

Midland Chilled Foods



“After the initial implementation, the business soon started to see more and more benefits from using Dynamics GP. It has given the users quicker access to more data, so they can perform their roles in a more informed and personally satisfying way.”

Kieren Briscoe, IT Manager, Midland Chilled Foods

Trinity customer case study:

Wholesale chilled, frozen and ambient Food Distribution

Industry:

Food Distribution

Objective: Old hardware and software needed to be replaced by a modern solution offering the flexibility and adaptability to allow Midland Chilled Foods to grow their business without IT restrictions

Approach: Work with Trinity Computer Systems to explore a modular solution based around Microsoft Dynamics GP

Key IT deliverables:

- An open platform for IT growth
- Access to the extended business functionality offered by the Microsoft Dynamics applications portfolio
- Quicker, better information for all users

Business benefits:

- Much stronger options now in place for customer specific pricing and negotiation
- Microsoft Great Plains provides a much smoother pick, pack and ship cycle
- Much simpler reporting, enabling staff to develop and use their own simple reports
- Scope to develop proactive selling over the telephone in future

Rationale for the project

Midland Chilled Foods, founded in 1976 and based in Willenhall in the West Midlands has grown to become one of the UK's largest independent wholesalers of chilled, frozen and ambient foods. Employing over 220 people and with a turnover in excess of £45 million, Midland markets an exceptionally wide range of products to independent wholesale and retail outlets and the catering industry.

Operating 24-hours a day, the business needed a new IT platform at the heart of the organisation, one that would enable improved pricing, delivery and overall service standards to customers whilst generating enhanced loyalty and competitive advantage.

Midland Chilled Foods wanted to explore the opportunities provided by today's advanced Microsoft Dynamics GP solutions, using incumbent supplier Trinity's expertise to configure the powerful components in GP to suit their specific type of wholesaling operation.

The new modular, 40 user system from Trinity provides Midland Chilled Foods with the flexible IT platform that was at the heart of their drive for change. Microsoft Dynamics GP brings a vast array of functionality within easy reach, making it simple to adapt the system to meet future business needs.

Answering key business requirements

Operating from two sites, Willenhall and Basingstoke, Midland Chilled Foods has approximately 40 users managing almost 1,300 accounts. Staff handle around 2,500 active items on file, with 450+ orders per day at 10-100+ lines per order.

With a dozen call handlers taking orders, it was critical for Midland Chilled Foods that the new technology extended the effectiveness of this team. In terms of access to order history, sight of stock and the ability to easily offer alternatives the new Trinity solution has significantly improved order processing.

Pricing was a key issue for Midland Chilled Foods, with over 80,000 customer/product prices to individually manage. The new system had to make an impact here and Dynamics GP

achieved this by automating price management to deliver significant time savings.

Operating a next-day promised delivery with over 35 Midland owned vehicles and some use of third-party carriers, shipping was also a key business driver. The new technology has reduced the pick, pack, ship cycle by as much as 4 hours, enabling the production department to access the picking note immediately after the order is entered.

“As a long standing customer, we are delighted that Midland Chilled Foods are reaping the benefits of their investment in new technology. The improvements that they have achieved, for example in the reduction in the pick pack ship cycle and customer specific pricing, are typical of the gains made in our wider Dynamics GP customer base.”

Carl Bolus, Sales Director
Trinity Computer Services

What was supplied?

Trinity is a specialist provider of technology solutions to wholesale distribution operations, providing Midland Chilled Foods with a modular solution based on the Microsoft Dynamics GP suite of applications. Trinity employed its unique insight into this market to customise a number of modules to suit the customer's business model.

Future flexibility was a key objective for the customer and the Microsoft Dynamics software at the heart of this implementation enables simple and extensive integration with MS Office and other Microsoft technologies aimed at improving user productivity.

Microsoft Dynamics GP covers all the core business applications including financials, sales and purchasing and stock control as well as very strong data access and BI capability. Specific Trinity modules being used are telesales, load scheduling, catchweights, and intersite transfers.



