Hitachi Solutions Asia Pacific modernizes financial and procurement processes of digital services firm with Microsoft Dynamics 365

SPECIFICATIONS

Products
- Ground-to-Cloud migration
- Dynamics 365 Finance
- Dynamics 365 Supply Chain Management

Integration Points
- Bank integrations
- Salesforce

Number of Users
- 45 users
- 11 legal entities

Currently Deployed
- Malaysia
- Singapore
- Indonesia
- Thailand,
- Cambodia
- Philippines
- Sri Lanka
- Bangladesh
- South Korea

The media and information services giant recognized its need for a cloud ecosystem that provides a complete, accurate, up-to-date view of its data and processes which would later help expand its finance and operations in different business units and pursue its strategy of growing aggressively in the Asia Pacific.
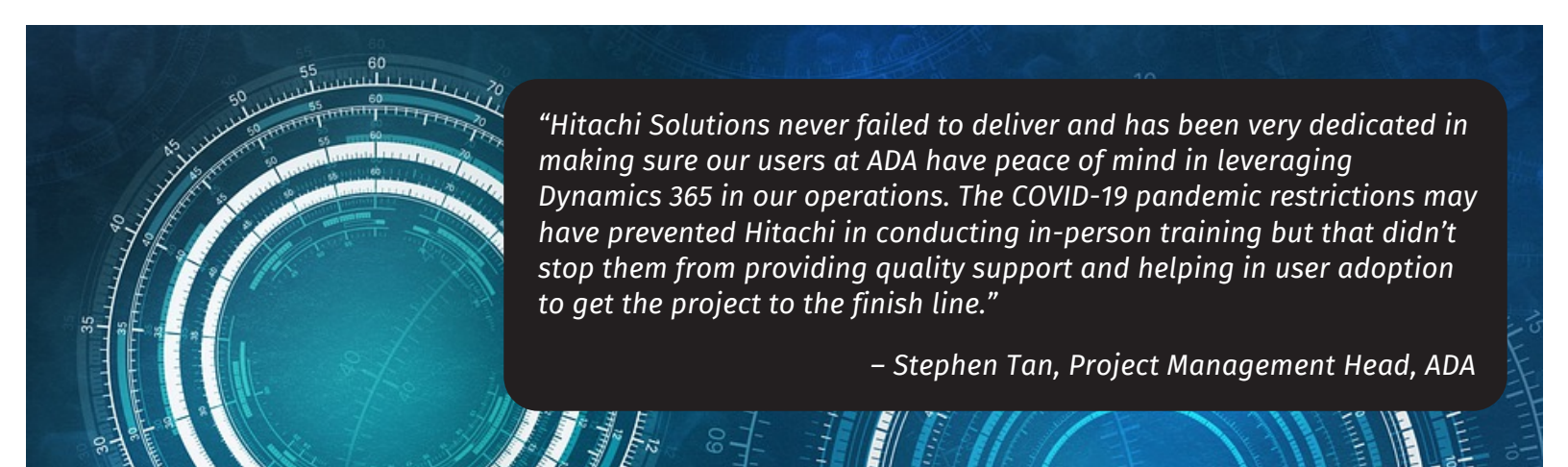
INTRODUCTION

Axiata Digital Advertising (ADA) is a data and artificial intelligence company that offers business insights, data enrichment, advanced analytics, and digital marketing solutions. A subsidiary of the multinational telecom conglomerate Axiata Group Berhad, ADA operates across ten markets in the ASEAN and South Asia region while partnering with leading brands to boost data-driven marketing strategies and complementing its unique digital expertise with deep proprietary data of 375 million consumers.

CHALLENGE

Investing in enhanced data sources is vital for ADA to identify the shifting demands of its consumers. ADA's business processes have long involved legacy systems, Microsoft Dynamics NAV on-premises, and other systems were users across various entities had to do some manual operations. The company had eventually outgrown the legacy system's capabilities and was finding that its functionality was not enough to meet their growing business needs— leading to drawbacks such as costly hardware maintenance, compatibility issues, and heavy customizations. It also became more apparent for ADA to upgrade or replace their system as support and updates will cease for Dynamics NAV.

ADA then decided to search for a trusted implementations partner to support their modernization because of the impending need for an automated platform. Having previously worked on Axiata Group Berhad's cloud ERP implementation, ADA awarded the project to Hitachi Solutions, winning over two other Microsoft partners.

"Hitachi Solutions Asia Pacific recognized the urgency in providing our team a robust solution that would further aid our business development and drive success in our existing markets." said Stephen Tan, Project Management Head of ADA. "Innovation will help our business thrive and having their team along takes us a step closer in our journey towards digital transformation."

