The Client

Bolan means "embrace or understand the world." When Bolan Home Fashion was started by partners Karen Wang and Dirk Schnermann in November 2005, the basic idea behind the German-Chinese Joint Venture was to expand in the garden furniture and textile segment, in addition to marketing their manufactured products on a global scale.

Fast Initial Growth Brings Challenges to the Maturing Company

The business grew internationally, opening offices in Germany, Bulgaria, China and Pakistan. Working hard to keep up with their rapid growth Bolan made fast decisions to adopt the then premier choice of Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software in each country they opened in, including Top Control in Germany, StepSoft in Bulgaria, Dativ in Germany and Excel spreadsheets in China. All doing much the same thing in different places.

Karen Wang spent some time working in Germany, during which she saw what information she could get from Top Control. When she tried to figure out how to obtain the same information from all Bolan locations she realized that obtaining consolidated reports for the entire company "would take ages" unless they had a common database. Currently she had people exporting information from each system to Excel and then consolidating them. "It was a double job to get information," explains Wang, "and much of the time the information was incorrect."

Wang asked her management team to determine what one single platform would work for all locations in all countries, and give her the accuracy and rapid access to reports that she needed. Ttheir research led them to the reliable, international solution available from Microsoft Dynamics AX.

Productivity First

For assistance, Wang turned to a firm she had known since working with them years before when she was at a New York garment district company, award-winning Microsoft Gold Partner Queue Associates. "After talking with them I made my decision because I could see that Queue, especially Managing Director Jeff Goldstein, was very professional. They are a very professional international company!"

The first challenge to solve was to get everyone from every Bolan location "on the same page." To accomplish this, Queue provisioned Office 365 for all Bolan users.

This immediately eliminated the cost of all internal Bolan communications across the public switched telephone network. Now Bolan users could not only speak with each other, they could see each other using Lync meetings for one-on-one communications as well as group conferences. They could share their desktops with each other easily to review documents, plans, and analyses. And they could do so not only on their computers, but on their mobile tablets and smartphones as well. "Now we use Lync to call each other," explains Wang, "It's free of charge and the connection is quite good." Wang estimates that this saves her company over £2000 per person per month!

Moving everyone to Outlook and Microsoft Exchange also provided shared calendars, contacts, tasks and other information. Scheduling meetings became a quick matter, rather than a long, involved issue. Using SharePoint, Bolan made the many documents their people needed to use regularly immediately available and easily updated and revised.

Unified Business Operations and Finance

Next, Queue and Bolan turned their attention to consolidating operations across all locations on one unified platform. They selected Microsoft Dynamics AX because it was available in every country Bolan had operations in, and it had broad functionality to help support the sophisticated processes Bolan had developed to drive their business.

To keep operating costs low, Queue Associates has provisioned Dynamics AX for Bolan on Microsoft's Azure cloud platform. Not only does this completely eliminate the need for Bolan to invest in server or storage hardware, it also removes the ongoing burden of supporting their own infrastructure and replaces it with a

high-availability, highly-reliable, and high-sustainability platform that is equally accessible from wherever Bolan may open operations next.

Starting with the office in Germany, Queue will implement Dynamics AX Finance, Accounts Payable, Accounts Receivable, Inventory Management, Procurement and Sourcing, and Production. They will then do the same in Bulgaria, then China, and then all other Bolan locations until the entire company is unified under a single common platform. It is anticipated that the actual time needed to deploy each location will be a fraction of what it would be in an on-premises software deployment environment.

"I can get consolidated reports from one system. I can access the system from anywhere, and I can get accurate numbers, and we're going to save a lot of manpower to do the double-trouble job and less mistakes," explains Wang.

Their Business Their Way

"Because Bolan Home Fashions both manufactures and sells their products they need a far-reaching solution for their complex operations," explains Queue Managing Partner Jeffrey Goldstein. "They take each sale from initial inquiry to request for quote, then do the necessary pricing calculations resulting in a calculated offer sheet for their customer. Once confirmed, this offer becomes a sales order which generates purchase orders which in turn set up factory orders and, ultimately, an invoice and packing slip. Then they can launch into the collections process."

Goldstein is confident in the Microsoft solutions, pointing out that there is tremendous integration between these Dynamics AX systems and the various Microsoft Office tools provided by Office 365 including Excel spreadsheets, Word documents, and PowerPoint presentations.

"Dynamics AX," explains Jeffrey Goldstein, "has allowed us to build this solution to adapt to Bolan's established procedures, not the other way around. When you automate a good system you end up with a great automated solution."

About Queue Associates

Queue Associates, Inc. is a professional services organization, focused on providing the Microsoft Dynamics solutions to international and domestic organizations. These solutions include accounting and finance, project accounting, financial reporting, internet-enabled enterprise resource planning (ERP), sales force automation (SFA), and customer relationship management (CRM) systems. Queue utilizes the Microsoft Sure Step Methodology to perform the following services: diagnostic, analysis, design, development, deployment, operation and optimization. Queue's uniquely thorough Business Process Review, conducted by CPA's and MBA's, ensures that recommended solutions meet clients' current and long-term requirements. Learn more about us at www.queueassoc.com.