Transforming bespoke manufacturing with Insight Works' solutions

Summary

Customer
Sotech

Industry
Bespoke façade manufacturing

Location
United Kingdom

Business Central Version
Business Central online

Partners
Insight Works (ISV)

Solution
- Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central
- Advanced Inventory Count
- Product Configurator
- Shop Floor Insight
- Warehouse Insight

Results
- Digital production planning with automated BOMs and routings
- Improved inventory accuracy and traceability
- Fewer manual data entry errors
- Supports growth without performance bottlenecks
- Responsive Insight Works support during critical times



ABOUT SOTECH
Sotech designs and manufactures the Optima range of engineered metal rain-screen systems, collaborating with architects, specifiers, and contractors to tailor bespoke façade solutions. Operating a bespoke manufacturing model, Sotech produces no items to stock and deals with a high volume of unique products with low repeat rates.

CHALLENGES
Before implementing Dynamics 365 Business Central and Insight Works' solutions, Sotech relied on Sage Line 50 and numerous Excel spreadsheets to manage their operations. This combination was insufficient for handling the intricacies of their bespoke manufacturing environment. The lack of integration led to siloed processes, inefficiencies, and data gaps.

Many of their manufacturing processes involve short production times, with items taking less than ten minutes at each stage.

Inventory Management and Tracking: Managing a complex inventory of multiple components and finished goods without real-time tracking led to inaccuracies and stock discrepancies.

Data Collection and Mobility: Relying on manual data collection was time-consuming and prone to errors. Sotech needed automated data collection tools accessible via mobile devices to ensure accurate, real-time data capture at every stage of production and logistics.

Scalability and Adaptability: The existing systems lacked the scalability and adaptability needed to support Sotech's goals for continuous improvement, stringent quality control, and compliance with safety and sustainability standards.

In March 2020, Sotech embarked on a project to modernize its operational systems. They sought a unified solution to streamline their end-to-end processes, from product design through manufacturing and inventory management.

SOLUTION OVERVIEW
To address their challenges, Sotech implemented a suite of solutions. These solutions were fully integrated with Dynamics 365 Business Central SaaS,

providing a unified platform that enhanced communication between processes.

1. Automated product configuration: By incorporating an advanced product configuration tool, Sotech automated the creation of bills of materials (BOMs) and routings for each custom item and job. This automation reduced manual workload, minimized errors, and ensured consistency.

2. Enhanced inventory management: Implementing a robust inventory management system that provides real-time material tracking from receipt to production. Utilizing mobile devices, Sotech streamlined material receipt, lot tracking, and bin management, significantly improving inventory accuracy.

3. Real-time shop floor data collection: Introducing a comprehensive shop floor data collection solution enabled Sotech to track parts and components throughout the manufacturing process in real-time. This increased visibility, enhanced traceability, supported compliance with safety and quality standards, and allowed for more informed decision-making.

4. Mobile data collection and mobility: Deploying mobile devices equipped with data collection capabilities ensured that data was captured accurately and instantly at each stage of production and logistics. This mobility reduced errors associated with manual data entry and improved overall efficiency.

IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

Sotech initially engaged a UK-based third-party provider for the deployment of Dynamics 365 Business Central and associated solutions from Insight Works. As the go-live date approached, it became apparent that the system was only 80% developed. Sotech turned to Insight Works for direct assistance.

Insight Works responded swiftly, deploying an engineer to the UK to provide on-site support. This decisive action and hands-on approach were instrumental in addressing the critical gaps in the system, ensuring its full functionality and enabling continuous production without delay.

RESULTS AND BENEFITS

Since integrating these solutions, Sotech has experienced significant improvements across its operations.

- Digital Transformation of Operations: Automating BOMs and routings streamlined production planning, reduced manual intervention, and increased efficiency.
- Improved Inventory Accuracy and Traceability: Real-time inventory management provided greater accuracy in stock levels and enhanced traceability throughout the supply chain. This minimized stock discrepancies, ensured materials were available when needed, and improved production schedules.
- Enhanced Data Accuracy and Efficiency: Automated data collection using mobile devices reduced errors associated with manual data entry. Accurate, real-time data improved operational efficiency and informed better decision-making.
- Scalability and Adaptability: The new system supports Sotech's bespoke manufacturing processes and accommodates growth without performance bottlenecks.
- Strengthened Collaboration and Support: The partnership with Insight Works provided invaluable support during critical times.

KEY TAKEAWAY

The integration of Insight Works' solutions with Dynamics 365 Business Central has transformed Sotech's manufacturing operations. The project's success underscores the importance of having a responsive and experienced partner when deploying complex ERP systems in a bespoke manufacturing environment.

About Insight Works

Insight Works is a Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central ISV (independent software vendor) specializing in warehouse management, manufacturing, and productivity solutions. With a portfolio of apps available on Microsoft Marketplace, Insight Works helps distributors, manufacturers, and wholesalers extend Business Central to fit the way they actually work. Learn more at insight-works.com.

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