



Keyora's Webfoot® Franchise e-Business Platform Customer Solution Case Study

WORTH®

Luxury Apparel Leader Empowers Sales Agents to Thrive, Gets Ready for Growth

Overview

Country or Region: United States

Industry: Retail and hospitality—Apparel retailing

Customer Profile

The Worth Collection makes and markets high-end clothing and accessories for women, selling through a network of independent agents all across North America.

Business Situation

The company wanted to make the agents' business easier and more profitable, improve agent retention and customer satisfaction, and prepare the company for growth.

Solution

The Worth Collection implemented the Webfoot® Franchise e-Business Platform from Keyora together with Microsoft Dynamics® AX to realize extensive e-commerce capabilities and streamline business management throughout the company.

Benefits

- Empower sales agents to succeed
- Enhance customer experience
- Realize process efficiencies and prepare for growth

“By using Keyora's Webfoot® e-Commerce and Microsoft Dynamics® AX, we expect to deliver a customer experience equal to or exceeding that of major fashion retailers, but at a fraction of the cost.”

Geoff Hicks, Chief Information Officer, The Worth Collection

Customers rely on independent sales agents for The Worth Collection—a leading provider of exclusive high-end clothing and accessories—to sell and deliver items from the company's seasonal collections. In an effort to maximize the agents' performance and loyalty, boost customer satisfaction, and prepare the company for growth, The Worth Collection replaced all of its disparate business software systems with an integrated solution: Microsoft Dynamics® AX. The solution supports all business activities with comprehensive, scalable functionality, integrating seamlessly with Keyora's Webfoot® Franchise e-Business Platform to facilitate advanced e-Business capabilities for sales agents. The Worth Collection agents can now focus on profitable selling with increased customer retention and higher service levels. And, the company can operate more efficiently, make sound strategic decisions, and ready for fast growth.



“Keyora’s Webfoot® e-Commerce enabled us to implement a full-service business model with our sales agents, boost agent loyalty, and help them focus on what they do best—selling our collections.”

Geoff Hicks, Chief Information Officer, The Worth Collection

Situation

The Worth Collection, headquartered in New York City, New York, designs, manufactures, and markets high-end clothing and fashion accessories for women. Every year, the company launches four seasonal collections for its two product lines, offering several hundred items at any time. The Worth Collection aims to make clothes of the best quality possible from the best materials and by using the most innovative designs.

A large network of independent sales agents across North America supports the company’s customers. Sales agents are highly skilled specialists who consult individually with customers at the agent’s home or studio. During their appointments, customers preview and try on clothing from the new apparel collections, and then place orders with the agent. The agents interact with The Worth Collection to manage the financial transactions and ensure the fulfillment of customer orders.

Competition for Agent Loyalty and Need To Support Agents’ Profitability

As owners of the customer relationships and trusted fashion consultants, the sales agents are crucial to the success of this luxury clothing business. The Worth Collection competes with other companies, including well-known brands, to build and maintain long-term, profitable relationships with agents. For that reason, the company strongly supports the agents’ success and ease of operating.

The older Sage Accpac enterprise resource planning (ERP) system in use at the company made it difficult for the agents and the company to do business together. In addition, Accpac did not offer an effective way to address customer needs over the web. The Worth Collection wanted to remedy these shortcomings and help agents focus more

productively on sales activities instead of administrative tasks.

Efficiency and Growth Requirements

The Worth Collection leaders wanted to strengthen their ability to direct the company’s revenue growth and increase its competitive advantage by efficiently responding to accurate, current information, but business reporting and decision making were not always easy or timely to perform. The company sought to connect its information and business management systems and make it easier to obtain useful, current business information. The web portal, accounting solution, ERP system, and other software tools served as multiple sources of information, with many opportunities for error and discrepancies.

Within its growth plan, The Worth Collection also anticipated opening additional retail outlet locations in addition to the three mall-location outlet stores it already operated. Finding an efficient solution to manage the retail business together with the company’s other activities became a critical consideration.