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CHARTING THE NEXT STAGE OF GROWTH

To further aid its growing ambition of sustaining quality services across its markets, ADA decided to upgrade its ERP system to the cloud with Microsoft Dynamics 365. Hitachi Solutions provided guidance to the company throughout the process with comprehensive solution demos, business case scenarios, all the way to tender submission. Microsoft Dynamics 365 Finance and Dynamics 365 Supply Chain Management (SCM) centralized ADA's processes into one platform and helped accommodate its increasing business volumes and cater to complex customer, vendor, and business partner requirements with ease and efficiency.

"We have significantly reduced manual operations and digitized our processes across entities into one platform," said Stephen. "Dynamics 365 provided us a reliable system for growth, a software that is not only helpful in employee productivity but also customer satisfaction."

Hitachi Solutions implemented the new ERP system across ADA's 11 legal entities in 9 countries via big Bang adoption. Getting rid of the legacy systems and integrating the necessary modules to the new cloud system simultaneously, provided its users the necessary functions available where customization is not a must.

"Moving from on-premises to the cloud is certainly a challenge where we must follow a process to make sure that we have accurately identified the potential issues, opportunities, and needs to prepare for during implementation and post-go-live," stressed Stephen.

GROUND-TO-CLOUD INITIATIVES WITH HITACHI SOLUTIONS

Hitachi Solutions Asia Pacific developed a global template for ADA and allowed the solution to be rolled out in its entities located in various countries such as Malaysia (HQ), Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, South Korea, and Thailand. This deployment also marks Hitachi Solutions' first project in the advertising industry and localization exposure, if not fully, in newly touched-based countries like Cambodia and South Korea.

"Data migration was one of the critical factors to make this project a success," said Nitin Mathur, Hitachi Solutions Asia Pacific's Senior Vice President of Delivery and Business Operations. "We ensured that users were able to familiarize themselves with the new system. Our data migration team efficiently managed the cutover and took the project to a successful go live."

Dynamics 365 Finance now enables ADA's finance team to seamlessly work on their daily activities involving financial consolidation and month-end close processes. Moreover, Dynamics 365 SCM helped ADA to fully maximize the cloud experience, integrate its core business operations, and reduce manual work— specifically handling its procurement and sourcing, sales and marketing, product management, and vendor collaboration.

Microsoft Dynamics 365 streamlined ADA's business processes and reduced the risk of system downtimes. This will help them move forward with their planned growth and aggressive business model innovation.

BENEFITS

The diligent participation from both ADA and Hitachi Solutions Asia Pacific moved the implementation forward without any major issues and escalations by proactively discussing the risks and devising mitigation plans in every phase. Stephen reiterates, "The project started during the height of heavy travel restrictions caused by the pandemic, but Hitachi Solutions still made it possible to support our team 100% remotely with the right passion and hard work."

Primary benefits ADA acquired from Dynamics 365 include:

Shared service operation: Dynamics 365 improved ADA's shared services which optimized its back-end operations and gave the users from various business units the capacity to focus more on the strategic work and reduce the cost on the financial processes.

Consolidated month-end reporting: High volumes of transactions that demand proper consolidation in its operations are a common occurrence for ADA. Dynamics 365 enhanced its users' handling and creation of consolidated financial statements wherein reporting can be done directly out of an entity in the system. ADA is now able to complete closing faster as compared to the previous 12 to 15 days after month-end close, audit requirements are satisfied.

Common data for all legal entities: ADA now manages common data across its legal entities. Data coming from multiple sources and systems are now combined, as opposed to having fragmented concepts.

"We made a commitment to Hitachi Solutions and Microsoft technologies because we believe they would support our vision to deliver the future of marketing and analytics. This collaboration is all about building a long-term partnership that would last beyond the initial implementation," said Stephen.

FUTURE GOALS

ADA readies itself to expand its use of Microsoft technologies in the organization while preparing for a more abundant, cloud-ready future to sustain growth, increase productivity, and minimize manual workload in all channels.

"We are noticing the positive business outcomes day-by-day as we called on the expertise of Hitachi Solutions Asia Pacific to manage our financial and supply chain modernization. Their team was able to set clear expectations for the entire process and developed a reliable template to keep our business processes consistent," said Stephen.

While ADA is yet to implement all digital competence it needs across its lines of business, Dynamics 365 Finance and Supply Chain Management is a great start in its digital transformation journey. Hitachi Solutions Asia Pacific continues to work with ADA in hopes of carrying out data-driven outcomes and delivering more compelling customer service.

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