

HALL HUNTER PARTNERSHIP

BUSINESS PROFILE:

- PROVIDES SEASONAL SOFT FRUITS TO MANY OF THE BIG BRITISH SUPERMARKET CHAINS

BUSINESS CHALLENGE:

- THE BUSINESS WAS RUN MORE AS A COLLECTION OF FARMS INCREASING DEMANDS ON THE SYSTEM
- EXPERIENCED RAPID GROWTH
- THE SYSTEMS WERE OVERLOADED AND NOT INTEGRATED

SOLUTION:

- MICROSOFT DYNAMICS NAV

BENEFITS:

- CAPACITY TO HANDLE HUGE VOLUMES OF TRANSACTIONS
- ENHANCED ACCOUNTING INFORMATION FROM FARMS TO THE HEAD OFFICE
- CAN OBTAIN THE PROFIT MARGIN ON EACH SHIPMENT DAILY
- NOW A MORE NIMBLE BUSINESS; ABLE TO ANALYSE MORE DATA AND REACT MORE SWIFTLY TO OPPORTUNITIES

A FRUITFUL PARTNERSHIP

BUSINESS PROFILE

The Hall Hunter partnership is a family business that grows seasonal soft fruits on an expanding network of farms in the South of England. Founded in 1970 as a pick-your-own enterprise, it now employs up to 1500 people and sells 5,500 tonnes of produce, through its distributor Berryworld, to most of the big British supermarket chains.

Most of the partnership's traditional growing takes place under cover but recent investment into glasshouses, together with expansion into more southerly areas, has extended Hall Hunter's growing season at both ends.

SUCCESSFUL TRACK RECORD

Over the years, Hall Hunter's management team has formed a close working relationship with Berryworld. It was through Berryworld, and its parent Poupart, that it was introduced to Tectura and Microsoft Dynamics® NAV. Finance Manager David Mear is the first to admit that, until then, the business had been run more as a collection of farms than a fully integrated IT operation. "I think it was when we took on a 470-acre property in Surrey, at a stroke doubling our growing capacity, that we realised change was needed."

Tectura had been working closely with Poupart for several years and, through implementing Microsoft Dynamics NAV, had helped it deliver a 35 percent increase in its own sales without increasing headcount. Given their intimate business relationship, it made sense for the Hall Hunter team to enlist Tectura's support as well.

Its one-man IT department had initially set up a simple client network, based on Citrix SQL servers located at each farm, and that at least got the sites sharing information. However as the Company expanded further, its accounts team was required to input more and more transactions and management were desperate to give them better access to timely data. The system gradually became overloaded and, without the dedicated manpower to maintain serviceability, Hall Hunter called on Berryworld and Poupart for support.

"As well as helping manage the increased workload, Poupart, an existing Tectura customer, recommended a migration to Dynamics NAV financial management," explains

“Without a doubt it has helped us manage our expansion and I am confident Tectura will continue to support us as we grow.”

David Mear
Hall Hunter
Finance Manager



Mear. With a decision firmly in place, all three firms provided Hall Hunter with project management assistance throughout the implementation and configuration phases.

HUGE LEAP FORWARD

The benefits swiftly became apparent. With an SQL database in place, the volume of transactions capable of being handled by the Hall Hunter system immediately soared. SQL reports could extract management information that just wasn't available before. Individual farms could very quickly send a great deal more accounting information to head office.

Continues Mear, “The file importation capability represents a huge leap forward for us, and there are no barriers to the type of material that can be imported. Reporting off these SQL tables is completely intuitive.” The management team can now analyse and run calculations off the data and explore scenarios that just wouldn't have been possible before.

“In terms of decision making we can work faster,” highlights Mear. “We can get our accounts out a week after the period ends. KPI data, especially from a sales perspective, is streets ahead of where it used to be.” Hall Hunter is now using Dynamics NAV for sales forecasting and

budgeting, and is looking to implement purchase ordering.

DAY-TO-DAY VARIATIONS

A number of developments to further streamline Hall Hunter processes have taken place in the last year. Rather than using a traditional sales order system, the partnership operates a self-billing invoice agreement with Customers. This accounts for the fruit that they have accepted and expect to sell to the supermarket buyers. Given the day-to-day variations in the types of berry, and their quality and subsequent demand, operators use a number of criteria, to enter a sales order effectively.

This information is key to the cost of servicing each order and therefore margins achieved.

TWO-STAGE SOLUTION

With all product information and subsequent decisions fed back into the system, Mear highlights, “It is now a totally straightforward process, in contrast to the time-consuming manual processes previously in place.”

Tectura came up with a two-stage solution. The first task was to create a list of stock codes to reflect all the various tray permutations, and then Berryworld

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introduced a web-based application to import them into their sales ledger, allowing orders to be created. Mear explains. “We are now closer to obtaining the profit margin on each shipment daily.”

Return on investment is measured in reduced overheads as well as increased accounting functionality. “If Hall Hunter was managing the same volume of business with the old system, we would probably be employing two more people,” explains Mear. “With Tectura’s help we are now a more nimble business; able to analyse more data and react more swiftly to opportunities.”

Confident with the visibility of relevant KPI’s, Mear summarises the relationship saying, “Without a doubt it has helped us manage our expansion and I am confident Tectura will continue to support us as we grow.”

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Phone: 0845 084 0152
E-Mail: uk.info@tectura.com
Website: www.tectura.co.uk

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