Solution

The Worth Collection surveyed the market for technology offerings that would help the company pursue its objectives more directly. The company also hired a new chief information officer, Geoff Hicks, to lead the effort to improve the company’s profitability and customer service level by making optimal use of technology and information management processes.

Generating Best Value from Existing Technology Investments

“My team was familiar and comfortable with Microsoft® technology,” explains Hicks. “Of course, we wanted to leverage our existing skills and investments as much as possible.” The Worth Collection already ran its business

systems on Windows Server® 2003, and employees used the 2007 Microsoft Office system applications to write documents, record and analyze data, exchange e-mail messages, manage tasks and calendars, and more. A solution that would work with the company's existing systems and could enhance workers' productivity made the most sense for The Worth Collection.

After considering products from Sage Software and solutions specific to the textile industry, Hicks and his team chose Microsoft Dynamics® AX, working with Microsoft Gold Certified Partner Crowe Horwath on the implementation. Says Hicks, "We looked for the best value with the most flexibility and the scalability to support strong growth, and that was Keyora's Webfoot® e-Commerce and Microsoft Dynamics AX." The Worth Collection engaged Microsoft Partner Keyora to implement their Webfoot® Franchise e-Business platform because of its advanced functionality and robust ability to integrate with Microsoft Dynamics® AX.

Implementing an Integrated Business Management and e-Commerce Solution

Technologists from Keyora and Crowe Horwath collaborated with The Worth Collection IT team to complete the implementation and capitalize on the scalability, manageability, and ease of use of the integrated solution. The team implemented a fully integrated business-to-business portal for agents in just four months, as opposed to the 12 to 18 months the process can often take for a solution of similar complexity. At the end of that stage, The Worth Collection owned the extensive, flexible e-Business capabilities it sought. To further enhance the usability of the new online business portal, the company invited several sales agents to visit with Hicks and his team to test the portal's functionality and provide feedback.

To The Worth Collection's sales agents and employees, Microsoft Dynamics® AX with Keyora's Webfoot® Franchise e-Business Platform appears as a comfortable, unified software environment. The integrated system lets them perform all tasks in serving customers, including order entry, updates, and tracking, quotations, and issue resolution. Microsoft Dynamics® AX also helps the company manage other activities, including manufacturing, materials planning, the warehouse and inventory, shipping, and financials.

Connecting and Streamlining Business Operations

At The Worth Collection, Microsoft Dynamics® AX integrates with several other Microsoft products:

- Microsoft SQL Server® 2005 for business intelligence analysis, reporting, and planning
- Microsoft Dynamics® Retail Management System to manage transactions at the company's outlet stores, which serve to introduce customers to the brand with a limited selection of clothing

Many software vendors have developed targeted solutions to integrate with Microsoft Dynamics® AX to meet companies' specific business requirements. The Worth Collection chose the following:

- Keyora's Webfoot® Franchise e-Business Platform as a next-generation web environment to further The Worth Collection's transformation to an e-business model.
- RF-SMART for Microsoft Dynamics® AX, from the company called RF-SMART, to facilitate wireless data collection and more efficient order processing in the warehouse
- Credit Card Management for Microsoft Dynamics® AX from Red Maple to make credit card transactions as secure, reliable, and efficient as possible

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In addition, Microsoft Dynamics® AX integrates with business services that The Worth Collection uses:

- Sales tax calculation services from CCH to ensure correct, problem-free charging of sales taxes by agents
- Shipping systems operated by UPS to track shipments and help agents set proper customer expectations for receipt of their orders

With assistance from the two key vendor partners Crowe Horwath and Keyora, the Worth Collection performed all training needed to help people become proficient with the new technologies. Employees and agents found Microsoft Dynamics® AX, integrated with Webfoot® Franchise e-Business Platform as the front-end software for online business, easy to learn and intuitive to work with because the graphical user interfaces looked much like what they were used to from other Microsoft products. The Worth Collection training brought more than 200 sales agencies to full proficiency within the first 30 days after the complete solution became available. Feedback from sales agents expressed a high level of excitement and satisfaction with the ease of use and extensive capabilities of their new e-Business tools.

