IMPROVING THE VISIBILITY OF YOUR SUPPLY CHAIN
SEEING WHAT MATTERS

ALIGNING SUPPLY CHAIN PROCESSES WITH BUSINESS STRATEGY

EFFECTIVE PLANNING AND DECISION-MAKING

ALLOCATING RESOURCES
GAINING FULL VISIBILITY AND CONTROL OF SUPPLY CHAIN OPERATIONS

As a supply chain professional you need to have complete visibility of your complex supply chain operations to maintain control and alignment with the business strategy of your company. Without a centralized, current view that presents actionable information about processes, the movement of goods, and warehouse and distribution operations, it is next to impossible to make smart decisions and introduce the right changes to optimize the supply chain network you’re in. Without granular as well as high-level visibility, it is also difficult to enable people and processes in the supply chain to support customer service-level commitments and prepare for tomorrow’s operational challenges.
CASE 1: Aligning Processes with Business Strategy

**Issue**
The leadership team in a global organization noticed gaps between the company’s vision and strategy, its supply chain processes, and the way its technology systems worked. While these systems helped to perform critical tasks in supply chain operations, it had become difficult to adjust them as the company underwent change and growth. Similarly, revising ingrained processes and practices for changed requirements looked like an overwhelming change management task. These limitations also impacted the company’s ability to plan and direct its growth into new markets and to collaborate effectively with its supply chain business partners.

**Problem**
Executives updated business strategy in response to shifts in the market, but, when it came to supply chain operations, they could not translate these changes into action. In consequence, they were unable to rely on the ability of supply chain operations to follow the company’s direction. Supply chain managers, logistics managers, and warehouse supervisors also were unable to bring their best-practice expertise to work on behalf of the company, because they lacked an easy way to run the most effective process flows on the systems in use at the time.

**Remedy**
Having implemented and integrated Microsoft Dynamics AX 2012 with ColumbusDistribution, company managers gained the ability to perform business process modeling. By doing so, they now can define and implement the processes and practices that make most sense for the business, and closely fit the ERP infrastructure to the supply chain’s evolving requirements. They can document and propagate best practices by recording the most effective process flows and making them directly available to employees as they work with the solutions. The company uses the ColumbusDistribution multi-country and cross-organizational capabilities to support its international growth and develop profitable collaboration with its supply chain partners. When the company implemented a new warehouse management system, it made use of ColumbusDistribution to plan the most efficient deployment and integration.
Benefits

The company optimized processes across its organization and value chain, adjusting operations to reduce the costs of storing and handling goods, and to meet customer service-level commitments more effectively. Today, as the COO and company leadership steer the company’s domestic and international growth, they rely on highly productive processes running smoothly and consistently on a flexible ERP infrastructure that can adjust to the company's direction. Employees in the company’s warehouse and logistics teams access best-practices guidance that allows them to perform such tasks as receiving, put-away, cross-docking, picking, packing, and shipping efficiently and with great accuracy. Customers enjoy service quality at a steady, high level, and supply chain partners find that engaging with the company is an efficient, productive experience. The implementation of the new warehouse management system took almost 20 percent less time than it would have done before the company began working with ColumbusDistribution.
CASE 2:
Effective Planning and Decision-Making

Issue
A successful company with complex distribution and supply chain operations needed to ensure that strategic planning, decision-making, and forecasting by executives and managers were sound, timely, and reliable. Without a way to include supply chain planning and execution in reporting and performance management, the success of the company’s strategy was at risk.

Problem
Company executives did not have within easy reach the tools to help them understand, control, and shape supply chain events. Therefore, the complete business impact of supply chain activities was almost impossible to ascertain. Logistics and distribution managers had an understanding of the processes and desired process outcomes within their domains, but were not able to bring about their success within the context of the company’s objectives.

Remedy
Implementing Microsoft Dynamics AX 2012 with ColumbusDistribution, the company gave decision-makers and planners at all levels of the organization capabilities tailored to their roles. From executives to warehouse workers, an integrated, centralized technology infrastructure offers real-time, meaningful information regarding all of the operations and performance. Specifically, the Dashboard of Task Management provides logistics supervisors and supply chain managers with meaningful reporting to specifically assess and manage details of warehousing operations.
The COO and Supply Chain Director rely on the ERP system together with Columbus Distribution to inform confident planning, forecasting, and business management. The logistics manager and warehouse supervisor conduct reliable advanced planning to optimize the usage of the workforce and achieve even better customer-service levels. Logistics and supply chain managers proactively pursue improvements in the management of operational performance, warehouse tasks, volumes, and waves.

