



MICROSOFT DYNAMICS AX
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SAINT-GOBAIN API

“The collaboration with Ultimate Software has always been smooth and flawless. We’ve worked together for so long for a reason”

Huseyin Durmus, Finance Manager at API, explains in this case study his experiences with Ultimate Software, during the replacement of their existing ERP-system.

API Introduced

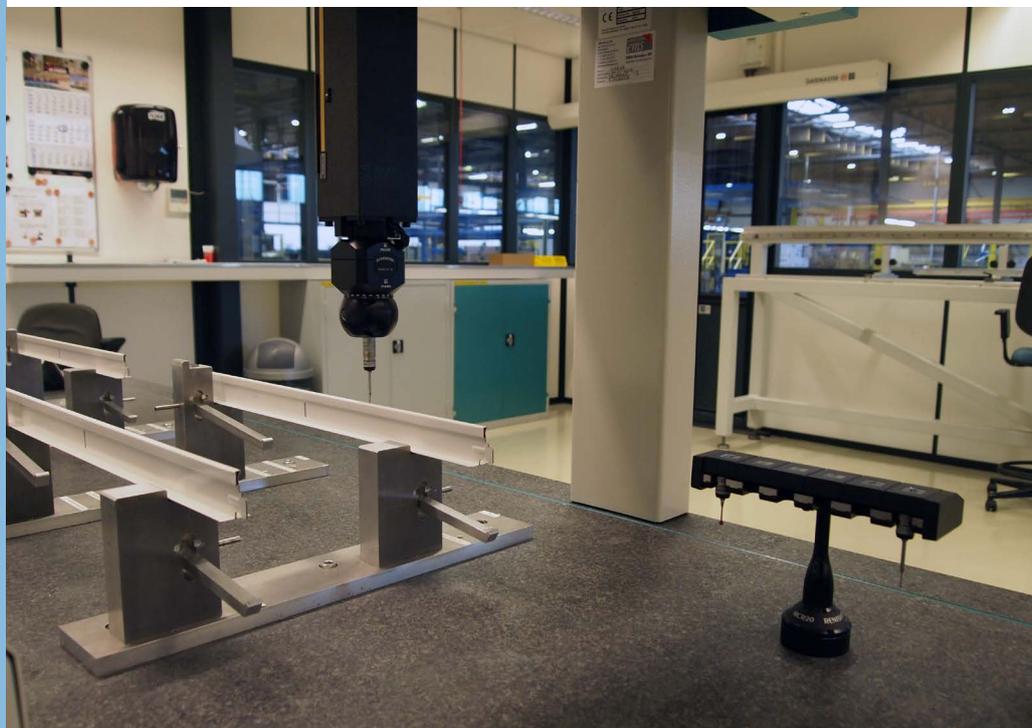
API, supplier of ceiling suspension systems, is a Dutch subsidiary of the French company Saint Gobain. API supplies standard and customised solutions to wholesalers in the Netherlands and other European countries. We contribute ideas and concept drawings to projects so that we can reach a targeted solution. We highly value both quality and service. Because our production takes place in the Netherlands, API can deliver rapidly. API can, if desired, also provide quick, on-site support for its clients. API is always searching for the same level of quality and service in its relationships with suppliers.

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THE CHALLENGE

A NEW ERP SYSTEM, PREPARED FOR DIGITALISATION

In 2013, the existing ERP system became outdated; API had chosen to work with an entirely new system to limit the amount of custom jobs (which are more error-prone). Also, API wanted to be ready to make the switch to the digital world with this new system. Flexibility was important to API and that's why it searched for a lighter version than the systems that were the standard at Saint Gobain. Because of the complex subject matter, API voiced its desire to prevent misunderstandings due to language barriers by cooperating with a Dutch group. The consultant working for their current system advised API to reach out to Ultimate Software. After an extensive contracting period, it was decided that Ultimate Software would be the organization to help API make the switch to Microsoft Dynamics AX in 2013. The cooperation immediately clicked; it was important to API that Ultimate Software was a supplier officially recognised by Microsoft.

THE SOLUTION

REPLACEMENT AND OPTIMIZATION WITH ADJUSTMENTS IN THE PROCESSES

Ultimate Software advised API, to not simply duplicate the old system, but to revisit the processes and optimise them wherever possible. This meant constantly asking what the possibilities of the new system were, whether to keep processes in the same structure as before and/or implementing organisational changes for optimisation. Change will always be met with some resistance but Ultimate Software always gave a good explanation of why certain changes were desirable. This way, existing processes were also analysed with a fresh look from inside the organisation. Something that took more time than originally expected was defining the reports. That may be better now in AX, but when the system was still brand-new we spent a lot of time getting the layout just the way we wanted it.

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The transition proceeded smoothly; no major problems were encountered, which meant that the business could keep running normally. API greatly appreciated the fact that the people from Ultimate Software were always nearby and easy to contact. 'They have a no-nonsense mentality, are professional, are good at thinking with you, and are very flexible. They were always ready to help and now – four years later – still are!', says API's Huseyin Durmus (Finance Manager, and one of the project leaders). 'In the exciting week in which we went live Ultimate Software was always here and that helped us relax. We wanted the approval of the French organisation to go off the beaten path, and thanks to Ultimate Software, we succeeded. They looked over our shoulders and were happily surprised!'

THE RESULT

MIGRATION WHILE THE BUSINESS CAN GO ON

Huseyin says: 'The transition happened without any issues worth mentioning. Of course, that was the result of good cooperation. Beforehand, Ultimate Software had indicated that over the course of the entire process, we were likely to run into a moment where tensions between the two parties would increase. They advised us that, when that time came, we should all sit together around a table to voice our frustrations and to discuss how to continue. That was good, because if that moment was ever necessary, it was nothing to be anxious about.'

To answer the question of what Ultimate Software could do better, Huseyin gave us the tip to be aware of the risk of know-how declining when people make the next step in their careers. He also advised that Ultimate Software should absolutely not change their service and fast reaction time. 'That we were helped quickly whenever we had a question was very important to us.'



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