



## Microsoft Dynamics Customer Solution Case Study



### Overview

**Country or Region:** United States

**Industry:** Education

### Customer Profile

Located in Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania, Bloomsburg University's College of Business offers 1,500 students degree programs in concentrations from accounting to marketing.

### Business Situation

The College of Business strives to provide students with experience that will help them find careers in their industry. But faculty realized it needed a new model of teaching to help promote this goal.

### Solution

The College of Business partnered with the Microsoft Dynamics Academic Alliance to implement Microsoft® Business Solutions–Great Plains® 8.0, now a part of Microsoft Dynamics™.

### Benefits

- Provides students with competitive advantage in the workplace
- Increases faculty collaboration
- Receives prestigious award, attracts students and faculty

## Business Software Gives Students Workplace Advantages, Faculty Receives Honor

“Microsoft Dynamics GP helped us stimulate the students ... We have to continue to bring technology into the classroom to help prepare our students for new opportunities in the professional world.”

*Dr. Al Fundaburk, Professor of Office Information Systems, Bloomsburg University College of Business*

The Bloomsburg University College of Business strives to provide its students with relevant course material to prepare them for positions in real-world organizations. The College of Business partnered with the Microsoft Dynamics Academic Alliance to implement Microsoft® Business Solutions–Great Plains® 8.0, now a part of Microsoft Dynamics™. Faculty then designed a course around the software to help students gain experience with business management systems and prepare for the technologically advanced workplace. Faculty showed strong teamwork, and the College of Business received a Pinnacle Award for Excellence in Education from Microsoft Dynamics, an honor that will help the college of business attract future students and staff. After strong results with Great Plains 8.0, the College of Business upgraded to Microsoft Dynamics GP 9.0 and implemented the newer software in its courses.



“Through the use of Microsoft Great Plains, students were taught how a decision would reverberate through a business system with multiple transactions.”

Dr. Bill Neese, Professor of Marketing,  
Bloomsburg University College of Business

## Situation

Located in Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania, Bloomsburg University is a four-year public university that offers its 8,000 students 63 undergraduate programs and 18 graduate degree programs. The college also offers more than 40 additional concentrations and minors to its students, and is one of 14 colleges in the statewide education system.

One of Bloomsburg’s largest programs, the College of Business, offers 1,500 business students degree programs in accounting, finance, management, marketing, and business information systems. The College of Business is accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), an association that focuses on continuous improvement and refinement cycles. All of the 40 faculty members in the College of Business meet the AACSB accreditation standards.

The College of Business prepares students to meet or exceed expectations when they reach professional positions in industry. The faculty members focus on teaching effective communication skills, disciplinary competence, use of technology, problem-solving, diversity, and ethics.

As the Bloomsburg University College of Business was preparing to undergo AACSB accreditation, faculty, including the Dean of the College of Business at that time, Dr. David Long, began to re-examine the departmental structure that Bloomsburg University’s College of Business had been using for many years. Dr. John Grandzol, Professor of Management, recalls the situation, “As we were going through the accreditation process, it became evident that perhaps the classic College of Business structure—a departmental structure—wasn’t giving our students the best picture of the way business really works now. There’s a core of 12 business courses but there wasn’t a lot

of interaction among the faculty or among the classes.”

The College of Business appointed a team of faculty composed of one member from each of the business departments—Marketing, Management, Finance, Information Systems, and Accounting—to explore alternative structures that might more closely reflect the way these disciplines align and interact in the commercial sector. In an innovative approach, the team began by researching business management software systems and examining ways the College of Business could integrate the systems into the curriculum, perhaps even structuring course offerings around the software.

As part of their research, faculty members attended professional conferences, such as Microsoft Convergence. “We spent a year studying and attending conferences sponsored by PeopleSoft, Oracle, SAP, and Microsoft,” says Grandzol.

The multidepartment team also talked with faculty at other universities, investigating the successes and failures of business management software systems in the education sector. “We wanted to look at ways the College of Business could use software to facilitate faculty interaction and simulate the different disciplines working together. Our goal was to show our students what a real-time, modern, global business process looks like,” offers Al Fundaburk, Professor of Office Information Systems and team member.

## Solution

The College of Business partnered with the Microsoft Dynamics Academic Alliance and implemented Microsoft® Business Solutions–Great Plains® 8.0, now a part of Microsoft Dynamics™, in spring 2006.