As managers define new benchmarks for efficiency and productivity, they guide supply chain operations along a path of continuous improvement. As a consequence of the use of pervasive insight and decision-driving capabilities, the company also succeeds in improving its margins and maintaining growing revenues.
CASE 3: Allocating Resources

Issue
A large European company tasked its distribution and warehouse managers with improving the resource efficiency and productivity of the operations of which they were in charge. The COO and other executives felt there were rich opportunities for making people and processes more successful. They also wanted to ensure that customer service-level commitments were incorporated into all of the organization’s supply chain operations, so the fulfillment of promises to customers would never be questionable.

Problem
Logistics, warehouse, and distribution managers found it difficult to create an environment that allowed their teams to work at optimal productivity. They also were not able to anticipate the outgoing and incoming flow of goods, which meant resource planning was less than effective. Warehouse and distribution workers, on the other hand, often wished for a more effective way to contribute their skills and experience to the success of the operation.

Remedy
Following the deployment of ColumbusDistribution, warehouse managers use Order Release Management, Wave Planning and Task Management to plan customer deliveries and related workflows based on priorities, timelines, and available resources. They schedule the picking of orders for best efficiency and automatically assign tasks to workers based on priorities and available skills. Logistics managers can easily ascertain that the warehouse teams take items to the dock in a timely manner and are ready to process arriving containers. Warehouse workers can combine multiple order lines for easier handling and identification, and assemble pallets flexibly with differently-dimensioned cartons.
Benefits

This company now allocates resources, optimizes warehouse throughput, and achieves performance improvements based on timely insight into applicable service-level commitments, timelines, and priorities. Warehouse and distribution employees play a key role in making warehouse operations and the movement of goods optimally productive. The company notes significant improvements in both performance and the satisfaction of logistics and warehouse workers, who now find it easier to make a productive contribution. Without adding staff to warehouse operations, the company achieved an increase in warehouse workforce capacity. At the same time, the costs for packaging and handling goods decreased. In addition, turnover among warehouse and distribution workers has gone down, leading to further cost reductions as a result of less recruiting, hiring, and onboarding of new employees.
Optimizing the Supply Chain with Practical Insight

ColumbusDistribution enables companies to move forward confidently with complete visibility. Across all aspects of supply chain management, planning, and execution, ColumbusDistribution provides relevant information to facilitate insightful planning and efficient operation. Companies can flexibly define and refine the processes that drive their supply and value chains, and enhance them by using reliable, real-time information that meets the needs of key roles. They can easily globalize and extend their supply chain to share resources and information across organizations and channels. ColumbusDistribution integrates with and extends Microsoft Dynamics AX 2012, the leading ERP system known for its flexibility, ease of use, and outstanding cost-to-benefit ratio.

The companies we discuss in our cases use several different solutions from ColumbusDistribution:

- Warehouse Management, including Wave Planning and Task Management
- Inventory Management, including Reservation and Allocations
- Supply Chain Design, which includes RapidValue to facilitate business process optimization
- Supply Chain Integration, which offers a framework to simplify integration of third-party systems

For more information about ColumbusDistribution, visit www.columbusglobal.com.
RapidValue is a business process modeling tool built inside Microsoft Dynamics AX to help you deliver more value from your ERP implementation. Columbus has taken industry best practice processes, from our experience of over 6,000 implementations, and built them directly into the solution.

Around 80% of business processes within an industry are standard from one organization to the next. We have defined and visualized these processes, which enables us to focus on the areas which are your competitive differentiators. This helps you streamline your business processes across the organization for efficiency, speed and to adopt best practices.

When combined with the SureStep+ implementation methodology it ensures that you achieve a complete end to end solution with a faster and smoother implementation, increased ROI, lower cost of ownership and documented processes.
ABOUT COLUMBUS:
Columbus is the preferred business partner for ambitious companies worldwide within the food, retail and manufacturing industries. We exceed 20 years of experience and 6,000 successful business cases, and we’re proud to offer our customers solid industry know-how, high performance solutions and global reach.

‘Columbus’ is a part of the registered trademark ‘Columbus IT’