



# Hitachi Solutions Managed Services enhances the capabilities, capacity, and skills of an already capable IT group

## SPECIFICATIONS

### Industry

- Manufacturing

### Managed Services

- Hitachi Solutions Managed Services — Global, flexible, 24x7 support

### Products

- Microsoft D365 F&O
- Microsoft D365 CE
- Microsoft D365 Sales
- Microsoft D365 Field Service
- Microsoft Power BI
- Microsoft Azure
- Hitachi Solutions Portal

### Managed Services Project

- 2018 - ongoing

### Language

- English

*After a massive unification of its ERP and CRM business systems to automate, streamline, and connect business operations, this large CNC manufacturer knew it needed to supplement its lean and mean IT department with cost-effective resources so it could be responsive to users and maximize the new system's productivity and efficiency benefits.*

## INTRODUCTION

Okuma America Corporation is the U.S.-based sales and service affiliate of Okuma Corporation, a world leading manufacturer of CNC (computer numeric control) machine tools, machine controls, and automation solutions. The company was founded in 1898 in Nagoya, Japan, and is the industry's only single-source provider of CNC machines, controls, drives, motors, encoders, and spindles. In 2014 Okuma launched the Okuma App Store, the industry's only centralized online marketplace for machine tool apps and related content. Along with its extensive distribution network (largest in the Americas) and partners, Okuma is committed to helping users gain competitive advantages through the open possibilities of machine tools today and into the future.

## CHALLENGE

Laser-focused on satisfying their customers, Okuma is committed to quality and innovation. However, over the years its business environment had grown to include more than 30 different systems. Aging, heavily customized, and lacking interoperability, the systems had become cumbersome to use, expensive to support, and hindered efficiency and customer service.

So to break down the silos that were limiting its ability to grow and innovate, members of the Okuma management team decided to modernize and move to the cloud with Microsoft Dynamics 365. The new solution unified Okuma's ERP and CRM platforms and connected the entire organization to intelligent applications and real-time data.

"We completely streamlined and automated our processes," said Mike Vassil, director of operations for Okuma America. "The result was a modern, interoperable system that accelerated efficiency, supported collaboration, and improved sales and service."

From sales to engineering to customer service to the warehouse to the back office, Okuma now has the visibility and insights it needs to optimize operations, improve compliance, drive revenue and growth, and better serve its customers.



Because of the sheer size and scope of the change, Okuma had turned to the manufacturing industry team at Hitachi Solutions to help them design and deploy the new solution. Hitachi Solutions brought the deep industry understanding, broad Microsoft technical expertise, and shared core values Okuma needed to ensure a smooth implementation and successful go live.

“Hitachi Solutions and Okuma America are both Japanese-owned companies with long legacies of quality, integrity, and excellence. Because of our similar corporate cultures and engrained values around urgency, commitment, and service, we were very like-minded in how we did business and were able to forge a familiar and comfortable working relationship,” said Mike.

## SUPPORT GOING FORWARD

Okuma knew it would need a support mechanism for after go-live. While extremely capable, the IT team was small. And because the D365 technology was new and they were an early adopter, they did not have the expertise in-house to perform the changes and upgrades needed to keep the system up to date and users happy.

“At the time, we only had three people available to focus on the new system and the pace of change from Microsoft was fast and furious,” said Mike. “We knew there was going to be an overwhelming amount of requests and adjustments and, while there were many things we could manage internally, we wouldn’t be able to sustain the volume on our own. And it didn’t make business sense for us to quadruple our team – there just wasn’t time or budget.”

So to ensure users were supported and customers getting the most value from the new solution, Okuma once again turned to Hitachi Solutions – this time to broaden and enhance the capabilities and expertise of its IT team with comprehensive managed services.

## MANAGED SERVICES SOLUTION


Okuma felt comfortable moving forward with Hitachi Solutions Managed Services because of the expertise and leadership demonstrated by the company and the trusted working partnership developed during the initial implementation.

“The Microsoft world was new for us so knowing Hitachi Solutions had experience across the entire Microsoft stack was invaluable. It was also great being able to get answers directly from someone who helped develop the solution,” said Mike. “But by far, the trust and understanding we had built up working together was comforting. Like an old married couple, we just got each other.”

Hitachi Solutions Managed Services now acts as an extension of the Okuma IT team by providing expert, dedicated system support 24/7, as well as by bringing highly-skilled global resources to the help desk. Working together seamlessly, they tackle the business-critical priorities that arise day to day including:

- Service requests & unplanned issues
- New functionality & system enhancements
- Application integrations
- Upgrades, fixes & patches
- Performance & diagnostics
- Release & source code management
- Reporting

With Hitachi Solutions Managed Services, Okuma IT is more efficient and productive. They are able to calmly and confidently answer the on-going demand from users, keep up with the speed of system improvements from Microsoft, and up-skill the team – all while ensuring optimized operations.



*“Hitachi Solutions Managed Services knows and understands the importance of our business system, what we’re doing, and where we are going as a company, which makes them a long-term, strategic partner. There are a million third-party companies out there trying to get our business, but none of them can replace the relationship we have with Hitachi Solutions.”*

*– Mike Vassil, Director of Operations,*

“Hitachi Solutions reduces my stress,” said Mike. “They know what they are doing and I have complete confidence in their ability to provide project management for large-scale upgrades and changes. They know us well and we work together like at well-oiled machine, staying in constant communication so there’s no duplication of effort. Often they initiate the projects because they get information from Microsoft even before we do.”

## **BENEFITS**

For Okuma, the biggest benefit of Hitachi Solutions Managed Services is that they are able to maintain a small, intimate internal staff with deep understanding of the business that can stay focused on strategic goals, while cost-effectively broadening and strengthening their bench to keep things up and running and staying ahead of the curve.

Hitachi Solutions is also a “learning tree,” able to help Okuma bridge their skill gaps. Because of our expertise and breadth of knowledge, we upskill and train them along the way — improving Okuma’s technical capabilities and capacity around D365 and other Microsoft products.

Okuma also appreciates the commitment and flexibility of Hitachi Solutions Managed Services. Said Mike, “During the pandemic Hitachi Solutions was ready, willing, and able to do whatever we needed to make sure we were ok. Not every partner would do that for you. The flexibility and sense of partnership and dedication we have for each other is rare and a real benefit in this day and age.

Other benefits of having Hitachi Solutions Managed Services as part of the team include:

- Reduced operational overhead, IT spend, and risks
- Ensured comprehensive, flexible, end-to-end coverage
- Access to a dedicated customer success manager and global team of certified support experts who can provide highly responsive coverage 24/7
- Ability to leverage the expertise of a premier Microsoft Gold Certified partner for quicker escalations and resolutions and faster deployments
- Maximized return on Microsoft investments

“Hitachi Solutions Managed Services has proven time and time again that they will do whatever is needed to ensure our success. They have even worked through an entire weekend to make sure we were ready for business after a substantial upgrade,” said Mike. “As we continue to adjust and tweak this new system to make it more efficient and effective, they give us the ability to make sure we get everything done — and that takes a lot of the pain away and makes all our lives easier.”

## **FUTURE GOALS**

Okuma plans to leverage its unified Microsoft D365 system to aggressively grow the business for long into the future and clearly recognizes the role managed services plays in helping them achieve this goal.

“We envision a robust business that continues to grow and grow and know we need Hitachi Solutions to help us in this capacity. They have demonstrated the value they bring to the company and it’s just a given that we need them as long as we have the system,” concluded Mike.