“It was an extremely rewarding experience for us to work with the Microsoft Dynamics

“Much like a private business, the college needs visibility to grow and attract new talent, and Microsoft Dynamics GP and the Microsoft Dynamics Academic Alliance helped us get there.”

Dr. John Grandzol, Professor of Management,  
Bloomsburg University College of Business

Academic Alliance,” says Grandzol. “The Microsoft Dynamics Academic Alliance opened doors that the College of Business would have never been able to open.”

#### **Training and Support**

In addition to the software, the Microsoft Dynamics Academic Alliance also provides training, technical support, networking opportunities, and access to a curriculum repository. The College of Business faculty took full advantage of the online training courses, developing a training schedule for both technical and business faculty members.

“In Microsoft Great Plains, the Microsoft Dynamics Academic Alliance provided the right solution for Bloomsburg University’s College of Business,” says Grandzol. “Their technical support and training for our users ensured that we could implement the systems quickly and begin using them.”

#### **Introduction to Supply Chain Management**

Rather than introducing students to Microsoft Great Plains as part of an existing course, staff members designed a new course around the software that was consistent with their new model of teaching.

The new course, Introduction to Supply Chain Management, is a survey class with a one-hour lab, where students perform real-time decision analysis. A limited group of 16 hand-picked students participated in the original class, offered spring 2006. The students broke into four groups of four—with one student each from the four disciplines: Accounting, Marketing, Information Systems, and Operations Management. The four teams functioned like independent businesses, with each student contributing expertise in a particular area.

Likewise, four professors were involved in teaching this new course: Dr. Chuck Russo from Accounting, Dr. Bill Neese from Marketing, Dr. Al Fundaburk from Information Systems, and Dr. John Grandzol from Operations Management. “The four of us worked together to develop a syllabus and teaching plan that would demonstrate the capabilities of Microsoft Great Plains,” adds Neese.

“We developed a course that would touch on product sourcing, supply, transformation, accounting, money flows, information system requirements, and customer relationship management,” adds Grandzol. “Our goal was to present a fully integrated business curriculum in which business disciplines work together in continuous improvement and focus on systems-oriented processes.”

#### **Data Flows with Microsoft Dynamics Great Plains**

In the course, students used the following Microsoft Great Plains modules: Financial Management, Analytics, and Distribution. The Microsoft Great Plains system was populated with real business data from a Microsoft partner and hosted on the College of Business servers. Neese adds, “Through the use of Microsoft Great Plains, students were taught how a decision would reverberate through a business system with multiple transactions.”

For example, students explored how decisions intended to optimize customer retention might cause problems for operations in terms of quality levels. And then perhaps those operational issues required technology or equipment, which could overload the information system, or cause financing issues. For the first time, their coursework spanned organizational boundaries, presenting an entire process and allowing students to follow the flow of data through the entire supply chain.

Students also performed budget planning in Microsoft Great Plains with the Financial Management module, exporting data to Microsoft Office Excel® and creating PivotTables and other reports. The Accounting professor taught students about the different types of accounting transactions and how to create applicable reports in Microsoft Great Plains using the Analytics module.

In the Information Systems portion of the class, students were given an overview of the entire business process scheme, exploring the ways that Microsoft Great Plains facilitated data flows and information creation across different processes. Finally, the marketing professor used the Distribution Management module to teach students about demand and inventory profiles and how those flow into the customer relationship management issues.

Students were responsible for weekly journals where they could list what aspects of the course were useful, as well as system issues or transitional problems among faculty members. "From our perspective, we were delivering a new and unique way of teaching," says Neese. "We relied on the students to help us identify what was or wasn't working."

#### **Future Goals with Microsoft Dynamics**

As with any business, the College of Business has plans to keep its systems current and recognizes the value of extending system functionality. At the end of the spring 2006 semester, the College of Business upgraded from Microsoft Business Solutions–Great Plains 8.0 to Microsoft Dynamics GP 9.0.

"We're now using Microsoft Dynamics GP 9.0 in our Accounting Information Systems course, and we plan to push modules of Microsoft Dynamics GP into more specific applications in the Accounting and

Operations Management courses," says Grandzol.

When the College of Business offers the Introduction to Supply Chain Management course again in fall 2007, it will feature an upgraded decision analysis lab. Plans include additional business management software, including Microsoft Dynamics CRM as a software tool for Marketing, and the Microsoft Business Portal module in Microsoft Dynamics GP for high-level Operations and Project Management courses.

"The Business Portal module will support our graduate programs by supporting access to company data from a virtual company for students in our Managerial Decision Making courses and other MBA classes such as Operations Management," says Grandzol.

