



Chemicals Distributor Enhances Customer Service and Sales with CRM Solution

Overview

Country/Region: Australia

Industry: Chemicals

Customer Profile

Based in Melbourne, Australia, A-Gas Australia is a blender, repacker, and distributor of specialty gases and chemicals, including refrigerants, foam-blowing agents, aerosol propellants, and solvents.

Business Situation

A-Gas Australia needed a customer relationship management solution to help it provide better service to its customers and to provide richer information to its sales force.

Solution

A-Gas Australia is deploying Microsoft® Business Solutions CRM running on Microsoft Windows Server™ 2003 and integrating with its existing Microsoft Business Solutions—Great Plains® accounting software.

Benefits

- Unified view of the customer
- Integrated solution
- Better customer service
- Enhanced sales management

“The Integrated Sales and Customer Service modules of Microsoft CRM help employees share information, improving sales success and delivering consistent, efficient customer service.”

Scott Miller, Managing Director, A-Gas Australia

A-Gas Australia, a blender, repacker, and distributor of specialty gases and chemicals, including refrigerants, foam-blowing agents, aerosol propellants, and solvents, needed a better way to manage its customer relationships. The company, which has 25 employees, deployed Microsoft® Business Solutions CRM running on the Microsoft Windows Server™ 2003 operating system and using Microsoft BizTalk® Server 2004 to integrate CRM with the company's existing Microsoft Business Solutions—Great Plains® financial management software. A-Gas Australia, which is completing a pilot program and preparing for full deployment, anticipates benefiting from a unified view of the customer, the integrated solution's efficiencies, better customer service, and enhanced sales management.

“The Microsoft CRM Customer Service module helps our service representatives track customer requests, manage support issues from initial contact through successful resolution, and provide customers with the consistent, efficient service that ensures satisfaction.”

Scott Miller, Managing Director, A-Gas Australia

Situation

A-Gas Australia is a blender, repacker, and distributor of specialty gases and chemicals, in particular, replacements for chlorofluorocarbons used primarily as refrigerants; foam-blowing agents, aerosol propellants, and solvents. The company, which has 25 employees, is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the United Kingdom-based A-Gas International Holdings.

Top management at A-Gas Australia identified the need for a customer relationship management (CRM) solution to help it manage the company, better track account activity, and create more reliable sales forecasts, demand planning, and opportunity management. To do this, A-Gas Australia needed a single, unified view of its customers, which was not possible with its existing patchwork of applications that kept information in silos.

The lack of a unified view also led to inconsistencies in data, because information on the same customers was kept in separate data stores and accessed by separate business applications. The company also wanted its CRM solution to give its customer support personnel the unified data store required to resolve product shipment queries and enhance customer service.

As A-Gas looked for a CRM solution, it specified that the application seamlessly integrate with its existing deployment of Microsoft® Business Solutions—Great Plains® software, which the company uses for financial management and business intelligence. The company also needed the CRM application to integrate with its Microsoft Office Outlook® 2003 messaging and collaboration client, which the company deployed with Microsoft Exchange Server 2003.

Solution

Working with Microsoft partner Professional Advantage, which helped the company successfully deploy Microsoft Great Plains software, A-Gas Australia chose Microsoft Business Solutions CRM. The company is engaged in a pilot project and is preparing for full deployment of Microsoft CRM version 1.2.

The solution is being deployed on the Standard Edition of the Microsoft Windows Server™ 2003 operating system, the foundation of the Microsoft Windows Server System™ integrated server software. The company has already implemented the Active Directory® directory service, a technology of Windows Server 2003, and upgraded all of its servers to Windows Server 2003. Microsoft SQL Server™ 2000 provides the CRM data store, and SQL Server Analysis Services handles the company's online analytical processing. Microsoft BizTalk® Server 2004 serves as an integration hub.

Deploying Microsoft Great Plains went so well in Australia, it has been deployed in a second subsidiary, A-Gas United Kingdom, which also anticipates deploying Microsoft CRM. The combination of Microsoft Great Plains and Microsoft CRM will also be deployed in two other subsidiaries: A-Gas South East Asia and A-Gas South Africa.

Benefits

A-Gas Australia anticipates a number of benefits from its integrated CRM solution, including a unified view of the customer, an integrated solution, better customer service, and enhanced sales management.

