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Liz McLaury, Controller, Living Essentials

FIRST TECH DIRECT HELPS WHOLESALE DISTRIBUTION COMPANY PLAN DEMAND AND STREAMLINE ORDERING PROCESSES

INDUSTRY

Wholesale Distribution

BUSINESS SITUATION

With over 250% growth, Living Essentials decided it was time to deploy a new system before its business grew so big that the implementation process would be painstaking.

SOLUTION

Living Essentials deployed Microsoft Dynamics® GP and turned to Microsoft® Gold Certified Partner First Tech Direct to help improve its distribution, forecasting, purchasing and reporting capabilities.

- Microsoft Dynamics® GP
- Accellos' Collect for GP
- Azox Credit Card Extension
- vSync's EDI Solution

BENEFITS

- Enhance operational efficiencies
- Improved connections
- Competitive offerings



Case study

About

Living Essentials, headquartered in Novi, Michigan produces 5-Hour Energy, the leading liquid energy shot. 5-Hour Energy can be found in drug, grocery, health and convenience stores. Despite dozens of imitators, it is still number one – by a wide margin. 5-Hour Energy stays successful by giving their clients a proven blend of B-vitamins, amino acids and essential nutrients.

Business Needs

Before implementation of the Microsoft Dynamics® GP solution, Living Essentials handled warehouse management manually through paper and spreadsheets. With over 250% growth Living Essentials' manual systems had become strained. "It was a lot of data entry and it wasn't very accurate. The faster you grow, the tougher it gets to automate something and to develop the whole process," said Matt Dolmage, CFO, Living Essentials.

Living Essentials decided it was time to deploy a new system before the business grew so big that the implementation process would become painstaking. With a technology background and familiarity with Microsoft solutions, Dolmage led the search for a new system that could meet the company's needs. So Living Essentials began the search for a robust solution – one that could help improve sales forecasting accuracy and streamline order and purchasing processes. The system also needed to provide outstanding reporting capabilities to help the company better share sales, order, and shipping information with management, sales staff, sales managers, and customer service representatives.

Solution

Living Essentials called on First Tech Direct, a Microsoft® Gold Certified Partner based in Royal Oak, Michigan to help improve its distribution, forecasting, purchasing and reporting capabilities. First Tech Direct evaluated Living Essentials' situation and deployed Microsoft Dynamics GP. "Microsoft Dynamics GP 10.0 is a vast improvement over our previous system. The new solution provides a state-of-the-art business system that enables our firm to achieve excellence in its financial management and distribution operations, as well as within its customer service", says Liz McLaury, Controller, Living Essentials.

EDI

Living Essentials also leveraged vSync's integrated EDI solution for Microsoft Dynamics GP to maximize their existing order-entry staff's efficiency, providing for electronic processing of inbound and outbound documents. "The number one benefit of implementing Microsoft Dynamics GP and vSync's EDI capabilities is the efficiencies we received. We no longer have to review hundreds of purchase orders a day – it has been a huge time saver", says McLaury.



First Tech Direct, LLC

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Automated Data Collection

“Living Essentials wanted an automated data collection solution that was built on Microsoft technology and seamlessly integrates with Microsoft Dynamics GP,” says Scott Jackson, VP, First Tech Direct. First Tech Direct highly recommended Accellos, a Microsoft Certified Business Partner that provides the Collect for GP software that utilizes radio frequency hand-held devices to automate the Microsoft Dynamics GP distribution and manufacturing functionality. “The Accellos’ Collect for GP implementation went smoothly, and now provides Living Essentials with accurate real-time data; eliminating large amounts of manual data entry”, says Jackson.

Credit Card Extension

“We used to pay a fee for every transaction where no card was swiped”, says Dolmage. “By selecting Azox Credit Card Extension software, we process every credit card transaction without the need to swipe the actual card eliminating transactional fees.”

First Tech Direct Expertise

Living Essentials’ Microsoft Dynamics partner, First Tech Direct, played an integral role in helping it to fully realize the benefits and extensible architecture of Microsoft Dynamics GP. Through business process consulting, customization, and enhancement programming services, First Tech Direct helped Living Essentials by implementing the Microsoft Dynamics GP solution with enhancement products built on .NET technology.

“The extensible architecture of Microsoft Dynamics GP was a compelling driver in our decision to commit to the Microsoft distribution platform. The expertise and skills of our partner, First Tech Direct, have helped us to focus on our ever changing and growing needs,” comments, Dolmage.

Benefits

Since migrating to Microsoft Dynamics GP solution to meet its distribution requirements, Living Essentials is experiencing a wide variety of benefits in the areas of both warehouse management and customer service.

- **Operational efficiencies.** With the combined functionality provided by the integration between Microsoft Dynamics GP modules—Sales Order Processing with Advanced Invoicing and Purchase Order Processing, Living Essentials is already realizing gains in efficiency, accuracy, productivity, monitoring, and data visibility. The ability to view all orders, invoices, back orders, and returns in one location has increased its employee productivity, reducing the time spent counting inventory and increasing inventory traceability.
- **Improved connections.** Microsoft Dynamics GP is also helping Living Essentials to meet increasing customer demands more effectively. With the increased sales, inventory, and purchasing visibility provided by the increased distribution functionality within Microsoft Dynamics GP, it is able to minimize errors and improve tracking—resulting in the ability to ship more orders on time with greater accuracy. These improved capabilities have helped Living Essentials enhance positive long-standing relationships with its customers and vendors to new levels of satisfaction.
- **Competitive offerings.** Living Essentials is now able to provide the increased speed and functionality its customers are demanding. One example of this is Living Essentials’ ability to now track its UPS customer shipping orders directly, eliminating the need for customers to track shipments on their own. Through Microsoft Dynamics GP, Living Essentials receives real-time tracking information from UPS and integrates it directly into its systems, allowing it to provide up-to-the-minute shipping information to its customers.

For More Information

For more information about Microsoft products and services, call First Tech Direct at 248.291.0138 or visit the Web site at: www.firsttechdirect.com.

For more information about Living Essentials products, call 248.960.1700 or visit the Web site at: www.fivehour.com

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Matt Dolmage
CFO, Living Essentials

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