Grandzol adds, "The long-term strategy is to evolve a Supply Chain Management concentration, which consists of courses from all the different disciplines that already exist. But, they'll be enhanced with Microsoft Dynamics GP."

#### **Benefits**

Bloomsburg University College of Business faculty couldn't be more pleased with the Microsoft Dynamics GP business management solution and the Microsoft Dynamics Academic Alliance partnership. Not only are students at a greater advantage for positions in business and industry, but they also gain early access to pertinent technology to help further their prospective careers. Faculty have increased their teamwork and collaboration, encouraging the university to integrate more of its curriculum. Winning the Pinnacle Award for Excellence in Education during Microsoft Convergence 2006 has also helped Bloomsburg University College of Business attract more students and faculty.

### **Leads Students to Advantages in the Workplace**

Microsoft Business Solutions–Great Plains business management solution helps give students an advantage after graduation, providing them with real experience and a fundamental understanding of the entire supply chain. Other student benefits include exposure to business processes, firsthand experience with interdepartmental communications, and access to technology they may not have access to otherwise. Now, with the upgrade to Microsoft Dynamics GP, student preparedness for the real world pushes even farther forward.

“Microsoft Dynamics GP helped us stimulate the students and give them a larger picture of the world of business,” says Fundaburk. “We have to continue to bring technology into the classroom to help prepare our students for new opportunities in the professional world.”

Students’ weekly journal entries consistently confirmed high interest in course material, desire to work in interdisciplinary teams, and willingness to immerse themselves in new technology. Actual grades on the variety of interdisciplinary assignments were likewise high regardless of which instructor handled the topic. Students now see opportunities to work for global companies, and not just local organizations. In fact, many of the students who completed the spring 2006 Introduction to Supply Chain Management course have already landed jobs in larger business organizations. One student sent an e-mail to Dr. Grandzol just after the semester ended from his new position in supplier management, relating how his experience in this course landed him the job.

### **Encourages Faculty Collaboration**

Collaboration among faculty has grown stronger, with College of Business faculty members working together to develop new goals and strategies to help the students gain

real-world experience. For some professors, the teaching model has provided an opportunity to learn about technology and to work on course development with colleagues in other disciplines.

The College of Business has a long-term plan to combine Management, Marketing, Operations, Project Management, and Information Systems classes and put them together as a Supply Chain Concentration—with the use of Microsoft Dynamics software, including Microsoft Dynamics GP, Microsoft Dynamics CRM, and the Business Portal module in Microsoft Dynamics GP.

“Drafting a strategic plan like this is quite an accomplishment,” says Grandzol.

“Encouraging faculty and administration to look at possibilities for business curriculum and other growth is a huge benefit, and we now have the support we need in professional development and training to accomplish our goals.”

### **Receives Prestigious Award, Attracts Students and Faculty**

Receiving the Pinnacle Award for Excellence in Education during Microsoft Convergence 2006 was a tremendous benefit to the Bloomsburg University College of Business.

The Bloomsburg University College of Business can now attract more students and faculty thanks to the prestige associated with the Pinnacle Award for Excellence in Education. College of Business faculty members were able to network with Microsoft partners to help open up new opportunities. “Much like a private business, the college needs visibility to grow and attract new talent, and Microsoft Dynamics GP and the Microsoft Dynamics Academic Alliance helped us get there,” Grandzol says.

## For More Information

For more information about Microsoft products and services, call the Microsoft Sales Information Center at (800) 426-9400. In Canada, call the Microsoft Canada Information Centre at (877) 568-2495. Customers who are deaf or hard-of-hearing can reach Microsoft text telephone (TTY/TDD) services at (800) 892-5234 in the United States or (905) 568-9641 in Canada. Outside the 50 United States and Canada, please contact your local Microsoft subsidiary. To access information using the World Wide Web, go to: [www.microsoft.com](http://www.microsoft.com)

For more information about Bloomsburg University products and services, call (570) 389-4000 or visit the Web site at: [www.bloomu.edu](http://www.bloomu.edu)

## 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](http://www.microsoft.com/dynamics)

### Software and Services

- Microsoft Dynamics
  - Microsoft Business Solutions–Great Plains 8.0
  - Microsoft Dynamics GP 9.0
- Microsoft Office System
  - Microsoft Office Excel
- Microsoft Servers
  - Microsoft SQL Server

### Hardware

- IBM x346 system