Unified View of the Customer

Microsoft CRM helps A-Gas Australia build profitable customer relationships by providing a unified view of the customer. “The Integrated Sales and Customer Service modules of Microsoft CRM help employees share information, improving sales success

"We like creating solutions that are based on Microsoft CRM and Great Plains, because they integrate so well with all of the other Microsoft applications and servers."

Brad Tattersall, Microsoft CRM Business Manager, Professional Advantage

and delivering consistent, efficient customer service," says Scott Miller, Managing Director at A-Gas Australia.

Sales and customer service features include leads and opportunity management, a complete view of customer history, automated incident management, and a searchable knowledgebase. Microsoft CRM also gives A-Gas Australia reporting tools for accurate forecasting and measuring business activity and employee performance.

The unified customer view also enhances productivity by eliminating redundant data entry and streamlining business processes by integrating with A-Gas Australia's deployment of Microsoft Great Plains.

Integrated Solution

Built using Microsoft .NET-connected technologies, Microsoft CRM provides the integrated solution that A-Gas Australia needs. It is easy to deploy, customise, and use and is accessible from Microsoft Outlook and the Web.

Microsoft BizTalk Server is an integration point between Microsoft CRM, Microsoft Great Plains, and other applications providing CRM data. The integration with A-Gas Australia's deployment of Microsoft Great Plains gives customer representatives and other A-Gas employees access to the financial data they need to respond to customer queries. Also, integration with Microsoft Office Outlook 2003 makes it easy to incorporate e-mail, including notifications and automated alerts, into the customer service process.

Better Customer Service

The unified customer view and integration with Microsoft Great Plains helps A-Gas Australia provide superior customer service while increasing its capacity to handle requests, without adding employees. "The

Microsoft CRM Customer Service module helps our service representatives track customer requests, manage support issues from initial contact through successful resolution, and provide customers with the consistent, efficient service that ensures satisfaction," says Miller.

The Customer Service module also helps ensure efficient customer service processes by making it easy to assign, manage, and resolve support incidents with automated routing, queuing, and escalation of service requests, along with case management, communications tracking, and auto-response e-mail.

The module also supports routing and workflow management to route service requests automatically to the appropriate representative or teams for resolution, escalation, or reassignment, and a searchable knowledge base to resolve common support issues quickly. A-Gas Australia's customer service representatives can use automated tracking of customer e-mail messages to simplify communications and record keeping. "We like creating solutions that are based on Microsoft CRM and Great Plains, because they integrate so well with all of the other Microsoft applications and servers," says Brad Tattersall, Microsoft CRM Business Manager at Professional Advantage.

Enhanced Sales Management

Microsoft CRM enhances sales management with key performance indicators (KPIs) for all customers and partners, which highlight performance against the target. KPIs can be created for any criteria, including order status, credit status, and year-to-date sales. The solution also shows previous payment history, which is a helpful guide when approaching a customer with a new product or service proposal.

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 Professional Advantage products and services, call +(612) 9466-8752 or visit the Web site at: www.pa.com.au

For more information about A-Gas Australia products and services, call +(613) 9368-9222 or visit the Web site at: www.agas.com

Microsoft Business Solutions

Microsoft Business Solutions offers integrated business applications and services that allow small and mid-sized organizations and divisions of large enterprises to connect employees, customers, and suppliers for improved efficiency. The financial management, customer relationship management, supply chain management, and analytics applications work with Microsoft products such as Microsoft Office and Windows to streamline processes across an entire organization, giving businesses insight to respond rapidly, plan strategically, and execute quickly. Microsoft Business Solutions are delivered through a worldwide network of channel partners that provide specialized services and local support tailored to a company's needs.

For more information about Microsoft Business Solutions, go to: www.microsoft.com/businesssolutions

Software and Services

- Solutions
 - Microsoft Business Solutions CRM
 - Microsoft Business Solutions–Great Plains
- Microsoft Windows Server System
 - Microsoft Windows Server 2003 Standard Edition
 - Microsoft Exchange Server 2003
 - Microsoft SQL Server 2000

- Technologies
 - Microsoft SQL Server 2000 Analysis Services

Hardware

- Intel-based servers

Partners

- Professional Advantage

© 2004 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved. This case study is for informational purposes only. MICROSOFT MAKES NO WARRANTIES, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, IN THIS SUMMARY. Microsoft, Active Directory, BizTalk, Great Plains, Outlook, Windows, Windows Server, and Windows Server System are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the United States and/or other countries. The names of actual companies and products mentioned herein may be the trademarks of their respective owners.