TRIDEA PARTNERS

Stone Brewing Co.

"We had engaged in conversation with Microsoft and Tridea Partners to help us identify software that could support the growth of the business, while still being cost effective. Tridea Partners and Microsoft gave us that solution in Microsoft Dynamics GP. We made the decision to invest in the Microsoft platform that could support our brewing process, purchasing, retail, operations and accounting needs."

Steve Wagner, Brewmaster and President – Stone Brewing Co.

SUMMARY

Stone Brewing Co. is one of the top craft breweries in the world. They are known for many of their beers including Arrogant Bastard Ale and Stone Pale Ale, among others. However, when it came to managing their business, they were challenged with getting information from their systems to drive decisions. Stone Brewing Co. came to a decision that it was time to evaluate a new business management software system. They interviewed with several service providers, with a focus on selecting a partner that understood their business needs and that could provide "best practices" recommendations throughout the implementation. Their approach to software selection was to use "best of breed" solutions for each of the different business lines, with a willingness to build the necessary integrations points between the systems. Stone Brewing Co. also sees value in investing in technology to improve their business processes.

CHALLENGES

Stone Brewing Co. was using Business Works for accounting. The system was considere to be overburdened and extremely unreliable. With this system they did not track profitability by business unit (brewery, distribution, merchandise store, restaurant and corporate). Microsoft Retail Management system (RMS) was used as the POS system in the store, but it was not integrated with Business Works. Production and inventory control in the brewery was tracked in Business Works and a home-grown system was used for the routing of deliveries for the distributor with again no integration to the core accounting application, Business Works. The restaurant had selected to use Micros, which was also a separate system.

SOLUTION

Stone Brewing Co. made the decision to implement Dynamics GP with Tridea Partners to manage their core business processes. The client saw the system implementation project as an opportunity to introduce some changes to their business processes. During the planning phase of the project, a great deal of time was spent reviewing and documenting existing business processes and discussing opportunities to adopt "best practices". The accounting and financial/managerial reporting structure was completely overhauled, as the decision was made to begin to treat each business unit as a standalone profit center, allowing for analysis of the profitability of each of their business units.

Because the decision was made to use "best of breed" systems for each business unit, a great deal of attention was given to designing optimal and manageable interfaces between the systems. Stone Brewing Co. values the fact that Microsoft's systems are widely used solutions that have been proven to be effective across a large customer base. Microsoft has numerous integration and customization capabilities, as well as the low overall cost of development associated with Microsoft tools. They also appreciate being able to "plug in" to the large resource base of partners, consultants, and personnel that are familiar with Microsoft technologies.

After working with Tridea Partners to build and configure the system to meet the functional design requirements identified in the planning process, the implementation team began a series of formal end-to-end cycle tests to validate that the system provided the expected results for each process stream. Once processes were validated, functional team leaders signed off on the test scripts. The team then documented the transaction flows using screenshots and instructions on how to process each sequential transaction in a given process. These documents were provided to end-users during training sessions. Because the CFO and a strong Project Manager were actively involved in each of the above stages, the entire team was very aware of the importance of not only designing solid processes, but also actively testing each scenario. As the theoretical system design was put to the test in "real-world" testing scenarios, the CFO and Project Manager's involvement greatly facilitated the rapid reconciliation of any issues that arose.

The end result for Stone Brewing Co. has been a system that gives them visibility into each business unit, while also giving them timely and accurate information from all the applications used throughout the organization helping them make important daily business decisions. Stone Brewing Co. also redefined some of their business processes to better manage the rapid growth they have experienced over the last several years making them much more efficient, eliminating the need for additional headcount.