



Extending Microsoft Dynamics AX with Sunrise Business Intelligence

Public safety and tactically inspired apparel leader now has 'one version of the truth' with mobile BI, analytics and workflows

CUSTOMER PROFILE

ATLANCO® is the leading supplier of apparel and tactical products for military, law enforcement, and public safety professionals, as well as civilian enthusiasts. The company operates a global manufacturing and distribution supply chain, supplying uniforms, backpacks, boots, caps, belts, and supplies.

Country or Region: United States with manufacturing in Honduras and Asia

Industry: Manufacturing and Distribution – Apparel and Accessories

Brands: ATLANCO®, TRU-SPEC®, 5ive Star Gear®

BUSINESS SITUATION

With data silos across Microsoft Dynamics AX 2009 and other data sources, ATLANCO struggled to have one version of the truth. The company wanted a true set of numbers at their employees' fingertips.

SOLUTION

ATLANCO built a winning business intelligence capability with Sunrise BI services around Microsoft BI and MicroStrategy BI. They were able to quickly demonstrate a return on investment and excite the executive team with new insights, mobility and productivity.

"Everyone from the executive, sales, and customer service teams are really excited about what we can do with MicroStrategy and Sunrise BI."

*- Andy Laurance,
Director of IT, ATLANCO*



"We can now visualize data and spot trends quickly. Without a doubt, the opportunity and productivity gains justify the investment."

- Andy Laurance, Director of IT, ATLANCO

ATLANCO® is a leading supplier of equipment and uniforms for the military and law enforcement, and has been using Microsoft Dynamics AX to manage operations since 2000. After investing in a couple of business intelligence solutions and only getting lackluster results, ATLANCO turned to their trusted Microsoft and MicroStrategy partner, Sunrise Technologies for a new approach. Together, they set out to get to business value fast—in fact, it was just a matter of 6 weeks, and opportunity gains quickly demonstrated the value of the project.

ATLANCO not only achieved their desired goal of getting information into the hands of the people who owned the data, they also spotted a rising style/color trend that would have otherwise been missed. With their new BI capabilities, they uncovered an opportunity and capitalized on it. Wave 1 allowed the executive team and the business users to gain visual insights and additional productivity. Now, investments in BI continue to build momentum and excitement.



BENEFITS

- Replace data silos with a single business-language-oriented schema across multiple data sources
- Take control of the business and act on the same metrics across departments
- Move from reactive, manual reporting to proactive insights, predictive planning, and data-driven workflows
- Standardize calculations and formatting, eliminating manual effort and improving accuracy
- Deliver feature-rich data experiences on almost any device or platform
- Enable data-to-decision and decision-to-action
- Respond rapidly to market changes, and realize the full revenue potential of brands



SITUATION

ATLANCO is the parent company of the TRU-SPEC and 5IVE STAR GEAR brands, supplying uniforms and tactical products for military, law enforcement, public safety and off-duty/outdoor civilian enthusiasts. Founded in 1950 by Jack Zaglin in Marietta, Georgia, and originally known as the Atlanta Army Navy Supply Company, they have grown to over 1,000 employees with operations and partnerships in Honduras, Indonesia, Korea, China, and the Dominican Republic.

With their growth, ATLANCO needs graphical, predictive, prescriptive, and mobile business intelligence that could cross multiple source systems and even write back data.

DATA SILOS AND A LACK OF VISIBILITY

By 2013, ATLANCO had already been through two other business intelligence solutions that were implemented to deliver visual insights from Microsoft Dynamics AX and other legacy systems.

Outside sales representatives had limited graphical visibility into data about their regional sales performance, order fulfillment statuses, and customer trends—and they couldn't access data out in the field. Meanwhile, the IT team was strained to support requests for reporting, so often business users would take matters into their own hands and create their own spreadsheets. At all levels of the organization, people were spending several hours manipulating information on their own, creating unintentional consequences and erroneous intelligence that lead to poor decision making.

“You'd end up with various calculations of the same metric across departments which often resulted in a lot of wasted time, unnecessary inventory builds, and a very reactive process.” said Andy Laurance, Director of IT for ATLANCO.

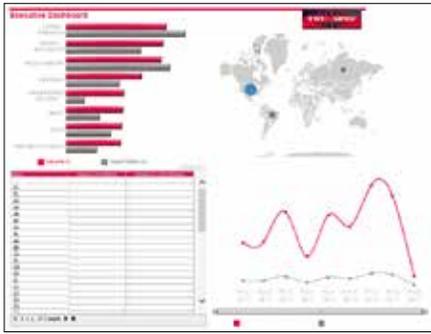
SOLUTION

ATLANCO decided to update its business intelligence solution for a third time using Sunrise BI, which leveraged Microsoft BI and MicroStrategy BI to answer key business questions.

Sunrise BI offered a value-driven approach that focused on delivering business value fast and frequently, with a series of short 6-8 week project waves. Project waves are designed to impact the business processes with the most value, while narrowing the focus to a scope that gets tools in the hands of users at the end of each wave, and iteratively building on the wins of each wave over time.

In July 2014, ATLANCO launched Wave 1 with 4 role-based dashboards designed to help executives, account managers, customer service and even customers manage their day-to-day tasks.

