



Linkwood Solutions

Dedicated Microsoft Dynamics NAV Professional Services Partner



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Linkwood Solutions bring considerable Microsoft Dynamics NAV knowledge to management team at Hotter Shoes



Hotter Shoes require a scalable ERP system

Linkwood Solutions engaged as the IT Partner

Resources and expertise provided

Implementation of a much improved NAV system

- Established Microsoft Dynamics NAV user
- Accelerated growth plans
- Existing trusted relationship
- Expertise in the Retail sector
- Able to free up internal resource to run the business
- An extension to the existing team, not a replacement
- Ongoing support and advice
- Call centre, merchandising and warehousing functions integrated with core accounts system

Challenge

In December 2007, Hotter Shoes recognised the need for additional investment into the company to expand the business and establish a management team to support their growth plans. This came in the form of an equity package from Gresham Private Equity. In 2008, Nick Davis was employed as the Group Financial Director of Hotter Shoes and one of his initial priorities was to develop their IT systems to support their accelerated growth plans.

Hotter Shoes selected Microsoft Dynamics NAV to support all aspects of the business from finance, through to manufacturing and distribution. Having selected a Microsoft Partner with expertise in the Retail sector, Hotter Shoes were concerned about how they could co-ordinate the project internally, working with their implementation partner, as they recognised that Hotter Shoes didn't have the skills or experience to manage a project of this size.

Nick Davis, Group FD of Hotter Shoes said: "Following an internal audit of our existing IT systems, we recognised the scale and complexity involved with collaborating with our Microsoft Dynamics NAV partner. We were concerned about articulating our requirements in exacting detail to ensure that we got the most out of our system to support the business now and in the future.

Solution

With experience of working with a number of specialist consultants implementing Microsoft Dynamics NAV in another company Nick Davis was employed at, he selected Linkwood Solutions as he had already developed a trusted relationship with those individuals during that implementation project.

Nick Davis said, "Having worked with Nic Lamb from Linkwood Solutions on a previous project, I was confident that they would bring not only an outstanding knowledge of Microsoft Dynamics NAV and a good general



About Hotter Shoes

Hotter Comfort Concept Shoes, a trading name of Beaconsfield Footwear Limited are a UK manufacturing success story. Established as a family run business in 1959, manufacturing own label slippers for the major retailers, they developed an excellent reputation for the quality of their own manufactured slippers. They experienced slow growth however until the 1990's, when their annual turnover run rate was around £3 million.

It wasn't until then that Hotter had what they describe as their 'eureka moment' – identifying a niche in the market for stylish shoes with comfort built in. Since then product innovation, world class production facilities and continual reinvestment in the business has seen their shoe collections expand beyond all recognition. At the same time, Stewart Houlgrave, Managing Director, and son of the founder of the business decided to take the business into the mail order market. It is this decision that has enabled Hotter Shoes to accelerate the growth of the business to its current revenue position of £35m and beyond.

<http://www.hottershoes.com/>



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business understanding, that they would also work well as part of our team as an extension of our business".

Linkwood Solutions bring project facilitation, project management, consultancy, training and development services to companies needing internal assistance when implementing or developing their Microsoft Dynamics NAV system. Linkwood Solutions enjoy a trusted partnership with Hotter Shoes and are the project manager on all things Microsoft Dynamics NAV. Their role has extended to supporting Hotter Shoes with other IT specific projects. For example Linkwood co-ordinated a data migration project to put all sales histories into a data warehouse of significant data volumes over a period of nearly 10 years. Hotter Shoes are now able to more effectively interrogate customer data in Microsoft Dynamics NAV and their Microsoft Dynamics CRM system to support their direct marketing campaigns and order fulfilment process.

Benefits

"Linkwood Solutions have been instrumental in assisting us with the implementation of Microsoft Dynamics NAV, a significant ERP system now with call centre, merchandising and warehousing functions integrated with our core accounts system. They provide a level of expertise that ensures that we know what we should avoid doing and advise us on the best way to do things. The most pleasing part is how well our managers work with them and it has brought with it a discipline in the project team, without which we wouldn't have been able to do it on our own", said Nick Davis of Hotter Shoes.

Nic Lamb from Linkwood Solutions said: "Our approach to working with Hotter Shoes is to act as an extension of their company assisting with not only the project management of the system but also provide as much knowledge as we can to help Hotter make informed decisions when dealing with their IT Partner. Our aim is to take the pain away from as many aspects of their system as possible to enable their management team to focus on what they do best - growing and developing their highly successful business.

Future

Linkwood Solutions continue to provide ongoing help and advice on their Microsoft Dynamics NAV solution and Hotter Shoes have recently implemented a new call centre application. With over 70% of sales via mail order, Hotter Shoes continue to develop their routes to market to serve customers, however they choose to purchase. Online Sales via www.hottershoes.com is a growing part of the business and as this expands Hotter Shoes are looking at further ways to develop tighter integration with their e-commerce systems to maintain their high levels of customer service and fast delivery times. Hotter Shoes are also expanding the retail side of the business, with six shops trading already and several more stores planned to open in 2010.

Furthermore, Hotter Shoes plan to sell into the US, and will work with Linkwood Solutions to ensure that their IT systems are capable of supporting the direct marketing campaign, e-commerce sales, and the fulfilment process as they continue to expand into new markets.



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