



Foodco

The Foodco Group is comprised of two well known brands: Muffin Break and Jamaica Blue.



Muffin Break provides customers with a combination of baked products and a unique blend of espresso coffee. Muffin Break stores can be found in Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom and Dubai. The Muffin Break product range is prepared and baked fresh in store daily.



Jamaica Blue offers a contemporary cafe experience with locations ranging from espresso bars to cafe restaurants, providing a diverse range of light meals as well as Jamaica Blue's distinctive blend of espresso coffee. Jamaica Blue stores can be found in Australia, New Zealand and Kuwait, Shanghai and Taiwan.

Snap Shot

Industry:

Retail / Franchise

Scenario:

With over 220 retail outlets under the Muffin Break & Jamaica Blue banners, in the past three years staff numbers at head office have grown from 35 to 75 and the numbers of franchisees have expanded from 205 to 260. Foodco decided to implement Microsoft Dynamics GP (formerly Great Plains) to assist with mounting workload and support growth.

Solution:

Foodco implemented Microsoft Dynamics GP

Benefits:

- Integration of data from POS
- Support for business growth
- Elimination of manual processing
- Significant time savings
- Elimination of data errors
- Faster reporting

Implementation Partner:

Professional Advantage

“ Professional Advantage has lived up to the high reputation it has for excellent customer service. ”



PROBLEM

As a leading Australian franchise organisation, Foodco's finance team manage a complex revenue model across several brands that are constantly expanding as new franchisees join the Foodco Group under the Muffin Break and Jamaica Blue banners. In the past three years, staff numbers at head office have grown from 35 to 75 and the numbers of franchisees have expanded from 205 to 260.

Jonathon Britton, Financial Controller, is primarily responsible for managing the monthly revenue stream, a franchise royalty payable from franchisees as a percentage of sales. In addition, advertising levy is collected from franchisees to be held in trust in the national marketing fund, maintained separately for Muffin Break and Jamaica Blue brand. They each have an annual marketing stipend to support new product launches or special offers.

"As the company expanded rapidly and the finance team was tasked with more responsibilities, our workload was increasing exponentially. Our existing accounting package wasn't keeping up and we were being buried under an invoice mountain."

SOLUTION

In 2005, Foodco Group put out a tender for a new financial solution package. After evaluating four leading packages, they chose Microsoft Dynamics GP (formerly Great Plains).

"We chose Microsoft Dynamics GP [Great Plains] because it suited the size of our business and our structure as a franchisor; it was going to be able to cope with future growth without the need for more headcount, and it could deliver the reports we needed easily," Mr Britton said.

"We were also impressed with the approach that Professional Advantage took in explaining the package and mapping it to our business needs rather than just providing an off-the-shelf solution," he added.

THE IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation faced several challenges. Halfway through the initial scope of work, Foodco's current Chief Financial Officer handed over responsibility for the project to Jonathan Britton. Work on the implementation stopped as the business realigned the objectives of the project.

After initial delays, Foodco went live with Microsoft Dynamics GP in July 2005.

"The implementation of Microsoft Dynamics GP [Great Plains] was successful despite some significant hurdles. With our CFO leaving and the internal project leader going on leave for six weeks prior to July 1, the Professional Advantage team exceeded all our expectations," Mr Britton commented.

"For anyone looking to implement a new financial system, July 1 is the ideal go-live date. It saves a great deal of time in rationalising the general ledger and testing incomplete data in the system. My advice would also be to have staff members involved in implementation available during the "go live" time."

One of the unexpected benefits Foodco found in using Dynamics GP was how easily it integrated the data from Point-of-Sale system used by franchisees. This had a significant impact on the veracity of the information coming in from the franchisees and ultimately how long it took to process invoices and reports.

"As part of a franchise network, standards are important - not only in customer experience and product offered, but also in systems used. Our franchisees use standard POS systems, which helps with revenue reporting and data analysis," said Mr Britton.

BENEFITS

"First and foremost, the biggest benefit in using Dynamics GP [Great Plains] has been the fact that without this software package, Foodco would not have been able to grow as quickly," Mr Britton said.

Using Dynamics GP has meant that 400 manual invoices which used to take two-three days to process are now done at the press of a button. The integration of data from Dynamics GP to the existing point of sale registers, has meant no data errors and the saving of at least a week every month in trying to reconcile the general ledger.

The functionality of Dynamics GP has also shortened the Profit and Loss statement as MDA codes are assigned for service items such as marketing collateral, for example store posters, flyers and other POS material.

The month end reporting has been reduced by two weeks.

"With the elimination of much of the data entry work required, we have been able to manage the workload with the same number of financial team members despite the number of stores growing by 85 percent and total staff figures more than doubling. We have also begun managing the payroll and accounts for Jahnus, a coffee distributor company supplying Muffin Break and Jamaica Blue coffee out of Melbourne. They were previously using MYOB but with Dynamics GP [Great Plains] we are able to remotely network into the same database," Mr Britton said.

"We have also integrated MicroPay payroll into the system which went live on the 1st of July. This means no more reconciliation nightmares! What used to take four days each month is now just a press of a button," said Mr. Britton.

"There were also the human benefits. The support provided by our implementation partner, Professional Advantage has been prompt and efficient. We have hardly needed to call the support desk but if we do, our questions are always answered quickly and simply. Professional Advantage has lived up to the high reputation it has for excellent customer service."

THE FUTURE

Mr Britton said, "We are currently enjoying the present! The team has been freed up from mundane data entry to look more analytically at the figures and add greater value to the business."

As Foodco Group continues to experience strong growth, the next planned activity for the finance group is to look at business intelligence modules to improve planning and have greater visibility on each franchisee's operation.

"Microsoft Dynamics GP suits our business, our franchise model very well. Ultimately the streamlining of the accounting system has meant the other departments are all a lot happier with the finance team and what we produce now, which makes Friday drinks so much more enjoyable!" concluded Mr Britton.

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ABOUT PROFESSIONAL ADVANTAGE

Professional Advantage was established in 1989 and today employs around 250 people in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, London and Fargo, USA. The company is the largest provider of leading brand global business management systems, such as financial management, ERP, CRM, retail, and business intelligence, to midsize organisations in Australia, supporting over 850 clients nationally. Its multi product offering is complemented by its development, systems integration, consulting, training, and support services. Professional Advantage is the winner of many business and vendor awards, including Microsoft Global Customer Care Excellence 2006, Epicor ANZ Reseller 2005, Epicor Global Vertical Market Solution 2005 for Senior Living Solution, Microsoft Inner Circle and President's Club Member 2006 and SunSystems Asia Pacific Partner for 2005.

The company's clients include medium to large public and private companies and government departments.

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