Benefits

Hicks and The Worth Collection executives are enthusiastic about Microsoft Dynamics® AX and pleased they accomplished their objectives for the software implementation in a timely manner. Says Hicks, “I’ve never seen so much done by any company of this size, in the time we achieved it. The ability to replace every software tool we had and press on to implement a new business model in less than a year means that Microsoft Dynamics AX is an amazingly flexible, powerful solution.”

Empower Sales Agents to Succeed

“In combination with Keyora’s Webfoot® e-Business Platform, Microsoft Dynamics® AX enabled us to implement a full-service business model with our sales agents, boost agent loyalty, and help them focus on what they do best—selling our collections,” says Hicks.

With Keyora’s Webfoot® Franchise e-Business Platform, The Worth Collection minimized the administrative tasks performed by agents who can access the sales portal from any location with Internet access. The company handles all transactions and accounting processes for the agents. Integrated inventory updates mean agents can enter into sound commitments with customers regarding the availability and delivery of products.

The Worth Collection tracks sales agent performance by the number of customer appointments during which agents show the products and by the sales revenue produced by each agent. The company expects both of those metrics to climb as the new business system enables agents to maximize the value of their customer relationships.

“Two of our largest sellers love the new Webfoot® Franchise portal because it helped them reduce overhead by more than 50 percent and spend more time with customers,” Hicks adds.

Enhance Customer Experience

The Worth Collection customers stand to benefit from the full-service model, which lets the company and its sales agents provide more prompt and efficient service.

The full-service model also lets The Worth Collection design and market new offerings efficiently and quickly. For example, the company began to provide an exclusive, branded credit card for customers making

purchases from the company. With favorable terms of 90 days same-as-cash and revolving payments, customers enjoy greater flexibility and can more readily purchase the clothing they like, when they want it. In turn, agents can grow their business with more satisfied customers who enjoy a wider range of options.

Business planners at The Worth Collection follow a well-defined road map to deliver additional service enhancements to customers.

Realize Process Efficiencies and Prepare for Growth

Having achieved the primary goal of improving the sales agents' productivity, The Worth Collection relies on Microsoft Dynamics® AX to improve efficiencies and resource management throughout the organization—including the warehouse, financial management, and product design and manufacturing.

“By using Microsoft Dynamics® AX and Webfoot® e-Commerce, we expect to deliver a customer experience equal to or exceeding that of major fashion retailers, but at a fraction of the cost,” says Hicks. “The new infrastructure is a firm, scalable foundation for multiplying our operational capacity and growing our business.”

Today, business managers at The Worth Collection rely on current, reliable information and comprehensive reports drawing from a single source, instead of accessing disparate systems to support decision making. That means business planning and competitive positioning are far more accurate, flexible, and effective. As Hicks explains, “One guiding principle of The Worth Collection is excellence in our products and everything we do. Microsoft Dynamics® AX lets us pursue our goals of excellence, integrity, and growth in the confidence that we can respond promptly to customer needs and competitive challenges.”

For More Information

For more information about Keyora products and services, call (866) 661-6688, e-mail us at sales@keyora.com or visit the website at: www.keyora.com

For more information about Microsoft products and services, call (800) 426-9400 or visit the website at: www.microsoft.com

For more information about The Worth Collection products and services, call (800) 967-8465 or visit the Web site at: www.worthny.com

For more information about Crowe Horwath products and services, call (866) 662-7693 or visit the Web site at: www.crowehorwath.com/crowe

For more information about Microsoft Dynamics®, visit the website at: www.microsoft.com/dynamics

Webfoot® e-Business Platform

Keyora's award-winning Webfoot® e-Business Platform has been designed to provide mid-market and enterprise organizations using Microsoft's Dynamics® AX or Dynamics® GP with a seamless, real-time e-Business environment that takes all the rich customer and item content from Dynamics® and presents it to your customers, employees and trading partners in a common browser format, ready for purchase. No matter what your requirements, it is our goal to provide you with a scalable solution that you will never outgrow.

For more information about the Webfoot® Franchise e-Business Platform, call (866) 661-6688, e-mail us at sales@keyora.com or visit the website at: www.keyora.com

Software and Services

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