



Industry Leading Furniture Manufacturer Reaches Goal of “One Voice to the Customer” with New Business Solutions from Microsoft and Sunrise Technologies

For nearly 100 years Hooker Furniture, one of the world’s largest publicly-traded furniture companies, has had an outstanding reputation as a global industry leader in product innovation, style, and functionality. One of the few furniture firms still led by a member of its founding family, the global organization both sources from Asia and continues to manufacture many of its pieces in the United States.

High-quality furniture manufacturing in and of itself is a highly complex process that requires a fine balance of extreme flexibility and rigid control. Hooker Furniture found itself out of balance after the acquisitions of Bradington-Young and Sam Moore Furniture and realized that, in order to bring all three brands into alignment, something needed to change.

FAST FACTS

Name: Hooker Furniture

Year Founded: 1924

Headquarters: Martinsville, Virginia

Brands: Hooker Furniture, Bradington-Young, Sam Moore Furniture, H Contract*, Home Meridian*

Website: www.hookerfurniture.com

Products Implemented: Microsoft Dynamics AX, Microsoft Dynamics 365 for Customer Service, Office 365

Sunrise Customer Since: 2010

*Not included in the Sunrise project

SELECTION

Hooker Furniture considered several ERP systems to help unify its brands. However, after a careful selection process that included demos, proposals, and reference calls, the Hooker team chose a clear winner – Microsoft Dynamics AX.

With its innate flexibility and built-in configurator, it was the best solution on the market to handle all the complexities of manufacturing configured products, case goods, and upholstered items.

Hooker had a very deliberate and diligent approach to the search for both its new ERP solution and implementation partner. The team contacted Microsoft directly to ask who would be the best partner for the job and again they found a clear winner – Sunrise.

“With a strong track record of successful implementations, several key industry references, and consultants who were both local and had a long history in furniture manufacturing, we knew Sunrise was the best fit for the project,” said Charlene Bowling, who was the CIO of Hooker Furniture during the project.

“Microsoft brought Sunrise to us to conduct the demos and we became comfortable and confident working with Sunrise and [Sunrise] had experience with others in the furniture industry.”

***Charlene Bowling
CIO (ret.) | Hooker Furniture***



GOALS, CHALLENGES, AND SOLUTIONS

Unification

While the addition of Bradington-Young and Sam Moore brought significant benefits to Hooker Furniture, like all acquisitions, there were also challenges.

The primary goal of the project was to unite the Hooker family of brands (Hooker Furniture, Bradington-Young, and Sam Moore Furniture) on a single system and provide a seamless shopping experience for its customers, while still maintaining the personalities and competitive business process that are unique to each brand.

Hooker wanted to provide its customers a variety of options to customize their orders and the ability to purchase across all three brands in a single transaction. However, this desire was severely hampered by disparate, home grown systems across the board. For example, a customer who wished to buy an entertainment center from Hooker, a recliner from Bradington-Young, and an accent chair from Sam Moore would have had to place three separate orders, with three separate invoices, and three separate delivery dates. This was not the experience executives at Hooker wanted for their customers.

By selecting Dynamics AX, Hooker was able to consolidate all three brands behind the scenes and there were tangible signs of unification the day after the final go live. **All three brands can now take advantage of:**

- A standardized, unified order entry process
- Streamlined collaborative manufacturing
- Increased visibility to inventory, production, and financials
- A standardized leather receiving and cover staging process

“We have successfully combined our three businesses onto one platform.”

***Charlene Bowling
CIO (ret.) | Hooker Furniture***

Manual Processes and Visibility

Due to the homegrown nature of the legacy systems, the Hooker brands employed manual processes that were both prone to human error and difficult to track.

One of the major pain points was the manual configuration and pricing of products. On any given piece of furniture, there could be dozens of opportunities for customization, each with its own price point. Prior to the implementation of Dynamics AX, the configuration would be entered as text in order entry and sent to the shop floor. This method relied on experienced, skilled individuals in order entry that were familiar with every possible configuration and trusted that those instructions would be interpreted correctly once they reached the shop floor. It also meant there was no easy way to check that each piece had been priced correctly based on customizations, company-wide promotions, and/or regional discounts.

These manual processes also created challenges when it came time to track inventory and other essential metrics. Like many furniture organizations, physical inventory had to be performed quarterly and a true picture of how the brands were doing wasn't available until month's end.

