



# Plastics Manufacturer Protects IT Investments, Boosts Efficiency with E-Learning

**Microsoft Corporation**



## Microsoft Dynamics Services Customer Solution Case Study



## Plastics Manufacturer Protects IT Investments, Boosts Efficiency with E-Learning

### Overview

**Country or Region:** United States

**Industry:** Manufacturing—Plastics

### Customer Profile

Founded in 1968 and based in North Port, Florida, King Plastic manufactures a wide array of polymer products for worldwide distribution.

### Business Situation

Working with Microsoft® Gold Certified Partner Tribridge to upgrade to the latest versions of Microsoft Dynamics® GP and Microsoft Dynamics CRM, King Plastic wanted to boost user adoption without scaling support costs.

### Solution

The company enrolled in the Business Ready Enhancement Plan and Microsoft Software Assurance for Microsoft Dynamics, which provides access to CustomerSource, an on-demand e-learning resource.

### Benefits

- Enables predictable IT support costs
- Increases productivity
- Improves capacity for change management

“Because CustomerSource is so easy to access and use, it encourages our employees to take initiative and empowers them to quickly find their own answers.”

Karen Navas, IT Manager, King Plastic

King Plastic is a leading manufacturer of polymer sheets, slabs, and massive shapes used in applications ranging from marine craft to food service products. Seeking to centralize accounting and financial reporting, streamline its manufacturing operations, and improve customer service, King Plastic worked with Microsoft® Gold Certified Partner Tribridge to implement Microsoft Dynamics® GP and Microsoft Dynamics CRM. To maximize its return on investment in these solutions, King Plastic enrolled in the Business Ready Enhancement Plan and Software Assurance for Microsoft Dynamics. Through these offerings, the company gains access to CustomerSource, an online training and technical support resource. King Plastic uses the knowledge base and e-learning tools on the CustomerSource Web site to flatten IT support costs, increase productivity, and improve change management.



“CustomerSource helps us get the most value day-to-day out of the Microsoft Dynamics solutions that we use.”

Karen Navas, IT Manager, King Plastic

## Situation

Located in North Port, Florida, King Plastic is a leading manufacturer of the expansive polymer sheets used in many of today's high-performance watercrafts. The company also uses its expertise in plastics manufacturing to provide source materials for a range of consumer and commercial-grade applications, from outdoor cabinetry to industrial piping.

More than 150 employees work at the 150,000-square-foot King Plastic facility, which houses its corporate offices and a manufacturing plant that operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. To better serve the needs of customers on the West Coast, King Plastic is evaluating whether to open an additional warehouse and distribution center in Medford, Oregon.

When the company first worked with Microsoft® Gold Certified Partner Tribridge to implement Microsoft Dynamics® GP, King Plastic focused on migrating financial data from a collection of spreadsheets. Microsoft Dynamics GP helped the company to better manage its chart of accounts and improve financial reporting capabilities.

Over the next several years, King Plastic expanded Microsoft Dynamics GP to more roles within the organization, working with Tribridge to tailor the Inventory Control, Supply Chain Management, and Sales Order Processing modules to fit specific King Plastic business processes. “We've transitioned from using spreadsheets to track inventory and manage our production processes to managing all of our critical business data in Microsoft Dynamics GP,” says Karen Navas, IT Manager at King Plastic. “This has been a huge shift for us in terms of how we operate.”

By using Microsoft Dynamics GP as an end-to-end business management system, King Plastic boosted operational efficiency and

increased flexibility. In fact, the use of a bill of materials for each product, which is automatically generated in Microsoft Dynamics GP, has helped the company cut production lead-times by 100 percent. Recently, Tribridge helped King Plastic upgrade to Microsoft Dynamics GP 10.0 to take advantage of the application's new role-tailored user interface and increased collaboration capabilities.

King Plastic uses Microsoft Dynamics CRM alongside Microsoft Dynamics GP to track sales leads and manage profiles for its growing list of customers. With its recent upgrade to Microsoft Dynamics CRM 4.0, which Tribridge also facilitated, the company plans to take advantage of new tools for customizing workflows, managing customer contact and service delivery, and creating and executing marketing campaigns. “By moving to the latest version of Microsoft Dynamics CRM, we'll be able to take a leap forward in the way we serve our customers and sell our products,” says Navas.

Providing more employees in the organization with access to innovative business management tools is a priority at King Plastic. To achieve this goal, company leaders looked for a way to extend Microsoft Dynamics GP and Microsoft Dynamics CRM to more employees without increasing support costs.

## Solution

To promote rapid employee adoption of the software and reduce training and support costs, Navas enrolled King Plastic in the Business Ready Enhancement Plan for Microsoft Dynamics GP. To support the company's growing installation of Microsoft Dynamics CRM, Navas also enrolled King Plastic in Microsoft Software Assurance for Microsoft Dynamics CRM.

Through both of these offerings, IT personnel and line-of-business staff at King Plastic gain



The King Plastic offices and manufacturing facility employ 150 people

access to CustomerSource, an online, password-protected resource for employee training and technical support. “I knew about CustomerSource from my previous experience in IT, so I decided to test it out,” says Navas. “When I saw how quickly CustomerSource helped one of our accounting employees answer a question about Microsoft Dynamics GP, I knew it was an essential tool for King Plastic.”

The Business Ready Enhancement Plan and Software Assurance increase the value of Microsoft Dynamics by providing employees with:

- Unlimited online training.
- Access to CustomerSource and the knowledge base.
- Extensive documentation.
- Communities of people who use Microsoft Dynamics.

