Goldline Distributors

Goldline Builds Platform for Dynamic Growth

Within nine short years managing director, Mark Gray, has grown Goldline from a small start-up to become a major food supplier to the hub of the Western Australian gold fields, Kalgoorlie.

The company specialises in the food services industry, supplying a comprehensive range of items including dry foods, freezer items, fruit and vegetables, beverages, chiller foods, confectionery, hospitality, janitorial and packaging products. Its customers are drawn from a 400 kilometre range around Kalgoorlie and although it predominantly services businesses, Goldline also benefits from a small cash-and-carry component.

Gray believes that Kalgoorlie's comparative isolation, the depth of Goldline's product range and its broad geographic territory have been key factors in the company's rapid growth. "We started with freezer and dry products, gradually broadening into new areas," he notes. "What we have always tried to model is a one stop shop so that customers deal with one delivery and one invoice."

Problems

In its early days Goldline relied on a small business accounting package. However as the number of product lines rose into the thousands and the daily transactions continued to increase, the software began to strain at the sides. Gray decided to upgrade and selected System 77. A year later Goldline formed a relationship with Professional Advantage to develop and support the new software.

In the ensuing four years the mining industry boomed and Kalgoorlie's economy grew exponentially. Goldline's business tripled. With ever an ever-growing client base to service, more than 7,500 products and additional product categories to manage, Goldine's business systems were once again under stress.

Gray says, "Our product range, workforce, our vehicle fleet – everything had tripled. We were in the middle of a boom and it was driving tremendous growth." The only solution was to once again upgrade.

Snap Shot

Industry - Wholesale Distribution

Business Objective:

Deployment of an enterprise business software system capable of keeping up with and managing Goldline's exponential growth.

Solution:

Microsoft Dynamics GP

Business Benefits:

- Faster, more efficient customer service
- Better inventory control
- Minute-by-minute visibility into customer order status
- Online ordering is reducing the cost of order fulfilment

For more information:
www.pa.com.au/microsoft
email: microsoftinfo@pa.com.au
call: 1800 126 499

Solution

In March 2008 Gray took his first step by approaching Professional Advantage. "Professional Advantage already had the keys to my previous system and it was going to be an easier task for them to convert our data than it would have been for anyone else. They had the skills and tools that we needed to help our business grow, and I knew and trusted them."

A team of consultants from Professional Advantage sat down with Goldline management and conducted a review of every process in the food supplier's business. They then prepared a design document and recommended Microsoft Dynamics GP as the business software suite most suitable for supporting and growing alongside Goldline's business.

Confident that Professional Advantage knew his business and understood what was required, Gray accepted the recommendation and deployment began.

Implementation

Despite a few minor hiccups implementation went smoothly. Gray comments, "I was fortunate that we had been through software deployments in the past so I knew what to expect, even though it's one of those things that you can't really prepare for no matter how much training you do."

The most immediate impact of deployment was felt by staff. There was an initial period of frustration as everyone came to grips with the new software and learned to find the information they required, followed by relief at the increase in capabilities. Gray estimates it took six weeks to start obtaining really beneficial insights from the new system and two more weeks to feel completely comfortable with the change.

The system automates many of Goldline's processes and operates across all areas of the company, from accounts to inventory and customer relationship management.

Processing speed and the depth of data captured have dramatically enhanced the ability of staff to answer customer and supplier queries quickly and efficiently. Other benefits include what Gray describes as the "visual" nature of the software and the way it enables management to analyse and report on all aspects of the business.

Online ordering

It didn't take long after going live for Gray to consider ways of extending the benefits of his new Microsoft Dynamics software. "The more we get used to the system, the more ideas that come to mind," he says.

For the first project, Professional Advantage implemented an online ordering system that allows customers to visit a secure Goldline website and place their own orders. The web site was launched in mid 2009 and promoted to a small section of the customer base so that Goldline could monitor the response.

With telephone orders traditionally taking up to half an hour to complete, each online order delivers Goldline a significant reduction in staff workload. Rather than tying up a customer service operator, each web order automatically prints out in the Goldline warehouse, ready for picking and despatching. For the customers, the web site offers the ultimate in convenience – orders can be placed at any time.

Gray explains, "Right now we have around six percent of our customer base ordering via the web. It is a growing part of the business and is something that we can use to leverage the rest of our business." To capitalise on the cost benefits Gray intends to develop a second wave of web functionality which will increase the amount of product information on the site, encouraging more customers to adopt the online environment.

GPS order tracking

For Goldline's second expansion project, Gray asked Professional Advantage to develop a way of improving order tracking. What he wanted was to marry GPS data with Microsoft Dynamics to give customer service staff the ability to locate any customer order at any given minute. With the majority of the development complete, Gray is looking forward to having the new functionality added to his system.

"This is the kind of capability you inherit when you get these systems," Gray comments. "The whole idea is that no matter what you think of, you can build it all on the same platform rather than having independent islands or systems throughout the business."

Growth and Acquisition

In mid 2009 Goldline thumbed its nose at the economic pessimists and acquired one of its Kalgoorlie competitors. It was a decision born of Gray's conviction that organisations should always keep an eye out for the opportunities, particularly during changing business cycles. Integration of the new company's products and data into Goldline's business systems took just two days. It was an outstanding success.

When asked for his thoughts on the deployment of Microsoft Dynamics GP, Gray says, "Everyone takes a deep breath and wonders if they are going to overstep the mark or put their business on the edge of a cliff when they consider a major system change. The fact is that I've had the opportunity to see this twice now and it's totally the opposite. We found that the first time around we improved profitability and were able to manage customer requests more easily. The second time around we've done the same things plus we are attracting bigger customers because we can do things our competitors can't, like consolidated invoicing."

Gray adds, "The whole package that Goldline delivers is head and shoulders above our competitors. We've made a conscious decision to keep investing heavily in technology because the savings when you get to the other side are pretty impressive. It's the unseen benefits of good systems that are important."