

## Zebra Pen Corporation

- Leading manufacturer of writing instruments improves visibility with Dynamics AX

### OVERVIEW

#### CLIENT

Zebra Pen Corporation

#### CUSTOMER PROFILE

Zebra Pen Corporation is a leading manufacturer of writing instruments, including ball point pens, highlighters, mechanical pencils, gel rollers, and correction pens.

#### BUSINESS SITUATION

Zebra Pen was moving their manufacturing operations to Mexico, and needed a system to support their new business model.

#### SOLUTION

Zebra Pen implemented Microsoft's Dynamics™ AX ERP system to manage their Financials, Inventory, Production, and Distribution operations.

#### BENEFITS

- Increased control over their inventory
- Enhanced customer service levels
- Improved efficiencies and lowered operating costs

### Background

Based in Edison, New Jersey, Zebra Pen Corporation was founded in 1982 as a wholly owned subsidiary of Zebra Co. Ltd., a global manufacturer of fine writing instruments based in Tokyo, Japan. Zebra Pen offers an extensive line of writing instruments including ball point pens, highlighters, mechanical pencils, gel rollers, and correction pens. Zebra Pen stands behind their name, and guarantees quality, satisfaction, and ultimate writing performance.

Zebra Pen's writing products are widely distributed through a variety of dealers, including food chains, discount chains, drug chains, office supply stores, stationary stores, wholesale clubs, and mail order companies. Zebra Pen also offers an advertising specialty division whereby promotional pens can be customized for use in their customer's branding activities.

### Situation

Zebra Pen's products are manufactured in several countries in the Asia Pacific region, including China, Japan, and Indonesia. These pens are then imported to North America, where Zebra Pen performs a final inspection and packages the products for distribution. Zebra Pen runs a high volume blister packaging operation with roughly 200 production employees. Once packaged, these products are warehoused and are ready to be picked, packed, and shipped out to their customers.

In a move to drive costs out of the organization and continue to be competitive in the global marketplace, Zebra Pen made a strategic decision in 2001 to move their production activities to a facility in Mexico. This move essentially required Zebra Pen to start their new operations from the ground up.

As the new facility came online, Zebra Pen immediately saw the limitations in their current software systems. "At the time, we were using an old IBM AS/400 system that was built for distributors", stated Clem Restaino, President of Zebra Pen Corporation. "We tried to make it work, but it just didn't fit. As a result, roughly 9 out of 10 activities including inventory management, purchasing, and production scheduling were being done manually."

In addition to all of their manual operations, Zebra Pen was suffering from a lack of visibility into their production and distribution operations. "Since our operations were now located a long distance from our headquarters, we needed to watch things much more closely", continued Mr. Restaino. "With our existing systems, we just couldn't get a good handle of what was happening in our Mexico facility, and as a result, our inventory was really out of control. We needed a business system that was built to manage our type of production and supply chain operations."

### Solution

After deciding to invest in a new enterprise software system, Zebra Pen Corporation began an evaluation of new packages, evaluating companies like SAP, Oracle, Microsoft, and others. "We looked at 4 or 5 different vendors", explained Mr. Restaino. "At the end of the day, Microsoft's Dynamics AX was clearly the most compatible solution with our business model."

Microsoft Dynamics AX is an adaptable, easy-to-use ERP software system that is capable of running all of Zebra Pen's operations in a single system. Zebra Pen selected Systems Advisers Group, a Gold-Certified Microsoft partner, to help them with their

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Since the facility in Mexico was clearly the biggest priority, Zebra Pen began the project with a rapid implementation of Dynamics AX

## How can we assist you next?

Systems Advisers Group is a global Gold Certified Microsoft partner providing software solutions and services around Microsoft's Dynamics AX enterprise software system.

## Let's talk

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www.systemsadvisers.com