

Stevens & Co (Ryobi) CASE STUDY

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BRAINTREE ENHANCES STEVENS & CO'S BUSINESS WITH MICROSOFT DYNAMICS 365 BUSINESS CENTRAL

At a glance:

Selecting the right service provider is crucial for businesses, especially when migrating IT solutions. Aiming for a seamless shift to minimise disruptions in their operations, Stevens & Co (Ryobi), power tool distributors, with the help of Braintree transitioned from Great Plains Software to Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central.

SEAMLESS TRANSITION

With Braintree being the implementation partner, Stevens & Co's move to integrated business management solutions (ERP) with Business Central was a success, attributed in part to Braintree's extensive knowledge and understanding of their business environment and systems from the get-go.

"The decision was made to do an upgrade in our current accounting software, but when we considered the workload involved doing that upgrade, we realised that doing a complete change in ERP systems just made more sense," says Richard Stevens, CFO of Stevens & Co.

He adds that their estimation at the time was that the workload and cost of doing an upgrade would be as high as 80 to 85% of the cost of doing a full move to another system. Following the assessment, they then went to market

to look at different ERP systems and weighed up the various options, but in the end, it was quite an easy decision that Business Central was the way to go, particularly based on the architecture of Business Central compared to the previous software used.

Stevens recognised that both systems were very similar, specifically as they were both Microsoft products. "We had the skill sets on both sides. We had people who understood our environment, and our business, which is a vital part of successful deployment. Once we established that Braintree had the necessary skillset in Human Resources, we decided to go with them". Stevens said that proof of concept beforehand, moving all data into the Business Central environment and seeing how it all worked, helped in making the final decision to switch.

NAVIGATING THE CHALLENGE AND EMBRACING CHANGE

Given the scale of business-critical projects that Braintree executes, it is inevitable that there will always be some degree of curveballs and problems. "What you have to do is continuously communicate and have everything in order, so that you have the bandwidth to deal with those issues," Stevens says.

Gary Shandler, Account Manager at Braintree, agrees, but says that a big factor which contributed to the success of the project was Richard Stevens himself, who was the driving force. With challenges which included changes in personnel, Stevens was the one constant, and he knew exactly what he wanted and needed.

Change management and user acceptance are crucial aspects of any project, but consultants cannot be

responsible for this. "They don't know the people nor hold the relationships with the staff who ultimately use the product." The project's success relied on fostering a positive mindset among employees who were enthusiastic about the new project. The positive mindset helped the project move forward. Despite some issues, such as going live, the smooth transition was made easier by having end users on board. Both familiar users and those using it for the first time found the new platform to be much better.

"The migration from a 1980s-built system to a new, agile, and modern accounting system was a significant change, as it was more stable, faster, and efficient on resources. The system's architecture, which incorporates modern accounting principles, was more stable, faster, and efficient," says Stevens.

PATH TO SUCCESS / SUCCESSFUL MIGRATION

While Stevens admits that even with a lot of research and insight, a move like this is always a leap of faith, but fortunately, the completed project was a success.

"Thanks to Braintree's involvement throughout the process, we were able to stay close to the project, identify issues quickly and resolve them in a timeous manner. This formed the trust and appreciation for their eyes on the project and it was part of the equation that made the project a success," he says.

He further states that that dedicating more time and flexibility to development resources both at the go-live stage and post-implementation and a change management approach that prioritises replicating existing processes within the new system without extensive customisation; "this allows for a smoother transition and ensures that foundational operations are established before

exploring advanced functionalities and enhancements in the new ERP system."

Stevens estimates that with Business Central, the business has seen a 25% improvement in document management and product traceability and a 500-1000% improvement in efficiencies in warehouse pulling and packing with upcoming warehouse development within Business Central.

Stevens says, "Business Central, designed with forward momentum in mind, is the future ERP system. Its fluid nature and ease of reporting and data management have been positive, but formatting can be undynamic. The system's life span is infinite, and an upgrade can be done over the weekend, making it easier to transition to the next ERP system."

PRODUCT & SERVICES PROVIDED:	Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central
ORGANISATION SIZE:	175 staff, 5 branches and two subsidiaries (Kenya and Namibia).
INDUSTRY:	Power Tool and Equipment Distribution
COUNTRY:	South Africa
BUSINESS NEED:	Migrating from Microsoft Great Plains (GP) to Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central.

For more information, visit us at braintree.co.za

Voyager Building, Rutherford Estate,
1 Scott Street, Waverley, 2090
PO Box 369, Rivonia, 2128
South Africa

Tel: +27(0)11 455 6248
enquiries@braintree.co.za