A Microsoft platform ensures that the interfaces are familiar to Midland Chilled Foods staff, the customer can also be confident that the technology set is continually benefiting from high-level R & D activity and easy to access upgrade plans.

Phasing of the project

At the project outset Trinity worked with Midland Chilled Foods to map out current operations and procedures in use, also considering how new capabilities and processes could be incorporated in the Microsoft based solution.

Participation at every level by Midland Chilled Foods also contributed to the success of the project ensuring that Trinity had a clear and accurate picture of the business and enabling the most appropriate configuration of Microsoft Dynamics.

Employing established change management practices, to minimise business disruption and create an environment for rapid transition, Trinity were able to deliver a trouble-free implementation. Initial delivery of the project saw current functionality matched and thorough training ensured effective cultural adoption of the new system by staff.

Having delivered a successful implementation, Trinity are now working closely with Midland Chilled Foods to ensure that they stay up to date with the technology and are positioned to take advantage of new developments and products from both Microsoft and Trinity.

Benefits and gains so far

Benefits from the new system are already evident in several areas:

- Pricing and promotions have substantially improved at Midland Chilled Foods, who see major benefits in options for handling customer specific pricing and enhanced flexibility in the pricing module. In particular they have achieved enhanced customer service and faster turnarounds now that over 80,000 prices for customers/product have now been brought into the pricing module
- Order capture has always been a key driver, with Midland Chilled Foods benefiting from:
 - Much better visibility of stock via the catalogue than before
 - A clear view of the customers order history
 - Templates to easily manage orders against previous order history and patterns of purchase
 - Easy to use price negotiation facilities
 - Simple look up, search string “contains” and hierarchical catalogue search
 - Enhanced visibility of stock on hand, available, and on order from supplier
 - Scope to introduce proactive selling of promotions
- Inventory Management has improved as the customer is now able to split inventory into manageable sections for regular stock counts
- Delivery has also been enhanced, with 3-4 hour improvements in pick, pack, ship cycles and faster access to picking notes for production staff. The Basingstoke depot has been able to implement bin bay picking
- Collections & Returns are now more streamlined via automated raising of collection notes and simpler journey planning
- Staff are now generating their own reports via Smartlists, giving them rapid access to information and reducing the workload for the IT Manager. Reporting tools are easy to use for all staff. The IT Manager is able to produce enhanced reports via SQL Reporting Services

- Purchase Orders are now automatically faxed to suppliers, streamlining the ordering process.

Plans for the future

Access to a flexible IT platform for future growth was the key driver behind Midland Chilled Foods investment with Trinity. The Microsoft platform at the heart of the business now provides almost unlimited scope for developing a broad range of additional IT applications functionality.

Amongst the areas already identified for further exploration are:

- Scope for the telesales staff to introduce promotions, cross-selling, offering substitutes and an upsell to the highest margin option.
- Implementation of new purchasing functionality available in the Trinity solution so that, for example, purchasing staff can take advantage of automatic purchase order generator routines

“Dynamics GP has proven to be a very resilient ERP solution for our 24 hour operation” said, Kieren Briscoe, IT Manager, Midland Chilled Foods. “ Initial adoption of the system by the users was swift too, which led to greater confidence in the product from all who are using it”



Trinity Computer Services

Trinity Computer Services is a leading Microsoft Dynamics Partner and an award winning software developer.

For over 20 years Trinity has been a recognised leader in providing specialist IT Solutions for the Wholesale Distribution sector. Trinity software helps wholesalers to improve customer service, reduce costs and make better business decisions.

Based on the solid foundation of Microsoft Dynamics GP, our systems combine market leading innovation from Microsoft with rich functionality for distribution businesses. Trinity IT professionals have implemented over 200 systems in companies both large and small and can call upon a wealth of experience in delivering solutions that provide real benefits for your business.