



Modernizing to the cloud helps legendary boot brand put its best foot forward for customers

SPECIFICATIONS

Industry

- Retail/CPG

Drivers

- Existing Microsoft Dynamics AX 2012 system was outdated, heavily customized, and costly to maintain
- Stopped and long-running processes caused instability, unplanned downtime, and frustration
- Company desired to move from on-prem to the cloud to better support strategic growth

Products

- Microsoft Dynamics 365 Finance & Operations, Supply Chain Management
- Microsoft SQL Server, Azure Service Bus, Logic Apps, Synapse, Data Lake Store, Data Factory, Azure Analytics Services, Power BI
- Hitachi Solutions Managed Services

Major Integration Points

- Azure Analysis Services, Avalara, Allport Cargo, BarTender, EDI, Lightspeed, Logility, Magento, OIA (US Customs), Optoro, Plumriver, Prophix, ProShip

Number of Users

- 300+

Deployed

- North America

LaCrosse Footwear, Inc. was looking to modernize and migrate to the cloud to elevate their customer experience, support aggressive growth plans, gain better metrics and insights, and build for greater success. They wanted a solution that leveraged the familiar Microsoft platform, had minimal customizations, and was reliable. Read on to learn how Hitachi Solutions proved we were the right partner, with the right approach, to give LaCrosse a fresh start and help them soar to the cloud with Microsoft Dynamics 365.

INTRODUCTION

LaCrosse Footwear, Inc. is a leading developer and marketer of branded, premium, and innovative footwear for expert work and outdoor users. The company's trusted [Danner®](#) and [LaCrosse®](#) brands are distributed domestically through a nationwide network of specialty retailers and distributors, and internationally through distributors and retailers in Asia, Europe, and Canada. Work customers include people in law enforcement, agriculture, construction, industry, military services, and other occupations that need high-performance and protective footwear as a critical tool for the job. Outdoor customers include people active in hunting, outdoor cross training, hiking, and other outdoor recreational activities.

CHALLENGE

For over 100 years, LaCrosse has been dedicated to their customers, delivering innovative, high-quality footwear solutions that help them move "forever forward" in life. A loyal Microsoft customer, LaCrosse was still running its original on-prem Microsoft Dynamics AX 2012 implementation to manage its business operations and supply chain. Although it had served them well for the better part of a decade, the system was now feature-limited, heavily customized, and had reached end-of-life.

"From a system maintenance standpoint, it was getting really complex and costly," said Sadri Behbahany, Director Information Technology at LaCrosse Footwear. "A lot of our time and resources were spent trying to keep the system up and running. We were not able to give our internal and end customers what they wanted in terms of features, and deployment of changes and updates took days."

The legacy ERP system also had serious reliability issues, often crashing during the company's busiest times — including Black Friday when volumes were high. Downtime



and long-running and locked-up processes slowed down order processing, inventory allocation, shipping, and invoicing. This caused havoc for IT and created frustration and negative experiences for users and customers.

Faced with aggressive growth drivers, it was clear LaCrosse had outgrown their old system and needed to modernize, centralize, and leverage the cloud to better — and more reliably — serve customers, meet strategic objectives, and improve overall operations.

“AX just couldn’t take us to the next level in terms of revenue growth, but we wanted to stay with the trusted Microsoft platform and become cloud-first. Upgrading was impossible because of extensive customizations over the years. What we needed was a fresh start with Microsoft Dynamics 365,” said Sadri.

PARTNER SELECTION

Having been through quite a few ERP implementations in his career, Sadri knew the process could be difficult and complex, especially in a company that is supporting multiple channels. He knew working with the right partner was very important. With that in mind, he and his team methodically considered and reviewed seven different Microsoft partner candidates.

After several in-depth interviews, they ultimately chose Hitachi Solutions as their Microsoft Partner of Record, citing our experience, comprehensive demo and problem-solving methodology, and the skill of our overall team as motivating factors.

