

Transition to Microsoft Dynamics NAV Keeps Manufacturer Ahead of the Competition

Founded in 1950 by C. Ted Hutchens, Hutchens Industries has long established leadership in the tractor trailer suspension business by treating each customer individually. Hutchens goes the extra distance to engineer products that meet each customer's unique needs and achieve 98% on-time delivery.

BUSINESS CHALLENGES:

Upgrade, improve data collection and implement kitting

Hutchens originally implemented Microsoft's Navision in 2004 to formalize the business processes of MRP (materials resource planning) and manufacturing. Changes during the difficult times after 9/11 brought home the need to store the collective knowledge of the company in a system, instead of employee memory.

In addition to the upgrade to Microsoft Dynamics NAV 2009, Charles Feister, Hutchens' Director of IT worked with Greg Williams, Western Computer's Project Manager to improve Hutchens' use of Dynamics NAV to enable them to:

- Expedite data collection time for inventory on the production floor as well as the warehouse.
- Simplify special order tracking and reporting.
- Build employee confidence in Dynamics NAV's MRP functionality.

SOLUTION:

Automated data collection, kitting and training

Automated Data Capture

Hutchens' critical business need for more automated data collection, both on the shop floor and in the warehouse, led Hutchens to implement Microsoft Dynamics NAV's ADCS module. Additionally, web applications developed by the Hutchens IT team allowed for easy configuration of handheld devices and integration with Dynamics NAV.

Using NAV 2009 web services to write both kiosk and mobile apps means that inventory output and consumption is tracked on the shop floor, providing real-time insight into inventory availability.

Custom Kitting

Hutchens' focus on engineering and building custom suspensions required complex kitting. Previously, "phantom" kits were used to support the project specs, but phantom kits did not show up as one inventory item. Customers had to order by individual components rather than kits.



PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

Western Computer helped Hutchens Industries:

- Upgrade from Navision 3.70 to Microsoft Dynamics NAV 2009.
- Reduce data collection time from hours to minutes with Automated Data Capture System.
- Simplify product ordering with enhanced kitting capabilities.
- Improve MRP with real-time inventory insight.
- Train workforce to implement best practices.
- Complete project under budget.

ABOUT HUTCHENS INDUSTRIES

Hutchens Industries, Inc. is a leading manufacturer of trailer suspensions, sub-frames and a wide variety of steel fabrications.

Hutchens' products are distributed globally. Customers include trailer manufacturers large and small, heavy duty parts distributors of all sizes, other suspension builders and a variety of firms in other industries.

www.hutchensindustries.com

"We pride ourselves on being able to make 98% of our deliveries on time – which is unheard of in our industry. NAV helps us do that."

Charles Feister, Director of IT



With the flexible kitting capabilities of Microsoft Dynamics NAV 2009, custom kits are now built on the fly and tracked for each customer. Sales engineers can work with customers to build to their specifications, ensuring all engineering standards are met, and create the kit specific to that customer.

In addition, customers can now order with one part number instead of the components of their special order. This enhances customer value, as Hutchens is now able to track special order kit manufacturing costs to accurately calculate project profitability. Now, with better cost information, Hutchens can work with customers to find more ways to save them money.

Training with Company Data

Managing change in any implementation project is challenging, particularly in an organization where the average tenure is 15 years, which makes old habits hard to break. Based on experience from the initial Microsoft Dynamics NAV implementation, Feister planned for intense training using Hutchens' own data for testing. Previously, employees had difficulty applying the training received using non-related sample data to their production environment. To best understand the new system, they had to see their own data in the new environment.

In addition, training focused on improving productivity through the use of best practices. As Feister recalls, "Greg brought in the dose of reality that Hutchens needed during the implementation. He helped us understand the logic behind the NAV business processes."

LESSONS LEARNED: Training and teamwork

The focus on training paid off for Hutchens. Go-live was a non-event. Feister attributes the ease of go-live to both the Hutchens and Western Computer implementation teams. Careful project planning, clear communications and allocation of tasks based on individual abilities kept the project on time and below budget.

Key users fully tested the systems before they were turned over to the full user population for training. Multiple sessions, using their own data also helped users to understand the new processes and build trust in the system. Instead of second guessing inventory for MRP, employees now trust the system to maintain their impressive 98% on-time delivery achievement.

"We were very comfortable working with the Western Computer team because they shared our business philosophy. They understood our need to cut costs and our desire to plan effectively for the future with Microsoft Dynamics NAV."

Charles Feister, Director of IT



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Western Computer has specialized in designing and delivering customized Microsoft Dynamics solutions for businesses since 1987.

What sets us apart from other Microsoft Dynamics partners and other ERP solution providers is our commitment and dedication to our clients — a philosophy expressed through the quality of Western Computer's products, our professional services, and the long-term partnership we build with each client.

Western Computer has attained AMR Research/ Gartner certifications in Discrete Manufacturing, Process Manufacturing, and Distribution. Western Computer has also attained "INNER CIRCLE for Microsoft Dynamics" status, awarded to those Microsoft partners who have achieved the highest level of performance in the Microsoft channel worldwide.

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