



Overview

Country or Region: United States

Industry: Oil and gas—Oil refining

Customer Profile

Blue Sun, a clean-tech innovator with a strong reputation for product excellence, markets a family of biodiesel fuels from sustainable resources under its Blue Sun Fusion brand.

Business Situation

The company wanted to strengthen its viability through the challenges of an economic downturn, increase management control over the business, and prepare itself for renewed growth.

Solution

Blue Sun implemented Microsoft Dynamics NAV to manage finance, provide reporting and business insight, and progressively support all aspects of the operation.

Benefits

- Meaningful business insight and compelling visibility
- Strategic focus with low technology ownership cost
- Scalable to support clean-tech resurgence

Clean-Tech Innovator Thrives Through Economic Downturn, Readies for Rapid Growth

“With Microsoft Dynamics NAV, we’ve become an extremely efficient, lean operation. We know it also has the flexibility to scale to the substantial growth we are preparing for today.”

Jerry Washburn, Senior Vice President and CFO, Blue Sun

A provider of alternative fuels from sustainable resources, Blue Sun has built a strong reputation for product excellence. To manage the company most efficiently in a challenging business climate and to prepare to capitalize on the promise of its Blue Sun Fusion brand following a recovery, Blue Sun implemented Microsoft Dynamics NAV. The solution provides company managers with the meaningful insight they need to move the business forward. It also facilitates with ease the many types of reporting Blue Sun requires to demonstrate regulatory compliance, drive financial performance, nurture strategic relationships, and maintain high levels of individual and organizational productivity. By using Microsoft Dynamics NAV, the company has added customers and distribution channels without increasing overhead and is poised to realize significantly enhanced growth as the clean-tech market rebounds.



“In 2007 ... we used Microsoft Dynamics NAV to boost individual and organizational productivity and doubled our revenue, adding new customers and distribution channels, without hiring more staff.”

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Situation

With headquarters in Golden, Colorado, [Blue Sun](#) markets a product family of alternative fuels under the brand of Blue Sun Fusion. Founded in 2001 with the goal of developing the best possible biodiesel fuel, Blue Sun went to market in early 2005 after extensive research and development efforts. Blue Sun Fusion products offer a variety of blends of traditional diesel with fuel from renewable sources, which are proprietary oilseed crops. The company quickly garnered an outstanding reputation as a provider of renewable-source fuel products of a significantly higher quality than traditional diesel fuels.

Blue Sun operates a fuel distribution network with sophisticated, high-volume ration-blending terminals, from which trains and trucks can transport Blue Sun Fusion products to almost any location in North America. Today, Blue Sun Fusion fuels are available mostly in the Mountain West region of the United States and neighboring areas, including Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming. Blue Sun's main business groups engage with the supply chain to procure raw oil feed stocks, which a contract refinery refines into biodiesel; make these fuels available to the Blue Sun Fusion product offering or resell them domestically and internationally; and market the Blue Sun Fusion brand.

With the economic downturn, companies in the alternative-fuel industry have faced severe challenges to their business viability and made far-ranging adjustments to remain competitive. An embargo by the European Union on biodiesel from the United States added to the urgency of doing so. Of 17 alternative-fuel companies that venture

capitalists or private equity groups funded from 2005 to 2007, only Blue Sun and one other organization are still in business. Blue Sun today maintains a small, efficient team and pursues strategic partnerships with large petroleum companies to jointly market the Blue Sun Fusion brand and products.

To ready the company to weather a recessionary economy and capitalize on newly emerging opportunities for growth, Blue Sun decided to make more strategic use of software technology. As Jerry Washburn, Senior Vice President and CFO at Blue Sun, explains, “Our employees would create stand-alone spreadsheets to track and reconcile financial and other business data, which was a labor-intensive practice. The accuracy of the results was often questionable and rarely provided the meaningful insight into the business that managers needed.”

In addition, Blue Sun's needs outgrew the capabilities of the Sage Peachtree accounting software that the company used. Specifically, Blue Sun sought a complete enterprise resource planning (ERP) solution that included:

- Dimensional accounting to accommodate multiple departments and divisions without being compelled to handle them through the general ledger.
- Cost center and profit center accounting.
- Commodity tracking.
- Tax credit tracking and handling.
- Intercompany transaction posting, elimination, and consolidation.
- Compliance and financial reporting.
- Process-manufacturing management functionality.

