great Plains through a Terminal Server (part of Windows Server® 2003) program environment.

Benefits

With Microsoft Great Plains in place, TurboChef has succeeded in implementing a solution that supports the company's accelerated growth, provides integration capabilities that reduce time spent on manual tasks, and can be extended to meet all of TurboChef's business needs.

Supports Accelerated Company Growth

To say TurboChef has undergone rapid company growth over the past two years would be an understatement. The company has brought production in-house, increased the number of oven models it produces from 2 to 60, and has expanded sales into over 30 countries. And through it all, Microsoft Great Plains has aptly supported all of TurboChef's manufacturing and production business needs.

"[Microsoft] Great Plains supported us through our accelerated growth period without requiring us to make any major system changes. This really speaks to the flexibility and scalability of the solution," says

Jim Harris, Business Applications Manager for TurboChef. "In addition, it provides the financial capabilities we need to fulfill Sarbanes-Oxley regulatory requirements, which is a necessity now that TurboChef is a public company."

Saves Time with Integration, Improves Business Insight

Warranty work is a requisite part of TurboChef's business and a task that the company outsources to third-party vendors. As such, it is critical that customer, product, and warranty information is accurate—one reason being so that customer representatives can dispatch technicians to the right addresses for service calls. Otherwise, TurboChef pays the U.S.\$100 service bill, which is a cost that can add up quickly, considering TurboChef has sold over 30,000 ovens in the United States alone.

Before implementing Microsoft Great Plains, TurboChef manually entered product information into its warranty system, a process that took time and threatened to compromise the validity of the data. But today, the company has streamlined this process because the two systems are now sharing information and, thus, eliminating the need for duplicate data entry.

"Before [Microsoft] Great Plains, we spent 16 hours a week manually entering information into our warranty tracking system. But now we have an integrated process, so this task takes less than 30 minutes a week," says Harris. "In addition, because data is seamlessly shared with Great Plains and our warranty system, we don't have to worry about manually introducing errors, and we're working with clean, reliable data."

Microsoft Great Plains is also helping TurboChef to gain better insight into company data (such as its commission structure) and, in turn, saves the company more time. Most

“[With Microsoft Great Plains] we’ve streamlined processes, achieved better business insight, and have a solution that we can customize to meet our business needs.”

Al Cochran, Chief Financial Officer, TurboChef

of TurboChef’s sales are being completed by third-party representatives dedicated to a specific region or country. Before implementing its business management solution, TurboChef manually tracked these sales and associated commissions through a multitude of invoices and spreadsheets—a task that consumed several days each month. But with Microsoft Great Plains, TurboChef has an automated commission transfer process that takes less than 30 minutes each month.

Accommodates Targeted Business Needs

While Microsoft Great Plains offers complete functionality without any modifications, it is also a flexible product that can be extended to accommodate the specific needs of any customer. For TurboChef, this flexibility has enabled it to implement several add-on products that result in a tailored solution that meets TurboChef’s unique business needs.

For example, with a widely dispersed customer base, TurboChef must ensure that appropriate sales tax is being added to each and every sale. To automate this task, TurboChef implemented Vertex, along with a third-party add-on product, TaxAssist.

As another example, in spring of 2006, the company will introduce a new oven that appeals to the residential market. In tandem with that release, the company plans to provide a Web-based user interface to Microsoft Great Plains. The end result will be a customer-facing Web site where dealers can place and track orders, and a site that automatically feeds this order information into Microsoft Great Plains.

Cochran sums up, “[Microsoft] Great Plains provides TurboChef with the tools and capabilities we need to continue on our path of accelerated growth. We’ve streamlined processes, achieved better business insight, and have a solution that we can customize to meet our business needs.”

For More Information

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For more information about I.B.I.S., Inc. products and services, call (770) 368-4000 or visit the Web site at:

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For more information about TurboChef Technologies, Inc. products and services, call (866) 908-8726 (TURBO) or visit the Web site at:

www.turbochef.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

Microsoft® Business Solutions—Great Plains®
Now Microsoft Dynamics™ GP

Software and Services

- Microsoft Dynamics
 - Microsoft Business Solutions—Great Plains
- Microsoft Office
 - Microsoft Office Excel 2003
- Solutions
 - DPPI Xcelerator for Microsoft Great Plains SmartList
 - I.B.I.S. Tax Assist

Technologies

- Terminal Server (in Windows Server 2003)

Partners

- I.B.I.S., Inc.
- DPPI

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