



Microsoft Customer Solution

Case study

Microsoft Business Solutions—Great Plains

MuscleMaster.com Expands Critical Mass, Increases Revenue by 368 Percent in One Year

The implementation of a business software solution that integrates with existing e-commerce and fulfillment systems has enabled online fitness site MuscleMaster.com to handle \$8 million (USD) in sales with just five customer service representatives.

With the savings generated by the Microsoft® Business Solutions—Great Plains® solution, MuscleMaster.com allocated the extra resources to servicing new strategic partners. As a result, they increased the amount of time spent working with customers. CEO Nick Chunias believes this is a major reason why their sales grew from \$2.2 million in 2001 to \$8.1 million in 2002.



CUSTOMER PROFILE	BUSINESS SITUATION	SOLUTION	BENEFITS
MuscleMaster.com has grown rapidly in the online health and fitness arena. By utilizing state-of-the-art technology, MuscleMaster.com offers extensive information, products, and services for people interested in exercise, weight loss, and nutrition. MuscleMaster.com is located in Southborough, Massachusetts, USA.	As a profitable and growing company, MuscleMaster.com found that their old business solution no longer could handle their high transaction volume and satisfy their reporting needs. They needed a solution that would integrate their existing e-commerce and fulfillment systems and support their growing online business.	Microsoft® Business Solutions—Great Plains® was implemented, in part because of the power of its Integration Manager to integrate financial management with other applications, including Web applications, at a low cost.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saved 500+ labor hours per month • Payback in less than six months • Revenue increase of 368 percent in one year • Integration of financial capabilities with other applications • Staff redeployed from manual to strategic roles

"We understood the importance of choosing the right technology and the right implementation partner. Microsoft Business Solutions and DataSys came through with flying colors. The automated technology has allowed us to expand our distribution channels and grow our business. What's more, it has given us a decided edge over our competitors."

Nick Chunias

Chief Executive Officer
MuscleMaster.com

Situation

Founded in 1996 and headquartered in Southborough, Massachusetts, MuscleMaster.com is a leading online health and fitness superstore. MuscleMaster.com has built an outstanding reputation within the health and fitness community by offering free educational electronic newsletters, extensive fitness and nutrition content on their Web site, and industry-leading customer service. The Web site provides one-stop shopping for vitamins, nutritional supplements, fitness equipment, and services geared toward individuals interested in an active and healthy lifestyle.

The company is further able to expand their influence in the industry through a unique strategic partnership program. This partnership allows other sites to use MuscleMaster.com's extensive product, image, and article databases. Coupled with their leading edge order management and fulfillment technology, MuscleMaster.com provides a seamless out-sourcing solution for these partners.

As MuscleMaster.com sales volume started to rise, processing with their old software slowed to a crawl. Another hurdle was the need to reenter every order into both the accounting software and the company's fulfillment system.

Solution

After a thorough review, Nick Chunias, Chief Executive Officer, selected Microsoft® Business Solutions—Great Plains® as the solution to help the company achieve their aggressive growth plans. In addition, Microsoft Business Solutions provides Integration Manager—a powerful tool used to safely and easily integrate with other crucial applications at a low cost.

With the help of DataSys Corporation, MuscleMaster.com's Web development

team created functionality within their Web site, based on Microsoft Active Server Page technology, to export orders into a Microsoft SQL Server™ table. DataSys then used Integration Manager to create a routine to import the tables and convert them into sales orders within Microsoft Business Solutions.

Integration Functionality

DataSys developed functionality that moves the orders from Microsoft Business Solutions to a third-party order tracking solution, Aristo Parcel Shipping System (APSS) from Kewill. This extension, known as the Tracking System Integration, begins with a Microsoft Business Solutions customization that separates international orders from those within the United States, an important distinction required by the fulfillment system.

The tracking system integration also prints a pick ticket for each order that includes an identifying bar code. Users then simply push a button that moves the orders to a separate database accessible to the fulfillment system. After the warehouse personnel pick the order, they scan the bar code, and the fulfillment system retrieves the sales order information from the database. The fulfillment system then populates the shipping information, prints a shipping label, and returns the tracking number and shipment history to Microsoft Business Solutions through an ODBC (open database connectivity) interface developed by DataSys.

Through this integration, customer service representatives can also view the shipping history of every order to determine current and historical shipping status. The customer service person is instantly linked via a Web browser to the shipping status of the selected order on the United Parcel Service Web site.

DataSys later developed Order Import Utility, a customization that imports orders from MuscleMaster.com's strategic

partners that sell through Yahoo! Shopping. This custom application reads the order files and writes them to a Microsoft SQL Server table to be processed as sales orders.

Benefits

Reduced Order Entry Effort

When MuscleMaster.com originally implemented the system, Chunias thought the company would save about 500 hours per month and that those savings would pay for the software and implementation costs in approximately six months. The software paid for itself in even less time and eliminated much of the manual order processing, allowing customer service personnel to focus on customer service rather than order entry.

Revenue Increase of 368 Percent in One Year

“Rather than reducing headcount, we allocated the extra resources to servicing new strategic partners, and we increased the amount of time spent working with customers; this is a major reason why our sales have grown from \$2.2 million (USD) in 2001 to \$8.1 million (USD) in 2002. Our representatives are happier too, because they are now focused on more analytical

tasks as we have virtually eliminated tedious data entry. Best of all, our automated approach has positioned us to handle future sales growth with far less than proportional increases in staffing,” Chunias says.

Integration Capabilities

Speaking of Microsoft Business Solutions integration capabilities, Chunias says, “We needed a system that would integrate financial applications with just about anything else, including our own Web site, strategic partners, Yahoo! Web sites, and shipping carriers.”

The Right Solution and Partners

Chunias has this to say about the selection of Microsoft Business Solutions and their reselling partner, DataSys. “This was a major investment for us: we understood the importance of choosing the right technology and the right implementation partner. Microsoft Business Solutions and DataSys came through with flying colors. The automated technology has allowed us to expand our distribution channels and grow our business. What’s more, it has given us a decided edge over our competitors.”

Microsoft Business Solutions offers a wide range of integrated, end-to-end business applications and services designed to help small, mid-market and corporate businesses become more connected with customers, employees, partners and suppliers.

For more information about Microsoft Business Solutions, go to:
<http://www.microsoft.com/BusinessSolutions>

Software and Services

Microsoft Business Solutions— Great Plains

- Financial Management
- Customization Tools
- Supply Chain Management

Independent Solution Vendor Aristo Parcel Shipping System

Partner

DataSys Corporation
Marlborough, Massachusetts, USA



For More Information

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For more information about MuscleMaster.com products and services, visit the Web site at:

<http://www.musclemaster.com/>

For more information about DataSys Corporation products and services, (508) 303-9490 or visit the Web site at:

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