Solution

Washburn knew of [Radiant Technologies](#), a Microsoft Gold Certified Partner with a strong concentration on clean-tech industries and deep expertise in using technology to achieve environmental benefits. Radiant Technologies is headquartered in San Diego, California, close to many alternative-energy and sustainability-focused organizations. The company also has offices in Denmark and Singapore. Within the company's technology portfolio, [Microsoft Dynamics NAV](#) plays an especially prominent role.

Michael Anderson, CEO of Radiant Technologies, highlights the reasons why the company feels so strongly about Microsoft Dynamics NAV: "Clean-tech and other environmentally directed companies often run many different phases of business operations—from

startup and research and development to commercial distribution—within a very short time. Some of these companies follow nontraditional business models that may have little precedent. Microsoft Dynamics NAV is a great fit for such organizations because it offers a flexible programming environment and extensible software tools that we can use with great efficiency to create business management infrastructures that help companies to innovate and grow."

Blue Sun had set a short timeline to get the new business management solution running and wanted to get started using the solution without making any changes to its hardware and network configurations. To start, Radiant Technologies deployed Microsoft Dynamics NAV as a hosted solution to save Blue Sun the costs of an on-premises solution and the expenses and

Role Centers in Microsoft Dynamics NAV, fine-tuned by Radiant Technologies, help business managers find exactly the data and functions they require most in their jobs.



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Jerry Washburn, Senior Vice President and CFO, Blue Sun

reconfiguration effort related to hardware changes. The entire implementation, including some customization to support process-manufacturing and fuel-blending operations, took less than 90 days. Later, Blue Sun streamlined its hardware environment and brought Microsoft Dynamics NAV in-house. However, Washburn anticipates that growth during the coming years will bring the company to a point when a hosted solution again makes more sense for the business.

Today, Blue Sun uses Microsoft Dynamics NAV primarily for financial and compliance reporting. All business and financial data reside within the solution. By using Microsoft Dynamics NAV, Blue Sun employees perform order processing, general-ledger consolidation, accounts payable and accounts receivable tasks, inventory cost management, and extensive reporting. To help generate the reports in the precise formats Blue Sun managers want, the solution integrates with Jet Reports. And, employees at Blue Sun no longer use stand-alone spreadsheets or other insular reporting functions.

Microsoft Dynamics NAV connects with an off-site payroll system facilitated by Ceridian, sending and receiving payroll details. And to ease tax reporting, the solution links with the tax management systems of several states where the company does business, automatically populating state tax-reporting forms with business data. In the near future, Blue Sun plans to link the solution with its human resource records, which Ceridian also manages, and connect it with a Concur travel and expense management system. Manufacturing and distribution operations will come online with Microsoft Dynamics NAV as

demand grows. Eventually, when the company develops more established strategic relationships with distribution and marketing partners, the solution will support collaboration with these partners and provide them with access to business information.

Benefits

Having successfully weathered a challenging economic downturn, Blue Sun is preparing to grow market share and revenue as proven providers of clean and sustainable technologies to garner increased attention. “Microsoft Dynamics NAV is smoothly fine-tuned to the specific requirements of our business,” says Washburn. “It facilitates all the reporting and management tasks we need to perform today and will serve as the core of our business infrastructure in the years to come.”

Meaningful Business Insight and Compelling Visibility

Today, Blue Sun owns a single, centralized repository for all business information and has discarded the isolated spreadsheets and other informal information management tools that it previously used. Says Washburn, “Blue Sun enjoys the ability to easily generate all the reports it needs to demonstrate regulatory compliance, help the board and business managers to make sound decisions based on real-time business insight, and make a compelling business case to potential strategic partners.” Washburn and other executives can also review the company’s financial events and trends in the form of highly intuitive dashboards that make it possible to absorb information quickly.

For a company that is successfully emerging from a global recession and is pursuing a larger share of the market

when other clean-tech competitors may be struggling, the ability to use data as business evidence is critical. Explains Washburn, "Reliable, complete business information from Microsoft Dynamics NAV helps us increase our visibility and communicate the unique value of our brand and products to partners, investors, and the public."

