Case Study

GatewayRail

GATEWAYRAIL

Integration helps logistics company wield tighter control and plug revenue leakages

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THE CLIENT

GatewayRail provides multimodal logistics solutions across its various operational areas - Rail, Road, Terminals and Inland Container Depots (ICD). It owns and operates a fleet of 21 trains and over 235 road trailers at its rail linked terminals.

Playing in the logistics business, the company's business success and growth is a factor of the visibility it has across its operations. The customers' inventory on the move at any given point of time is huge, both in volumes and value, and usually involves services rendered by more than one area of the company's operations. Thus, warranting an integrated approach. Transitioning from a distributed IT set-up to a centralized system and powered with real-time data, GatewayRail not only ups customer satisfaction by 100% but also gives management better control over the operations.
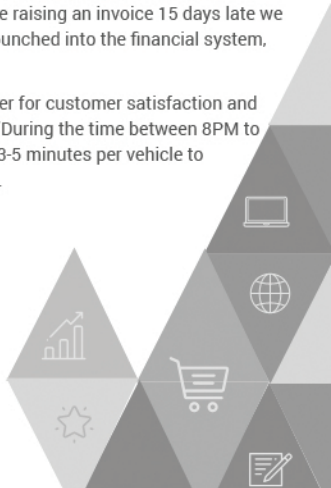
CHALLENGES

GatewayRail was dependent on stand-alone customized applications, either developed in-house or procured from local vendors, for its different areas of operations. Nor were these operations integrated across the different locations. While some processes like Gate Permit, etc. were manual.

Working in silos inhibited seamless flow of data across the organization, resulting in lack of data availability. This, in turn, meant lesser control over the operations, revenue leakages, and inability to plan ahead, proving to be a bottleneck in the way of driving future growth. "Having separate software for the different operations effectively meant that there was no unified view or integrated data available from the starting point to the last mile delivery, making tracking and future planning difficult," recollects Atul Bansal, GM-IT, GatewayRail. The company's finance application, Tally, again not being integrated with operations systems, led to delays in raising invoices and consequently late payments. "As we were raising an invoice 15 days late we were realizing payments in 50 days. Besides, whichever bills were generated had to be manually punched into the financial system, wasting precious time," explains B.K. Sahoo, CFO of GatewayRail.

In fact, time is of essence in the logistics business. Ensuring on-time delivery is a crucial parameter for customer satisfaction and repeat business. This required plugging the possible sources of delay, including gate operations. "During the time between 8PM to 2AM around 250 trailers pass the gate. As the gate permits were issued manually, it took approx. 3-5 minutes per vehicle to exit," he avers. Consolidated time taken for all the trailers indicates the immense productivity loss.

Inventory management too was a challenge owing to the non-integrated approach. In a yard of over 90 acres locating a customer's container was a big challenge like locating a needle in the haystack, and could take as long as 1-2 days, says Bansal. RFID would have been a viable solution for tracking, but that required first having a centralized system like an ERP in place for it to integrate with.

HUNT FOR RIGHT ERP

To counter these challenges GatewayRail required a solution that was not only integrated, but also flexible and scalable to meet future requirements. The company decided on Mircosoft Dynamics NAV 2009 to meet this goal.

However, the journey prior to reaching the point of decision was not an easy one for the company. While on the lookout for an integrated solution Bansal realized there was no robust ERP available in the market to cater to the specific requirements of a logistics company and incorporate an understanding of the domain processes.

During this phase of searching for the right solution the company also burnt its fingers trying to implement a solution from Oracle. "Before going in for Microsoft Dynamics NAV, we tried to implement Oracle and struggled with it for about a year, but could not eventually implement it as it was not very user friendly," explains Bansal.

Post the experience with Oracle and earlier unsuccessful hunt for the right solution, the company decided on choosing between SAP and Microsoft Dynamics. Eventually, owing to its user friendliness and flexibility for customization Dynamics held an edge over SAP. The ability to customize was a key deciding factor as GatewayRail wanted to incorporate the process knowledge into the solution to align it to the requirements of the logistics industry. "We realized that SAP was more difficult to customize as compared to Dynamics," says Bansal.

The Microsoft Dynamics NAV solution comprises of the following key modules: Finance, Sales and Purchase, Sales Contract Module, Terminal Module, Rail Module and Road Module. Among these the operations specific modules were customized and specifically developed for the solution.

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> Post the implementation of Microsoft Dynamics NAV, we conducted a survey among our customers. And, the result was almost 100% jump in satisfaction levels with the company's services.
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> **Atul Kumar Bansal,**
> General Manager – IT, GatewayRail Freight

Stand alone systems for the different operations hindered GatewayRail, a logistics solution provider, from getting an end-to-end view of the business. Lack of real-time data availability not only created process inefficiencies, time and productivity loss, but also made it difficult to plan ahead and drive future growth. Moving to Microsoft Dynamics, the company is now empowered with data to better control operations, leading to 100% increase in customer satisfaction.

Results

- Real-time data availability lends better control
- Plugging revenue leakage
- Process visibility helps keep track
- Ability to plan ahead
- Time and cost savings, improving productivity.

PHASED IMPLEMENTATION FOR SMOOTH TRANSITION

For the implementation GatewayRail partnered with Trident Information Systems, a Microsoft partner. Along the way it also sought services of a logistics consultant, Logesys, for domain expertise. Both Trident and Logesys worked in tandem to tailor the solution to specific logistics industry processes.