“While some of the other candidates made us uncomfortable with their fragmented approach, the Hitachi Solutions team addressed how they would resolve our problem areas and issues with a cohesive, refined presentation and competent presence that hit all the key buttons our stakeholders were looking for,” said Sadri

SOLUTION

Once selected, Hitachi Solutions worked collaboratively with the LaCrosse team to ensure a high-quality, fully-integrated, scalable Microsoft D365 Finance & Operations and Supply Chain Management solution that met their needs with as few customizations as possible. To better predict cost, time, and effort, we first performed an initial blueprint engagement. We also set clear expectations, tracked accountability, ensured everyone was always on the same page, and kept the project on track through our best-practice delivery approach called Unified Framework.

Despite having to transition to a remote work model because of the pandemic, we completed a fresh install capable of supporting the needs of LaCrosse’s 300+ users across seven retail stores and two distribution centers — on time and with no major issues or business disruption.

“Given the complexity, integrations, and what we were trying to do, the implementation went very well. When we turned the switch on, it worked,” said Gwen Siy, IT Project Manager at LaCrosse Footwear. “The Hitachi Solutions project manager — and the whole team — were awesome. Anything that came up, we worked as one team to resolve, which I really appreciated. And, they were there to support us post go-live, which was very important.”

Added Sadri, “The key thing for me was having a direct line to the Hitachi Solutions executive leadership during the process. If I had a question or major issue, I could always reach out. They were very responsive and supportive and, to me, that made a huge difference.”

BENEFITS

With Microsoft D365 live across the enterprise, LaCrosse now enjoys all of the operational benefits of a modern cloud-based application — unified data, faster processes, improved



performance, and more accurate reporting. With far fewer customized extensions and integrations, it is more reliable, easier to manage and maintain, and enhances the overall customer experience.

“The D365 environment is much more stable and user friendly, and provides better functionality than before. We are now well positioned for growth, and we have the building blocks in place to be able to provide exciting new features for our end-customers,” said Sadri.

Added Gwen, “Our whole inventory allocation process used to take many, many hours to run. That’s significantly better now. We are also much more dynamic in how we allocate inventory so it is not a bottleneck in our ERP process any longer. Our background processes run faster and our deployments are much faster — taking only an hour or so instead of days.”

LaCrosse’s new solution is always up-to-date and ready for them to take advantage of any new feature or functionality from Microsoft. More benefits include:

- Faster, more efficient performance with less unplanned downtime
- Cloud-first applications, security & scalability
- Improved order handling and reporting structure, which allows product optimization & more personalized customer experiences
- Future-proofed data & operations
- Streamlined and automated processes, including order processing, inventory allocation, warehouse and returns management & other key processes
- Increased visibility and data insights across the company’s entire inventory, including sellable and shippable items
- Continuous updates & improvements

MANAGED SERVICES

Because the new cloud-based environment was more complex than before, LaCrosse engaged Hitachi Solutions Managed Services to help maintain the system, mitigate risks, maximize performance, and ensure they get the most value from their investment.

Our Microsoft-certified managed services team extends LaCrosse’s IT department capabilities by providing expert, scalable, 24/7 post-go live support for their new Microsoft D365 solution and Azure cloud ecosystem. Through a dedicated and local and global presence, we help them manage the system and tackle business-critical priorities that arise day-to-day. Our services include:

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

THE FUTURE

LaCrosse is so pleased with the results of this project they are considering additional opportunities to expand their Microsoft investment with Hitachi Solutions’ support.

“In the near future, we want to take advantage of Power Apps and Power Automate to increase process efficiencies from our factory to field sales. We are also planning to work with Hitachi Solutions on implementing additional integrated solutions including POS for our retail stores,” said Sadri.

Other potential projects include improving distribution channel operations and efficiencies in warehouse operations.

To learn more about what we did for LaCrosse, [contact us](#).