Strategic Focus with Low Technology Ownership Cost

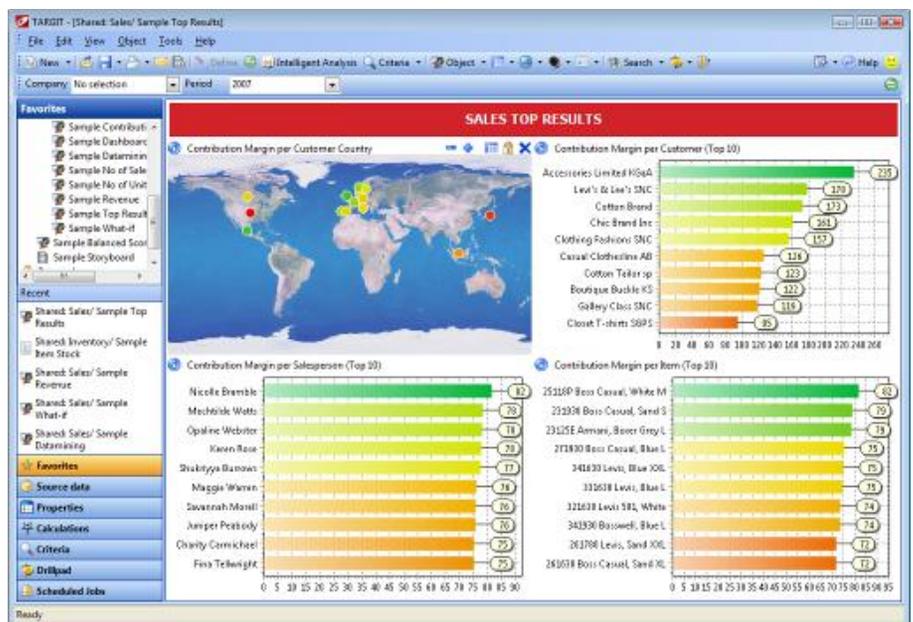
With Microsoft Dynamics NAV, Blue Sun operates with great efficiency and keeps costs under close control. "In 2007, for example, we used Microsoft Dynamics NAV to boost individual and organizational productivity and doubled our revenue, adding new customers and distribution channels, without hiring more staff," says Washburn. "Consolidating management processes on a single, integrated solution makes a big difference in keeping our overhead low."

Blue Sun expects to further minimize its cost of technology ownership when Microsoft Dynamics NAV will again become a hosted solution, which is what Blue Sun expects to happen as it looks to support sustained growth facilitated by the most efficient and economical use of resources. As Washburn states, "I believe software as a service has excellent potential for us, with an optimal combination of best economy and flexible technology. We will be able to generate substantial savings simply by eliminating much of our hardware and service contracts."

Scalable to Support Clean-Tech Resurgence

Given changing economic trends and the current administration's emphasis on renewable energy, Blue Sun expects increasing interest in its Blue Sun Fusion biodiesel products along with stronger growth for the entire clean-tech industry. The company already takes advantage of

Radiant Technologies enriches Microsoft Dynamics NAV with graphically rich, intuitive, highly actionable reports on business results.



For More Information

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www.microsoft.com

For more information about Blue Sun products and services, call (303) 865-7700 or visit the Web site at:

www.gobluesun.com

For more information about Radiant Technologies products and services, call (858) 558-5955 or visit the Web site at:

www.thesunishining.com

the technology to thrive through shifting business requirements. "With Microsoft Dynamics NAV, we've become an extremely efficient, lean operation," says Washburn. "We know it also has the flexibility to scale to the substantial growth we are preparing for today."

For Blue Sun, that renewed growth is likely to include international expansion, which means the company will be able to take full advantage of the multilanguage, multicurrency, and multisite capabilities of Microsoft Dynamics NAV. As growth accelerates and the Blue Sun Fusion brand becomes more broadly available and appreciated by consumers, the solution's business intelligence and reporting capabilities will continue to play a critical role in executives' ability to take the company in the right direction.

Additional Resources

- [Learn how Microsoft Dynamics NAV can provide better insight in changing business conditions](#)
- [Review Microsoft Dynamics NAV customer success stories](#)
- [Visit Microsoft Dynamics NAV communities](#)

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

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