



Customer Solution Case Study

Infrastructure Services Company Improves Control, Increases Profitability and Sustains Rapid Growth

Feedback Infrastructure, a professional infrastructure services provider found its existing disparate IT systems to be difficult to manage, and unable to accommodate the continued growth. It wanted an enterprise resource planning (ERP) solution to help plan, monitor, and control its operations. Working with Microsoft® Gold Certified Partner Wipro Infotech, the company implemented Microsoft Dynamics™ AX 2009. With transparency and greater visibility, decision makers are able to track milestones and review business metrics. This results in confident decisions that are implemented quickly and efficiently; with almost 80 percent of the processes automated. Dynamics AX has laid a foundation for continued growth. The management is more effective and has complete control over business processes. In addition, customers have real time access to the progress of each site, improving customer satisfaction levels.

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Pankaj Sachdeva
President - Finance and Accounts
Feedback Infrastructure Services

Feedback Infrastructure Services (formerly known as Feedback Ventures) is India's leading integrated infrastructure services company. Focused on infrastructure development, the company offers an integrated suite of services across the core and social sectors of infrastructure. Feedback is known for its innovative work and for operationalizing challenging projects in difficult locations. Its services include business planning, project feasibility and structuring, design and engineering, rehabilitation and resettlement, capacity building, PPP (Public-Private Partnership) advisory, and process improvement.

Feedback was incorporated as a Private Limited Company in 1990 and today its team consists of 1,300 multi-disciplinary experts. It operates from its corporate office in Gurgaon, regional offices in Delhi, Bangalore, Mumbai, Hyderabad and Chandigarh and 55 project offices across the country. More than 25 of India's 50 biggest listed companies are Feedback's clients and so are the governments of 23 of the 28 Indian states and 4 of India's 7 Union Territories. The annual revenue of the company in fiscal 2010-11 was U.S.\$ 30.5 million (INR 137.31 crore).

Situation

Feedback Infrastructure maintained separate applications to manage the financial and operational aspects of the business. The accounting software Tally was deployed for financial management. Additionally, Microsoft Excel spreadsheets were used for storing and monitoring data and also for report generation. Some Human Resource (HR) and Employee Self Service (ESS) functionalities were integrated through third party software. Lack of integration between project management processes and financial management application resulted in time intensive manual rework by the finance team.

Tracking processes and transactions with multiple standalone applications was very difficult. Timely and accurate financial reporting and data sharing across offices was another time-consuming process. The organization lacked visibility towards project accounting. Additional effort was required to collate data and derive statistics. "Consolidation of accounts was a challenge. We had to designate 15 employees for approximately 7 days to close the accounts," recalls Pankaj Sachdeva, President - Finance and Accounts, Feedback Infrastructure Services.

With client sites spanning multiple geographical locations, Feedback Infrastructure's resources and assets were unevenly distributed. There was no system to track daily attendance and record the job assigned and its status i.e. whether it is completed or pending. It couldn't monitor the time spent by various consultants across projects and track the milestones achieved. Manual appraisal process without workflows resulted in delays in issue resolution.

Further, there was a need to build a knowledge base that could be used by employees. R.S. Ramasubramaniam, Vice Chairman, Feedback Infrastructure Services explains, "Project artifacts were never archived. There were no knowledge sharing and learning documents from previous projects, which often resulted in repeating the same mistakes. We wanted to develop an intranet in order to avoid these hassles."

The company was at a juncture where it became necessary to review the effectiveness of business processes. The existing IT structure lacked central control and ownership. The company wanted to replace its legacy financial and reporting applications with a single, integrated platform to take more informed and quicker decisions. "We wanted a technology that would closely reflect our fast growing and expanding business and help us move away from a silo environment," continues Ramasubramaniam.

Solution

"Microsoft Dynamics AX was the best fit because of its rich functionality and relatively quicker implementation cycle at comparatively lower startup cost," states Anil Chopra, Managing Director, Feedback Infrastructure Services. "Concurrent user licenses and seamless integration with other Microsoft products in a single platform were added benefits."

Feedback's ERP implementation journey started in September 2008. The solution was deployed in phases, and the entire project was completed by May 2011. Deployed for users at head office and a client site in Gurgaon, Feedback Infrastructure implemented Administration, Human Resource, Expense Management, CRM, Finance, General Ledger, Accounts Payable, and Accounts Receivable modules. It also linked a third party solution for the professional services vertical with Dynamics AX.

Dynamics AX has been deployed for 77 concurrent user licenses and currently there are 755 web users along with 750 Microsoft Office SharePoint Server 2007 Enterprise Client Access Licenses (CAL).

Wipro with domain expertise tailored the solution to reflect the business goals. It included milestone billing and collection, project budget functionality, general budget, standard costing, invoicing, leads to opportunity process, resource scheduling, employee life cycle and integration with third party applications as well as Microsoft Office.

Further, it was decided to develop and deploy few functionalities of Microsoft Dynamics AX on the web to reach maximum users by deploying SharePoint Server, in addition to intranet and knowledge management solutions.

