



CLIENT SOLUTION CASE STUDY

Sporting Goods Retailer Finds Efficiency and Cost Savings with Dynamics 365 Business Central



Background

Fin Feather and Fur, a regional sporting goods retailer, found themselves managing their business with Oracle's JD Edwards ERP solution, a system not inherently designed for retail. Set up to fit the solution instead of their business processes, they were able to operate their retail business, but it was clear the solution was not able to meet their needs long-term. With multiple locations including six stores, a Distribution Center, and two e-commerce storefronts, the need for an integrated and efficient system was paramount.

Manual processes were a daily occurrence with both inventory and their Point of Sale (POS) system. The frequently noticed missed data in their ERP solution, and had to manually retrieve information from their POS.

As a retail business, they frequently offer special pricing and promotions. However, their POS system only gave them the ability to provide two types of promotions, and not reliably.

"Our cashiers had to manually calculate discounts and remember which items were on sale," said Eric Wentworth, ERP Manager. "We had to work around limitations of the system."

The warehouse operations were similarly affected, with transfer orders capped at 300 lines—any more would result in a system breakage, leading to a dead end.

OVERVIEW

Software Solutions:

- Dynamics 365 Business Central
- LS Retail
- Primo Payroll
- Easy Bound Book
- Big Commerce
- Channel Advisor

Challenges:

- System Constraints
- Inadequate ERP System Fit
- Inventory Accuracy and Efficiency

Benefits:

- Capitalize on Industry Solution
- Empower Business Innovation
- Capitalize on Cloud Technology

Company Overview:

Fin Feather and Fur is a family-owned regional sporting goods retailer with six locations, a distribution center, and two online storefronts.

Industry: Retail

Employees: 300+

Annual Revenue: \$100M



As the reliability of their system was questioned, and with an increasing number of transfer failures and no solutions in sight, the need for a more secure and robust system was clear.

The team at Fin Feather and Fur started a search for a new POS system that would include the features their operation needed and integrate to their ERP solution. They soon discovered that any new POS would require them to upgrade their ERP solution, with no guarantee they wouldn't face the same integration and data issues they were currently facing. This was due to the extensively tailored and non-retail-oriented structure of their system.

The projected financial and time investment required for such the upgrade and new solution was beyond the benefits they would realize after implementation, so the search for a new ERP solution began.

A New ERP: Dynamics 365 Business Central

Dynamics 365 Business Central, in conjunction with LS Retail, an ISV that specializes in brick-and-mortar point of sale systems, was introduced as a solution. This integration not only streamlined their in-store processes but also their e-commerce operations, pulling in orders frequently to ensure timely shipping.

In the selection of Dynamics, Rees Vail, VP of Operations, highlighted several key factors that made it the standout choice. Foremost was the user-friendly interface of Dynamics, which presented a straightforward and intuitive user experience. The simplicity of the system removed the need for extensive training and the seamless integration of Independent Software Vendors (ISVs) with Business Central ensured they could incorporate the business-specific functionality they needed.

Additionally, warehouse management is a capability included in Business Central, ensuring they had a unified system that felt consistent across different departments. They quickly realized Dynamics 365 was the right system for their long-term needs.

Inventory Management

With a vast catalog of 80,000 items, inventory was streamlined using a barcoding system called Bartender. An extension was developed, enabling instant tag printing for any item scanned. Furthermore, their purchase and transfer orders, sometimes containing thousands of items, were efficiently managed.

“Now we have more visibility into our inventory levels. Before we never knew if there was a dropped transaction, a broken product, or shrinkage. Now we can track variances in inventory and we know it's not the system if our numbers are off,” said Vail.

“The first week we had Business Central in place we picked more in the warehouse in one day than we ever had before,” said Wentworth. “The system has worked well from day one.”

Promotions

With a new POS system in place, Fin Feather and Fur can not only continue running promotions, but vary the type and complexity of promotions offered.

“We have done some really cool promotions now because we don’t have to create separate transactions or do anything manually for different offerings like buy one, get one at a discount, or bonus gift cards on a purchase,” said Vail.

Cashiers no longer have to manually calculate discounts or remember what items have a promotion – everything is automatically calculated at the register.

Financial Management

From an accounting perspective, intercompany transactions were set up, and all operations were centralized at the headquarters. The transition to Primo Payroll meant that all payroll activities, which previously involved manual calculations for over 315 employees across locations, were now integrated into Business Central - a significant time-saving transformation.

Automated systems were put in place for finance. For example, a nightly batch job was set to invoice shipped orders, apply cash from online credit card payments, and reduce manual tasks.

“We no longer spend any time looking for lost transactions or manually reentering data,” commented Wentworth.

ATF Compliance

Notably, one of the unique challenges was managing the sale of firearms. To address this, Easy Bound Book was implemented, a product that tracks firearm serial numbers, meeting all ATF requirements. Should the ATF require any specific weapon’s report, the system is capable of retrieving it swiftly.

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*ERP Manager
Fin Feather and Fur*

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A significant improvement was the transition from paper ATF 4473 forms, used for background checks, to electronic e-4473 forms on tablets. This cut down paperwork significantly, streamlining the process.

E-Commerce

The company also integrated their e-commerce operations with platforms Big Commerce and Channel Advisor. This integration enabled real-time updates of items, inventory management, and efficient order processing.

The Future at Fin Feather and Fur

Wentworth recently attended a Microsoft user group conference where he got a first row look at Microsoft's dedication and commitment to Dynamics 365 now and down the road.

"It was very refreshing to see how much effort Microsoft has put into Business Central. There are improvements, new versions coming, and so many ISVs – it was exciting to see all of it," said Wentworth.

The entire transition provided the company with a stable, integrated system at a lower cost than upgrading their existing system. Not only did they save money, but their operations became more efficient and cohesive. All the while, they retained their established processes, merely integrating them into a more robust system.

"We're looking towards the future. We're just getting rolling and now we are looking at new reports, benefits for our buying team, and new ways to manage inventory at our distribution center that will really benefit the company. That is the most exciting thing - we have a lot of options we never had before," said Vail.

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