The implementation was carried out in a phased manner to ensure a smooth transition. The finance module went live first in April 2012 followed by the different operations modules in April 2013.

During implementation three rounds of User Acceptance Testing were conducted, wherein a user was working on the system every two months just to rectify all the issues, says Braj Bhushan, Delivery Head, Trident Information Systems. Change management was also a key element during the early usage.

BENEFITS OF INTEGRATION

As management experts say, customer is the real barometer of an organization's health. To that effect, the company conducted a survey among its customers post Dynamics implementation. The results showed 100% increase in customer satisfaction levels post the integrated system came into place. Some of the other impact areas include:

Real-Time Data Availability Lends Better Control

Data availability across the different functions on a real time basis has ensured a unified, accurate and current view of the business, helping the management take timely and informed decisions. "Powered with data insights we now have a tighter control over our operations, which was missing earlier. Sitting here in the head office the top management can get a comprehensive view of all the locations," says Bansal.

Process Visibility Helps Keep Track

Seamless integration across the company's different operations and locations with Dynamics has enabled complete visibility into each process— from the initial booking to first pick up for road transportation to movement and clearance of containers from ICD to final delivery to the port through the rail movement. With all the depots integrated, one can now see the exact location of a container, and how it could be planned effectively for the next movement. Cross-visibility helps ensure the processes don't go off track, and if they do, timely corrective measures are taken.

Plugging Revenue Leakage

For a CFO across any business vertical, revenue leakage is one of the biggest concerns. And, so was it in case of Sahoo. For him, the ability to plug revenue leakage by addressing issues like delays and inaccuracies in invoicing has been one of the major advantages of moving to an integrated environment with ERP.

Ability To Plan Ahead

With accurate data available at a click, GatewayRail now gets insights into various elements on the operations side. For instance, number of containers done in a week or a month, where is it losing revenues, how can it improve revenues, which segment needs more focus, and so on. This can help the management plan ahead better for faster growth.

GatewayRail's Technology Environment

Solution	Mircosoft Dynamics NAV 2009 6.1
Deployment strategy	On-Premise

Time and Cost Savings, Improving Productivity

Improved efficiencies brought in by Dynamics have helped significantly save on time and costs on various fronts. Here are a few indicators:

- Monthly reporting closes on 3rd of every month as opposed to 10-12th of the month earlier. Invoices are raised in advance as opposed to 15 days' delay before ERP. No manual entries and elimination of duplication frees time for more productive work.

- With the gate operations becoming automated, time taken for a trailer to exit the gate has come down from earlier 3-5 minutes to 1-2 minutes.

- With RFID integrated with ERP, time taken to locate containers in the yard has come down from 1-2 days to a few minutes.

- The operations team which would usually work till late in the night now leaves office timely owing to improved productivity.

- Single solution desk. Single application means reduction in operational time, and also cheaper and simpler maintenance.

Powered with data insights we now have a tighter control over our operations, which was missing earlier. Sitting here in the head office the top management can get a comprehensive view of all the locations.

Atul Kumar Bansal
GM – IT, GatewayRail Freight

ABOUT TRIDENT

Trident is a global consulting firm that empowers organizations around the world to digitally transform and grow their businesses. Our expert consultants offer strategic consulting, implementation services, support and managed services and pre-built software solutions that help our clients innovate and reinvigorate customer, employee, partner and supplier experiences and processes using Microsoft Dynamics 365, ERP, CRM, Business Intelligence/Analytics and related Microsoft cloud solutions.

Trident enables Digital Transformation for enterprises and technology providers by delivering seamless customer experience, business efficiency and actionable insights through an integrated set of disruptive technologies: big data analytics, internet of things, mobility, cloud, security, unified communications, etc.

Quick Facts

1999	Year of Establishment
250+	No. of Employees
300+	No. of Customers

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CRM
MS D365 Sales
MS D365 Marketing

ERP
MS D365 Operations
MS D365 Business Central
Microsoft Dynamics AX
Microsoft Dynamics NAV

Internet of Things (IoT)
Retail Supply Chain
Asset Management
Fleet Management
Energy Management

Audit & Risk Analysis
ACL GRC
ACL Exchange
ACL Analytics

Business Intelligence
MS Power BI
SPSS
Qlik Sense

Retail Applications
LS Retail
D365 Retail

DevOps
IBM
Microsoft
Dynatrace

Mobile Apps
Sales Force Automation
Service Team Automation
Customer Loyalty Management
Mobile Inventory Managment

Security
Application Security
End Point Security
Database Security

Trident's Vertical Focus

Retail	Hospitality	E-Commerce	Logistics	Manufacturing	Real Estate & Construction	Education

Recognitions and Awards

'Transformative 100' by ChannelWorld at the Premier 100 annual awards for 2016, 2017, 2018

Microsoft Dynamics President Club winner from Microsoft for Microsoft Dynamics Navision, Axapta & MSCRM, 2011

Gold Certified Partner for Microsoft Dynamics Navision, Axapta & MSCRM

Platinum Partnership with LS Retail supporting clients with more than 5000 POS.

Attainment of **Premier partnership** status with IBM, 2010

Most Innovative Partner of the Year award from IBM, 2009.

Strategic Alliances

Gold Microsoft Partner — Microsoft

LS Nav Platinum Certified Partner 2018

Business Partner IBM

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