

# CHARTERIS

Seamless business and IT for performance advantage

## Creating a platform for manufacturing excellence

**Faced with escalating maintenance costs for its legacy manufacturing system, ABN decided to develop a bespoke solution based on Microsoft Dynamics AX. This, however, was a project focused on delivering benefits for the business, not on delivering technology. With support from Charteris, the company achieved its business goals and reduced its IT costs by 30%.**

ABN's manufacturing system lies at the very heart of its business. Used in eleven mills across England and Scotland, this vital technology platform supports all of ABN's key manufacturing processes, including supply chain management, production management and scheduling. CEO Alan Murphy explains: "Our manufacturing system underpins everything we do, from taking orders to producing our products and distributing them."

The company's existing system was many years old and had started to become expensive to support and maintain. The total cost of IT ownership had become prohibitively high and was no longer sustainable, so ABN started to look for alternatives. Initially, the business considered a number of turn-key manufacturing applications. However, it decided that it needed a more flexible IT platform that it could meld to its business processes. It therefore decided to develop a solution, based on Microsoft Dynamics AX technology.

Due to contractual arrangements, ABN had to decommission its existing system within a matter of just a few months, or sign up for support from its existing supplier for another five years. The company therefore needed to find a firm of external consultants to help it design and implement its new manufacturing system against a tight deadline.

ABN selected Charteris, because the firm offered expert knowledge of the manufacturing sector, together with proven skills with Microsoft technology. Above all, Charteris demonstrated its ability to handle a complex project within a fixed period of time.



### Client

ABN is the leading British manufacturer of pig and poultry compound feed. Part of the AB Agri Group, the company supplies its agriculture industry customers with a range of products and complementary services.

### Goals

- Reduce the total cost of IT ownership
- Facilitate business process improvement
- Future-proof the business

### Charteris' role

- Support the development of new business processes
- Design, implement and test a new manufacturing system based on Microsoft Dynamics
- Work closely with in-house teams to understand the needs of the business

### Results

- Total cost of IT ownership reduced by 30%
- Improved business processes enabled
- Greater flexibility to continue to transform manufacturing processes and make additional business improvements in the future



### A business-led project

Alongside the development of the new manufacturing system, ABN decided to evaluate and redesign its business processes in the areas of purchasing, customer contract management and pricing management. All of these processes had previously been determined by the functionality of the legacy manufacturing system. ABN wanted to take advantage of the flexibility of Microsoft Dynamics to design new processes that better suited the needs of the business.

"We wanted to unlock new benefits for the business," says Murphy. "The project called for customisation and bespoke development, but the consultants were very flexible and were able to deliver exactly what we needed."

Charteris worked as part of a cross-company project team to help formulate the new business processes and then build the necessary system functionality to support these processes in Microsoft Dynamics. The consultants developed, implemented and tested the software and supported change management activities within the business.

"A major positive was the degree to which Charteris quickly became part of our business," says Murphy. "Charteris' consultants didn't just come in and tell us what had to be done. They worked with us to develop what was right for the business."

### An example of best practice

From the outset, the project was led by the business. Murphy himself was directly involved throughout, along with many of the company's senior managers. He attributes the success of the project to this business ownership and the close cooperation that existed between the business, the Charteris consultants and ABN's in-house IT team. "This project was exemplary," he says. "It has certainly been recognised as an example of best practice with the AB Agri Group of companies."

Charteris has delivered a new manufacturing system based on Microsoft Dynamics that supports ABN's new and existing business processes. The solution was delivered on time, enabling ABN to terminate its maintenance contract with its legacy supplier prior to the commencement of the next five year contract term. "Our new manufacturing system meets the needs of the business and has enabled us to improve core business processes," says Murphy.

The flexibility and functionality of Microsoft Dynamics means that ABN can continue to evolve its manufacturing systems to meet new business requirements in the future. "Additional process improvements are still being identified and realised, so the benefits of Microsoft Dynamics will increase over time," Murphy predicts. "We have a technology platform that is now fit-for-purpose for the future."

The most significant benefit for ABN, however, is the reduction in costs that has been achieved. "We are making real and significant savings, following the implementation of Microsoft Dynamics," says Murphy. "We estimate that the total cost of ownership of our manufacturing systems has dropped by at least 30%."



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**Alan Murphy,**  
CEO, ABN

### About Charteris

Charteris is a business and technology consultancy that designs and delivers powerful, innovative solutions for Enterprise and Mid-market companies in the UK. The company is organised into three specialist practices - Business Consulting, Advanced Microsoft Consulting and Microsoft Dynamics Solutions – that combine to give customers a unique 360° approach to business and technology challenges.

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### Charteris clients include:

AB Agri | Argos | ASDA | Booker | Debenhams | Exova | G4S Risk Management  
John Lewis Partnership | Marks & Spencer | Microsoft | Northumbrian Water  
Sainsbury's | Swan Mill Paper Company | Tesco | TLV Euro Engineering

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