



# Food & Beverage Distribution

Sustaining success in a competitive industry



*Strict compliance standards, low profit margins, intense competition, high customer-service expectations—when you're in the food and beverage distribution industry, these conditions define your business. As a player in the industry, how effectively you meet the challenges determines whether or not your company is successful.*

There are tough issues on many fronts. First, you need fast and effective sales ordering processes to ensure customer needs are fully understood and addressed quickly.

You also need flexibility—the kind that can help you respond to customer demands and market trends as soon as they're identified. You have to be able to see information across all facets of your operations, and possess efficient delivery mechanisms that will get product where it needs to be, when it needs to be there.

You also have to react quickly to issues such as food safety and recalls before they can damage reputations, and closely monitor compliance with a range of regulations, whether from the FDA, the EU, or the International Food Standard.

Put together, these conditions can present obstacles—or opportunities. Having the right business solution in place can help you not only succeed in the industry, but excel.

## *Effective sales ordering*

Getting your customer orders processed quickly and efficiently is at the core of your business. With a robust business solution in place that tightly integrates your financials, inventory, and customer relationship management, you can be assured that orders are handled promptly and without error.

For example, by tightly integrating your data, you can create customer-driven forecasts based on repeat buying patterns to effectively plan warehousing and purchasing processes.

Integrated solutions can also support Automatic Data Collection (ADC) processes to ensure that distribution systems are integrated with financial and reporting applications. This in turn ensures that accurate data flows throughout the organization, increasing the accuracy of inventory and orders shipped, and boosting your forecasting capabilities. As orders are shipped, integrating accurate catch weights directly to accounting for billing may also help boost profitability and customer satisfaction through more efficient operations.

And with efficient sales ordering in place, you can improve your customer service by delivering real-time, customer-focused information directly to your customers at any time—the kind of service that will keep the orders rolling in.





## *Responsiveness*

Well-integrated business solutions give you the kind of agility and flexibility your business needs to serve your customers and compete effectively.

A flexible business solution can, for instance, enable you to integrate customer relationship management (CRM) and accounting systems to support individual customer requirements. Or implement a flexible pricing strategy that uses unlimited price lists, price banding, cost uplift pricing, or quantity break pricing.

If your business finds itself responding to many customer requests for automated reports, or for frequently requested information, flexible systems can give you the ability to make reports and data available to customers over secure Internet connections. Well-connected systems also will help you coordinate all aspects of communications when multiple personnel are communicating with the customer.

## *Efficient deliveries and food safety*

Getting the right product to the customer when they need it is the bottom line for food and beverage distributors. Robust, connected solutions can help make that job easier—and can be critical tools when you are managing product shelf life or responding to quality and food safety issues.



Your business solution should be able to effectively blend with technologies such as bar code and radio frequency identification (RFID) to provide real-time information that can help you plan product delivery schedules more efficiently, or allow customers to see deeper into the supply chain. You can also tighten delivery times and schedules by using your business software to create automated processes for specific customer requests.

Efficient delivery also means cost-effective delivery. Your IT systems should help drive down the cost of business with ADC sales systems that are tightly integrated to all other business systems in the organization. This integration can help you nearly eliminate comprehensive inventory counts, lower inventory required to service customers, pull customer orders in a fraction of the time typically required, and comply with changing customer demand.

When it comes to food safety or quality issues, having quick access to the broadest set of data is critical. Help keep the food supply safer by coordinating tracking of product from suppliers, and facilitate traceability from supplier to customer in markets where it's required. You can also improve accountability by implementing metric setting and tracking for individual warehouses, departments, and processes.

## *Optimal performance with Microsoft Dynamics*

Microsoft Dynamics™ offers a set of strong applications that deliver a compelling suite of technologies for organizations in the food and beverage distribution industry. The integrated tools in Microsoft Dynamics can help you succeed by speeding products from supplier to the store shelf, removing waste from operations, and meeting the demands of your retailing customers and consumers.

Our technology platform will enable your organization to assemble a complete, integrated set of leading-edge business applications. These integrated applications can be deployed quickly and inexpensively without complicated customizations and drawn-out implementation projects. Microsoft Dynamics solutions and Microsoft partners support:

- **Automated product tracking and tracing from the supplier to the retailer.**
- **Marketing promotion management.**
- **Integrated ADC solutions and catch weight capabilities.**
- **Real-time reports and alerts to management and retailers.**
- **Responsiveness to customer demands.**
- **Customized business reports.**
- **Accurate demand forecasting.**
- **Low-cost, Web-based customer support systems.**

# ACCOUNTABILITY

## *Innovative integration*

Microsoft Dynamics provides a flexible set of solutions that can be easily adapted to your operational needs. Built on the Microsoft® Windows Server™ platform, Microsoft Dynamics helps you take advantage of technologies such as Microsoft Windows® SharePoint® Services for knowledge management and collaboration, Windows Terminal Services for extending access to data and processes, and Web services that can enable visibility into your customers' and suppliers' systems. Microsoft SQL Server™ delivers a solid foundation for collecting, analyzing, and reporting data across your company's systems. And deep integration with Microsoft Office System applications, such as Microsoft Excel®, Word, Outlook®, Internet Explorer, SharePoint, and Visio®, can help you better understand inventory, plan production and lead times, design reports, and use data required to make accurate and cost-effective decisions.

## *Partners with industry expertise*

Microsoft Dynamics solutions are delivered by a network of partners with expertise in food and beverage distribution. They can provide local, personalized service—from planning and implementation, to customization, to ongoing support

and education. That means you get world-class business solutions from professionals who understand your business and will be there as your business conditions change.

## *Plan for growth*

Organizations need systems that can deliver a strong return on investment (ROI) in meeting current needs, while providing for the opportunity to scale dramatically to account for organic growth, acquisitions, changes in business focus, and other foreseeable future changes to the business. Microsoft Dynamics, along with Microsoft server technologies and productivity solutions, offers tremendous flexibility and scalability to implement the solution to meet today's requirements and to allow for substantial future growth and change.

To learn more about Microsoft Dynamics integrated solutions that can help you gain a competitive edge in food and beverage distribution, visit

[www.microsoft.com/dynamics/FoodBeverage](http://www.microsoft.com/dynamics/FoodBeverage)





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Microsoft Dynamics is a line of integrated, adaptable business management solutions that enables you and your people to make business decisions with greater confidence. Microsoft Dynamics works like familiar Microsoft software such as Microsoft Office, which means less of a learning curve for your people, so they can get up and running quickly and focus on what's most important. Built to work with Microsoft technologies, it works easily with the systems your company already has implemented. By automating and streamlining financial, customer relationship, and supply chain processes, Microsoft Dynamics brings together people, processes, and technologies, helping increase the productivity and effectiveness of your business, and helping you drive business success.

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