#### **Taking Advantage of Self-Help Resources**

Employees at King Plastic frequently visit the CustomerSource Web site to find answers, post questions, and explore application features in greater depth. By providing on-demand access to training materials and a searchable knowledge base that reflects real-world experience, CustomerSource helps employees across the organization increase productivity.

For example, when the company recently hired a new controller, he took on the task of streamlining internal financial-approval processes. As a new user of Microsoft Dynamics GP, the controller encountered a problem that he was unable to resolve on his own. So, he simply logged on to CustomerSource, searched the knowledge base, and found the answer he needed. “I couldn’t believe it,” Navas recalls. “Here was a new employee, someone who was completely new to Microsoft Dynamics GP, and he used the self-help resources on CustomerSource to get his question answered and move forward.”

#### **Preparing Training Materials**

“I used to dread preparing for training sessions,” says Navas. “It would take an enormous amount of time and effort to gather and sort through all of the information I needed.” Navas can now download user guides and updated help files from CustomerSource in the course of preparing training materials, which helps her better anticipate and address employee needs and questions. In addition, because CustomerSource provides extensive online training, including in-depth e-learning sessions on specific topics, Navas can confidently point employees who want additional guidance to these self-paced resources. “Using CustomerSource saves me a substantial amount of time and helps me dive deeper into the most critical parts of my training,” Navas says. “With help from CustomerSource, I actually enjoy putting training sessions together now.”

#### **Managing Transition**

King Plastic relies on CustomerSource as a critical part of its change management strategy as the company continues to expand its use of Microsoft Dynamics solutions. The company takes full advantage of the breadth and depth of the resources available through the CustomerSource Web site to solidify IT



King Plastic manufactures polymers used in a wide array of applications, including outdoor cabinetry

“King Plastic doesn’t need us to handle everyday IT service issues, but we were still able to work with them to define their IT strategy and provide the services to help them get there.”

Lu Ann George, Customer Service Manager, Tribridge

planning around upgrades and long-term infrastructure optimization efforts.

“By downloading the installation guides for the latest versions of Microsoft Dynamics GP and Microsoft Dynamics CRM through CustomerSource, I was much better prepared to manage two upgrades,” notes Navas.

“And, by routinely tapping into CustomerSource, I’m able to stay current on these solutions so that I can optimize the value we get from them over time.”

By helping King Plastic define and execute its IT strategy, CustomerSource plays a role in limiting the company’s need for external IT support. This helps King Plastic maintain predictable IT support costs. Further, it strengthens the company’s partnership with Tribridge, ultimately enabling Tribridge to engage King Plastic in a more consultative relationship. “King Plastic doesn’t need us to handle everyday IT service issues, but we were still able to work with them to define their IT strategy and provide the services to

help them get there,” says Lu Ann George, Customer Service Manager at Tribridge.

## Benefits

By accessing CustomerSource through the Business Ready Enhancement Plan and Software Assurance for Microsoft Dynamics, King Plastic has gained better control over IT costs while boosting employee productivity. These services enable the company to cost-effectively expand the reach of its Microsoft Dynamics solutions without driving up support costs. In addition, King Plastic uses CustomerSource to enhance its IT planning and change management efforts.

### Enables Predictable IT Support Costs

With access to solution documentation, online training, and a searchable knowledge base through CustomerSource, IT at King Plastic is more self-sufficient, which helps the company maintain predictable IT support costs. “I have a good idea of what we can handle, given the resources I’m able to draw from by using CustomerSource,” says Navas. “This helps me budget and plan for some of the more time-intensive and technically challenging projects that add real business value.”

### Increases Productivity

Employees at King Plastic frequently turn to the CustomerSource Web site to seek out answers to their questions and learn more about the versatility of the Microsoft Dynamics solutions they use every day. Says Navas, “Because CustomerSource is so easy to access and use, it encourages our employees to take initiative and empowers them to quickly find their own answers.” In addition, Navas attributes substantial efficiency gains in preparing employee training sessions to her own use of the CustomerSource Web site. “I save approximately 20 hours each training session through my use of CustomerSource,” Navas 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 King Plastic products and services, call (941) 493-5502 or visit the Web site at: [www.kingplastic.com](http://www.kingplastic.com)

For more information about Tribridge products and services, call (877) 744-1360 or visit the Web site at: [www.tribridge.com](http://www.tribridge.com)

## Improves Capacity for Change Management

CustomerSource plays a central role in helping King Plastic execute on its long-term strategy, supporting a smooth transition from rudimentary IT toward an optimized and fully integrated, enterprise-grade IT infrastructure. The company relies on access to detailed product road map information through CustomerSource to help inform and guide this strategy. "CustomerSource helps us get the most value day-to-day out of the Microsoft Dynamics solutions that we use," says Navas. "But, we also use it to add structure to our long-term planning around these solutions and how they fit into our larger IT network."

## 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 Dynamics CRM
  - Microsoft Dynamics GP
- Services
  - Business Ready Enhancement Plan
  - Microsoft Software Assurance

### Partners

- Tribridge



### **About Tribridge**

Tribridge is an IT services firm that delivers and supports technology, business management and core infrastructure solutions for organizations spanning diverse industries. Tribridge helps customers strategically leverage IT investments to become more productive, profitable, competitive and secure through proven methodologies, process optimization and industry best practices. We are dedicated to building a community in which organizations derive long-term business value from practical solutions that guarantee customer success and maximum return on investment. Headquartered in Tampa, Tribridge has customers, offices and team members across the U.S. and is the recipient of numerous awards, including the 2008 Microsoft Dynamics Worldwide Partner of the Year.

### **Contact Tribridge**

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