The rollout of this ERP and KM tool was code-named Feedback Enterprise Resource Network Systems (FERNS), and nicknamed, the Fountainhead, the place to go when you need to know.

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Vinayak Chatterjee, Chairman
Feedback Infrastructure Services

Customized Human Resource functionalities and workflows are also designed on SharePoint Server. For instance, the entire recruitment process, from raising a Vacancy Authorization Form (VAF) to its approval and routing to the recruitment team, selection and finally on boarding is completely automated using a SharePoint based workflow.

Additionally, several employee centric functions have been automated using SharePoint Server workflows. These include employee compensation and benefits, separation, training and development, Performance Management System, etc. For other aspects such as attendance, leave authorization and management, timesheets, payroll and helpdesk, a third party software has been integrated with the Dynamics AX and SharePoint Server. These are linked to the masters created in Dynamics AX. Classes or business logic is captured in Dynamics AX and SharePoint Server uses this business logic to insert or update data in AX tables. The solution thus provides a platform for all HR related assistance in one, seamless fashion.

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Amarendra Kumar
Fountainhead Champion
Feedback Infrastructure Services

The main requirement at Feedback Infrastructure was a Project Management Module for professional services organization to monitor all project activities. Third party tools for example timesheet, attendance and payroll are purchased and integrated with Dynamics AX. Since the user interface is common all the information can be stored and accessed simultaneously from a single location. Hence, all the project activities are monitored using a single ERP system.

The solution allows for integration between CRM and Project Management Module which results in sequential tracking of a lead to an opportunity to conversion to a customer. It then associates the project to it along with its various other dimensions.

Feedback Infrastructure has capabilities to manage almost all the business aspects and activities with the integrated solution. “Data management, control and ownership, enforcing processes and ability to analyze data for effective decision making etc. is a reality today,” says Amarendra Kumar, the Fountainhead Champion at Feedback Infrastructure Services. “We have developed high visibility from this project. We expect the life span of the project to be close to 10 years.”

Benefits

Microsoft Dynamics AX offers the operational transparency required by Feedback to create an environment of connected people. Everyone has real time visibility and access to critical information throughout the enterprise.

Automates Processes up to 80 Percent

The company is using the solution to eliminate time-consuming, error-prone manual processes. Data and lead management, which were manual processes earlier, are now automated and streamlined. Data is collated and mapped across all locations. Resource planning allows project managers to plan and track resources vis-à-vis ongoing projects.

With streamlined HR processes, tracking of assignments and mapping transactions has become very easy. “80 percent of our processes are automated. This helps in saving significant amount of time and manpower,” expresses Vinayak Chatterjee, Chairman, Feedback Infrastructure Services. “Besides saving time, it also reduces paper work by 30 percent and helps us in going green.”

Improves Business Controls

With a comprehensive and integrated solution in place, the company has gained holistic insight of its business. Business managers have increased access to real time information. Administration is consolidated at one location enabling better financial management and effectiveness. Anil Chopra explains, “Better visibility and insight leads to more control and sound decisions. Business managers now receive meaningful, reliable and current information. This helps better manage operations and support business growth. Efficient tracking and reporting abilities along with consistent workflows leads to improved planning by management.”

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Anil Chopra, Managing Director
Feedback Infrastructure Services

Increases Profitability

Closer prediction of project budgets and plans followed by optimal purchasing for project, controls cost, and generates milestone payments for owners, and subcontractor payments. This enables project managers to build accurate estimate, sharing the plan across departments for effective execution. The solution generates earned value reports on each project and performs profitability analysis at periodic intervals, which helps the management track and manages time and cost overruns.

Consolidation of accounts is no longer a challenge. “Microsoft Dynamics AX computes accurate payments for work completed as well as and contract orders leading to higher profitability,” says Pankaj Sachdeva, President - Finance and Accounts, Feedback Infrastructure Services. “We understand our cost structure better. Resources and assets can be used more wisely and managed for better returns.”

Increases Customer Satisfaction

Microsoft Dynamics AX allows Feedback Infrastructure customers to track all the project activities as well as the total time spent by the consultants in various activities reported through the timesheets. Self-involvement and up-to-date tracking improves customer satisfaction level and hence retention.

“Dynamics AX has been running for only 3 months, however, in just this time, we have seen an increase in efficiency. This will go a long way to accomplish our goal to be recognized as the best infrastructure services companies in India,” concludes P Pradeep, Head - IT, Feedback Infrastructure Services. “We are confident that it would take our business to the next level by significantly improving financial and operational management.”

Microsoft Dynamics

Microsoft Dynamics is a line of integrated, adaptable business management solutions that enables you and your people to make business decisions with greater confidence. Microsoft Dynamics works like familiar Microsoft software such as Microsoft Office, which means less of a learning curve for your people, so they can get up and running quickly and focus on what’s most important. And because it is from Microsoft, it easily works with the systems that your company already has implemented. By automating and streamlining financial, customer relationship, and supply chain processes, Microsoft Dynamics brings together people, processes, and technologies, increasing the productivity and effectiveness of your business, and helping you drive business success.

For more information about Microsoft Dynamics, go to www.microsoft.com/dynamics