



CASE STUDY

Techo-Bloc

Thinkmax[®]

Thinkmax Takes Techo-Bloc to the Next Level with Microsoft Dynamics 365 (AX)

About Techo-Bloc

Techo-Bloc is North America's leading manufacturer of innovative concrete paving products, including pavers, slabs, retaining walls, steps, caps, and edges. With seven plants—four in Canada and three in the United States—Techo-Bloc is a multi-company, multi-site business that serves both residential and ICI markets through more than 450 dealers.

Challenges

Over the past 20 years, Techo-Bloc has grown exponentially, from a mere five people in 1990 to over 600 employees.

With three companies operating in two different countries and multiple manufacturing sites and distribution centres, Techo-Bloc's legacy systems simply could not handle the multi-company transactions. The company had reached the point where it could no longer grow because it was being held back by its legacy systems. "We needed a bus to carry 30 passengers and we only had a four-passenger car," explained Mr. Ciccarello, President of Techo-Bloc.

That is when Techo-Bloc realized it had to replace its legacy systems with a leading ERP solution.

Solution

During the selection process, Techo-Bloc saw presentations by different system integrators, but the leadership team was still not convinced which Microsoft Dynamics 365 (AX) partner was right for the company. So they asked Microsoft if they could speak with some of their customers, and the name Thinkmax came up through references.

Instead of simply showing what Microsoft Dynamics 365 (AX) was capable of, Thinkmax took the time to understand Techo-Bloc's requirements and then demonstrated their vision of how Microsoft Dynamics 365 (AX) would meet those requirements. "They showed us Microsoft Dynamics 365 (AX) the way we wanted to see it, but also told us what was not necessary, and why. It showed me that they understood, whereas the other partners were not very creative," added Mr. Ciccarello.

Implementation

First, Thinkmax assisted Techo-Bloc in defining new target business processes that would lead to new efficiencies and automation across the entire business. Thinkmax then implemented Dynamics 365 (AX) to enable these redefined business processes, using Microsoft's Sure Step methodology.

Thinkmax generated innovations in Techo-Bloc's inventory management controls, the accuracy of shipments, and the transportation and logistics processes through enhancements to the solution, enabling Techo-Bloc to reach new heights in competitiveness and customer service.

"During the implementation, Thinkmax forced us to maintain discipline," Mr. Ciccarello recalled. "They held us accountable to our objectives. We had identified milestones and they were very proactive with the scheduling. Their follow-through with the project was incredible. If we missed a milestone, they would push even harder on the next one to stay on schedule."

"Microsoft Dynamics 365 (AX) gave us the platform to grow our business and Thinkmax supported us in our endeavour. From purchasing to manufacturing to selling, it has completely changed our business."

Charles Ciccarello,
President of Techo-Bloc

"At Thinkmax, we found a smart group of individuals who took the time to understand our requirements, and showed us they could deliver on those requirements with the flexibility of Microsoft Dynamics 365 (AX)."

Charles Ciccarello,
President of Techo-Bloc

Benefits

A platform to grow

With the solution in place, Techo-Bloc finally has the platform it needs to grow its business at a faster pace than might otherwise have been possible.

"A year ago we acquired two production sites and two distribution centres in the US Midwest. The integration of this other entity with multiple sites was done in 30 days. We could not have dreamed of doing that as fast or as efficiently prior to Microsoft Dynamics 365 (AX). Now, not only can we grow, we don't have to worry about how we're going to manage that growth," said Mr. Ciccarello.

Full visibility

As a fully integrated business management solution, Microsoft Dynamics 365 (AX) automates all transactions and provides full visibility into every aspect of the business. For instance, when products are being moved from one site to another, Techo-Bloc can track their location and inform customers of their order's status, which helps Techo-Bloc improve its customer relationships and avoid "he said, she said" type scenarios.

"The level of visibility and reporting we get is amazing. From purchasing to manufacturing to selling, it has completely changed our business," stated Mr. Ciccarello.

Improving the bottom line

Transportation represents about 20% of Techo-Bloc's costs and 20% of its revenue, thus the importance of selecting the right carrier. In the past, Techo-Bloc relied on a manual process where the dispatcher had to send a purchase order to the carrier who would book a slot for the pickup, but there was no pre-established rate. Now, Microsoft Dynamics 365 (AX) automatically identifies and assigns the carrier with the best rate for a specific city, improving Techo-Bloc's bottom line along the way.

Similarly, before the implementation Techo-Bloc did not always have the information it needed to make the right decision. Specifically, when the company received a high-volume order, it could not always tell if it was an order with an acceptable margin. "The reporting I get from Microsoft Dynamics 365 (AX) allows me to see things from different perspectives," said Mr. Ciccarello. "I can see sales with or without resell items, and the drill-down capabilities of Microsoft Dynamics 365 (AX) help us see where the problems are. This forces us to make hard decisions."

Gaining differentiation and a competitive advantage

To conclude, Mr. Ciccarello explained how the improvements brought by Thinkmax and Microsoft Dynamics 365 (AX) have impacted Techo-Bloc: "It has provided us with an infrastructure that makes us unique in our industry. This has undoubtedly translated into a competitive advantage. Before, we were very hesitant to grow, because our infrastructure could not support it. Now, we are more focused on our destination."



About Thinkmax

To bring your company to the next level, you need a partner. With offices in Montreal and Toronto, Thinkmax focuses on improving business processes through best practices and technology for companies with complex operations in the area of supply chain, process and discrete manufacturing, distribution, retail and professional services.

Whether you are evaluating ERP, BI, CRM and e-Commerce / Digital-Commerce solutions or have already implemented them and want to further leverage your investment, we can assist you.