“The driving force behind this project was having accurate visibility into sales and customer information, permissioned to provide contextually relevant, role-based visual insights. The ease of use is great and we are already producing value. It's simple for new users while being robust enough for power users to do anything they want. We're showing faster



“Before working with Sunrise to implement MicroStrategy, we always struggled to have one version of the truth. Account Executives would pull their numbers, executives would pull their numbers, and they’d each do their own manipulation in excel and the numbers just didn’t match up. Now they have information at their fingertips and this data productivity has actually saved us from hiring additional team members.”

*- Andy Laurance,
Director of IT, ATLANCO*

turnaround and more capability than ever before—and it’s reasonably priced,” said Andy Laurance, IT Director.

SINGLE BUSINESS SCHEMA AND TRUE NUMBERS

The new capabilities provided better access to sales and order information, and one version of the truth. Now finance, operations, service, and sales all speak from the same metrics and this includes consumption from the web, mobile and Excel.

“We have broken down the data silos and now have a true business-language-oriented schema that crosses many data sets, giving us access to information at our fingertips. At all levels of the organization, people are enthusiastic about the possibilities,” said Laurance.

ROLE-CENTRIC BUSINESS VALUE

ATLANCO and Sunrise BI heavily involved the business users throughout the 6-week-long project because they wanted to be sure the deliverables helped the end user with their day-today work, putting them in the driver’s seat of interacting with their own data. They achieved true visual insights and self-service data discovery.

For this 64-year-old company, showing inventory visibility to customers has been time consuming, and often required many hours to generate real time reports as the customer requested them. Now customers and their service teams share the same view, each with their own unique dashboard that reviews the same information, and it’s always available in real time.

“Customers want to know their order status in a timely manner and one of our great wins was automating this reporting process. We have saved a tremendous amount of time and that has allowed us to avoid hiring additional resources,” says Laurance.

And other business users were having their own revenue-impacting success with their role-based visual insights. The CFO can even monitor aging customer receivables in a new visual and remote way, without relying on IT services to deliver the information. Executives and sales now have a graphical view of current and historical top sellers, and can experience a rich data discovery and analysis experience by region.

“This type of information allows our sales team to identify and show our clients additional opportunities to sell companion items, such as a belt with a certain pair of pants,” says Laurance.

To top it all off, one of the biggest wins actually came from not making a decision that was being considered. There was perception that a specific color of a tactical pant style was not performing well based on opinions formed with inaccurate information. However, visual insights showed a different story and ATLANCO executives actually spotted an emerging trend that ended all discussions of discontinuing that style/color. “We would have not spotted this trend so quickly without the help of Sunrise BI,” says Laurance.



With easy access to information and an ability to capitalize on opportunities uncovered by visual insights, the power of getting from data-to-decision and then decision-to-action really starts to emerge on a daily basis, for all business users.

MOBILITY, PREDICTABILITY, AND BI-DRIVEN WORKFLOWS

After demonstrating the value of what is possible with Sunrise BI, there is an exciting momentum building at ATLANCO. Wave 2 takes a deeper dive into building out further what was launched in Wave 1, layering in additional financial metrics and predictive analytics. They are crossing source systems with ease and expanding the mobile and BI-driven workflows.

"Before Wave 1 kicked off, we were thinking about discontinuing the OD color of our popular tactical pants because perceptions were that it wasn't selling well. Then, when we were seeing the data through MicroStrategy, we were able to determine that we were actually starting to see an upwards trend. We would have never seen a trend this quickly before."

*- Andy Laurance,
Director of IT, ATLANCO*

FOR MORE INFORMATION

You can see online demonstrations of Microsoft Dynamics AX and MicroStrategy BI at www.sunriseconsult.com.

See BI in Action:
www.sunriseconsult.com/bi

To learn more about Atlanco or their TRU-SPEC® and 5ive Star Gear® brands you can visit: www.atlanco.com and www.truspec.com

"This is where things start getting exciting! We're going to take ATLANCO to true data-to-decision and decision-to-action with BI-driven workflow enablement. Wave 2 is going beyond the dashboard or report where other solutions end. We'll be taking a deeper dive into forecasting, financials and customer insights, and they will soon be able to see, comment, approve—even feed transactions back into AX," says Brandon George, Director of Business Intelligence for Sunrise Technologies.

ABOUT SUNRISE TECHNOLOGIES

Sunrise Technologies is a Gold Certified Microsoft Partner and a MicroStrategy Partner that specializes in the apparel, footwear, and home furnishings industries. With decades of experience, fine craftsmanship, and market-leading tools, Sunrise can deliver global, omni-channel, Tier 1 supply chain capabilities at a tremendous value wherever you do business

ABOUT SUNRISE BI

Whether you want to maximize your use of the Microsoft BI stack with or you want to complement it with MicroStrategy to deploy mobile apps and write back to any source system with ease, Sunrise BI is the experienced team that can deliver rapid value. With our deep knowledge and value-driven approach, your first Go Live can be in as little as 6-8 weeks. Sunrise BI brings business processes to life: manufacturing, operations, sales, retail, finance, sourcing, supply chain—you name it!



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