Sunrise was able to work with Hooker furniture to standardize the order entry process and significantly reduce order entry errors. Today, instead of relying on potentially ambiguous text based directions, the production paperwork is created using a series of drop down menus which automatically adjust the price of the piece. **The corporate office is now able to take advantage of perpetual inventory tracking and ensure that product pricing is consistent and disciplined.**

"We have common processes now and can serve our customers better."

*Christy Magee
Director of Applications | Hooker Furniture*

Configuration and Scheduling

As any furniture manufacturer knows, **scheduling the production and delivery of a configured product can be one of the most challenging aspects of the business.** It can be far too easy for one small error to quickly snowball into a costly mess. While this was being handled adequately before the implementation, the Hooker team knew that it could certainly be improved with Dynamics AX.

While Dynamics is particularly suited for flexible, configurable products, Sunrise was able to improve on the out-of-the-box functionality through the creation of a leather receiving process, a cover staging process, and a scheduling workbench.

Working with leather can be especially challenging for any organization. With imperfect square footage and hides of different quality and color, keeping track of inventory can be a headache – let alone matching materials to cover pieces quickly and efficiently. With the leather receiving process created by Sunrise, **Bradington-Young and Sam Moore were able to accurately measure and record hide square footage in Dynamics AX after receiving the bulk leather inventory.** This allowed for better quantity variance tracking without holding up the production scheduling process. **The cover staging process built on this efficiency by allowing for more precise inventory management of both leather hides and fabric.**

Prior to working with Sunrise, scheduling production was an incredibly manual process. Schedulers had to take into consideration available inventory and the capacity of specialized production lines to ensure that all pieces in a sales order finished at roughly the same time. After Sunrise implemented the scheduling work bench, this became a much more automated process. **With increased visibility to accurate inventory amounts and in-coming sales orders and production orders, schedulers are now able to streamline production and ensure that each production line is working at peak capacity.**

“The Sunrise team and the Hooker team worked very well together [not just on complicated interfaces] but many things... and we were able to achieve our goals together. ”

*Christy Magee
Director of Applications | Hooker Furniture*

Customer Service

One of the early goals of Hooker Furniture's ERP implementation was to present "one voice to the customer". With the introduction of Dynamics 365, the team at Hooker saw another opportunity to further this objective. **"We were looking for a new CRM system because we wanted to be able to track and measure how we are performing in our customers' eyes,"** said Christy Magee, Director of Applications at Hooker Furniture.

While Hooker Furniture has always prided itself on superior customer service, it was facing many challenges due to its outdated system and knew there was room for improvement. With over thirty customer care representatives fielding customer questions and requests everyday, tracking customer interactions across more than one agent was a real struggle, as was case management.

This desire to have better case management capabilities was one of the many reasons that Dynamics 365 for Customer Service was such a good fit. Additionally, according to Magee, **"We were also looking to the future. We thought about where we are going with our [ERP] implementation and it just made sense that we would want something that would integrate...it just seemed like a natural fit."**

After implementing Dynamics 365 for Customer Service, the Hooker customer care team is able to create and track cases as well as store all customer communications. Today, if a customer follows up on a previous call, any agent is able to review the previous conversations and pick up right where the last agent stopped. **Hooker has also seen improved reporting capabilities and more accurate measures of customer satisfaction.**

"We're seeing the benefits of it now, but I also see it growing with us as we continue to find new ways to use the solution."

*Christy Magee
Director of Applications | Hooker Furniture*

CONCLUSION

When the selection team at Hooker Furniture started out on their implementation journey, they weren't entirely sure which solution was going to be the right fit for them. However, they did have an end goal in mind: **to provide a unified brand voice to their customers and to continue to build on their long standing reputation of quality, service, and value.**

In the end, Dynamics AX ended up being the right choice for this global, multi-brand, multi-channel company. It offered Hooker the opportunity to **unify its three brands under a single system, to automate and streamline processes that were previously highly manual and prone to error, and provide better visibility throughout the organization.** With the addition of Dynamics 365 for Customer Service, Hooker has also been able to **add another layer of accountability and measurement to customer care transactions** – furthering its outstanding reputation.

By selecting a solution that is able to grow and adapt with the organization, Hooker has taken the first steps in ensuring that its clients will hear its “one voice” loud and clear today, tomorrow, and twenty years from now.

LEARN MORE

To learn more about this project, including press releases and videos, please visit: <http://sunrise.co/one-voice>

