



PMA Toasts to More Efficient Financial Reporting

Overview

Country or Region: Canada

Industry: Distribution

Customer Profile

Peter Mielzynski Agencies Ltd. (PMA), one of Canada's largest independent purveyors of fine wines and spirits, was incorporated in 1978. PMA today represents many of the world's best known international wine and spirits brands. PMA is located in Mississauga, Ontario, Canada.

Business Situation

PMA needed to more effectively track sales and inventory data and improve efficiency within the accounting department.

Solution

PMA selected Microsoft® Business Solutions–Navision® for its breadth of functionality and adaptability.

Benefits

- Improved accuracy and timeliness of business data
- Increased overall operating efficiency
- Provided a flexible platform for future growth

"We needed a solution that could scale with our growth and provide the flexibility needed to manage our complex financial reporting and accounting needs,"

Ab M. Echenberg, Financial Controller, PMA

Peter Mielzynski Agencies Ltd. (PMA) had an old financial system that was unable to adapt to the company's changing needs. It offered limited reporting capabilities, which were critical to PMA's business. PMA also needed the ability to track inventory levels in different provinces.

PMA learned about Microsoft Business Solutions–Navision and realized that this software provided the best foundation for its new business system. "The product's breadth of functionality and adaptability made it our first choice," says Echenberg. "Plus, it was recommended by our stakeholders, many of whom are also our suppliers."

With its new business solution, PMA can more effectively track critical business data. Microsoft Navision has greatly improved the company's overall efficiency and has positioned them well for future growth.

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Situation

Peter Mielzynski Agencies Ltd. (PMA), one of Canada's largest independent purveyors of fine wines and spirits, was incorporated in 1978 on the premise that Canadians should have full access to as many of the world's finest wines and spirits as possible.

The company has grown to a leadership position in service excellence and brand educational activity with offices in every province and affiliate offices in Quebec. PMA today represents many of the world's best known international wine and spirits brands.

Since the company's founding, wine and liquor exporters have relied on PMA to promote their products in the Canadian marketplace and sell them to distributorships.

With more than 20 years in the wine and liquor industry and annual revenues reaching \$10 million CDN, PMA realized that it was outgrowing its small, proprietary information technology system. "We needed a solution that could scale with our growth and provide the flexibility needed to manage our complex financial reporting and accounting needs," says Ab M. Echenberg, PMA's Financial Controller. "We eventually found what we were looking for with Aston Business Solutions."

PMA's old system was unable to adapt to the company's changing needs and offered limited reporting capabilities—and reporting was critical to PMA's business. PMA needed to be able to accurately track inventory levels in different provinces. Although it doesn't own the inventory, PMA controls it. PMA pays for the inventory on a consignment basis—that is, once the inventory in its branch warehouses is sold to distributorships, PMA pays the supplier. "We weren't convinced, however, that our software was providing us with accurate inventory-level reports for these

provinces," says Echenberg. "We needed to know what the exact levels were at any given time. We simply didn't have this kind of visibility with the old system."

The company also wanted to improve its efficiency and eliminate manual entry by consolidating its back-end accounting to a single system. PMA had been using a separate system to prepare financial statements. This arrangement cost the company valuable time, since someone had to rekey data from each system. In addition, the system did not produce financial statements that provided the information PMA needed. "The system just wasn't very adaptable," says Echenberg.

Solution

Finding the Right Solution

While searching for a solution provider, PMA learned about Microsoft® Business Solutions–Navision® and realized that this software provided the best foundation for its new business system. "The product's breadth of functionality and adaptability made it our first choice," says Echenberg. "Plus, it was recommended by our stakeholders, many of whom are also our suppliers."

After considering several solution providers, PMA decided to partner with Aston Business Solutions. "We felt that Aston Business Solutions could provide what we were looking for," says Echenberg. "Not only were they one of the largest providers of Microsoft Navision, they had long-term credibility, a solid reputation, and growth potential in Canada. They also had financial stability, something that other solution providers seemed to lack."

Tailoring a Standard Solution to Meet Unique Requirements

PMA began working with Aston Business Solutions during the summer of 2002. At that time, PMA had already implemented several Microsoft Navision modules, including

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Accounts Payable, which it was using to write checks and input invoices. With help from Aston Business Solutions, PMA was able to take the next steps—finalizing the reconciliation of the balance sheet account and preparing for a complete migration to Microsoft Navision technology by spring 2003.

Aston Business Solutions' programming experts also tailored Microsoft Navision so that PMA could manage its different branch inventories and track commission income, which was based on the sales of the product. To effectively track commission income, PMA needed a way to track, via invoices, any sales that had been generated by its representatives to the various distributorships. PMA also needed to be able to determine which invoices had not been paid so it could follow up with the liquor board.

"Aston's team really understood our business needs," says Echenberg. "As a result, they were able to devise the report configurations we needed to streamline this process."

During the implementation process, Echenberg was impressed with the depth of Aston Business Solutions' programming and business knowledge, as well as the team's determination to ensure the system worked. "Microsoft Navision's adaptability and flexibility provided us with the performance we were looking for," says Echenberg, "but Aston Business Solutions helped us program it properly so that we could maximize its potential and meet our requirements."

Benefits

Achieving Greater Business Insight

With its new business solution, PMA can more effectively track critical business data, such as inventory levels and detailed sales information, across the provinces. "With our

new reporting capability, we now feel confident that the information being generated is accurate and up to date," says Echenberg. "We also have gained better visibility into our complex accounting practices and can more easily track revenue and expenses as they relate to the budgets of the different brands." This is crucial to PMA's bottom line, since the company's promotional budgets are sometimes based on a percentage of these sales or are directly related to a budget that has to be accounted for and recorded.

PMA also appreciates the timeliness of the information made available through its new business solution. "Our accounting department now has the information it needs, when it needs it, and can pay the bills in a timely manner," says Echenberg. "This new system also enables the accounting department to more easily track its budget and revenue from a present point of view."

Improving Operating Efficiency

In April 2003, PMA moved all remaining systems to Microsoft Navision. Echenberg says this consolidation has greatly improved the company's overall efficiency. "I think we've saved a minimum of two or three person days a week by not having to recopy information," he says. "We can just download it electronically."

Echenberg also points out that this system, unlike its predecessor, offers the potential to scale with PMA's growth. "I feel confident that the solution from Aston Business Solutions will see us well into the future," says Echenberg. "Even as our needs evolve and our supplier base grows, I know that this solution will continue to adapt."

Partnering for Future Success

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 Aston Business Solutions products and services, visit the Web site at: www.astongroup-us.com

For more information about Peter Mielzynski Agencies Ltd. (PMA) products and services, visit the Web site at: www.pmacanada.com

Looking ahead, PMA plans to further enhance its Microsoft Navision system. "We want to continue getting the most out of our IT investment," says Echenberg. "And we believe that the experts at Aston Business Solutions can help us do that."

Microsoft Business Solutions

Microsoft Business Solutions offer integrated business applications and services that allow small and midsize 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 other Microsoft software, including the Microsoft Office System and the Windows operating system, to streamline processes across an entire organization. This gives 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.

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