



## North Sails Case Story

*“As our business focus is not implementing business management solutions, we wanted to work with the experts. Partner Power quickly demonstrated a good understanding of our challenges and business priorities. They worked directly with each country manager to gain an insight into the specifics of their local business,” Lars Ive, Chief Executive Officer, North Sails Denmark.* Today, North Sails has improved efficiency and gained control by having fast access to accurate business data.

### About North Sails

- North Sails designs and makes customized sails, and has built its success on offering customers best quality sails.
- Today, North Sails is the world’s premier sail maker with 63 major lofts and 56 service, sales, and satellite lofts in 29 countries.

### Benefits

- Consolidated financial information
- Fast access to business data
- Better and faster decision-making process
- Significant increase in productivity
- Staff freed up for customer focus

### Solution

- CORE solution based on Microsoft Dynamics NAV
- Integration to North Sails’ design and production system, prepayments, Intrastat functionalities.
- Implemented in Denmark, Spain, Belgium, New Zealand & the UK

*North Sails designs and makes customized sails and the company has built its success on offering customers best quality sails. North Sails has more than 100 sales, service, and production operations in around 29 countries. Because the company achieved rapid expansion in Europe primarily by acquisition, its European operations—run by North Sails Denmark—were more a series of individual companies than a consolidated business.*

### North Sails’ situation

Focusing on the financial management of the business has never been the top priority for North Sails, but managers recognized that, if

the business was to continue its success, it would need to introduce a common financial infrastructure.

Lars Ive, Chief Executive Officer of North Sails Denmark, says: *“Designing and building the best sails possible is our priority. But, to run an international business effectively, we needed to connect each operation and build a consolidated organization. With local operations running independently—with their own financial systems—it was impossible for managers to make accurate comparisons. There was simply no standardized way of accounting or financial reporting.”*

The company ran its own production and design system, which held all customer data, including initial orders, design, and pricing of the sails. A range of book-keeping systems were used in each country operation for managing day-to-day invoices, purchase orders, and salaries. Financial administrators had to import financial data into Microsoft® Office Excel® manually, which was then sent to Denmark to be consolidated at the company's headquarters. By the time this was pulled together, the figures were already out of date. And with old systems and inefficient methods, financial administrators wasted considerable time entering data into different systems.

*"Getting the financial backbone of the company right was key to moving the business forward," Ive says. "It took months to do the annual accounts because systems were not integrated and all processes were manual. As chief executive, I had to be able to access up-to-date financial data quickly. I couldn't wait for months. And it was the same for my managers. Having fast access to data would improve decision-making and free staff up to focus on our customers."*

## The solution

At its headquarters, North Sails Denmark was already using an earlier version of Microsoft Dynamics NAV. Administrators found it easy to use once they had imported the business figures from Office Excel. When looking at the roll-out of a solution across the organization, Microsoft Dynamics NAV multi-site and multi-language functionality was invaluable in being able to meet local requirements. And when considering future needs, the scalability of the solution meant it would be able to meet increased demands as the business grew and new countries were added. The company, therefore, decided to retain Microsoft Dynamics NAV and persuade local managers of the benefits of extending the solution across the business.

North Sails Denmark turned to Microsoft Gold Certified Partner, Partner Power International (PPI). Lars Ive says: *"PPI soon demonstrated an understanding of our challenges and business priorities. As our business focus is not implementing business management solutions, we wanted to work with the experts. PPI worked directly with each country manager to gain an insight into the specifics of their local business and ensure they understood what made Microsoft Dynamics NAV the best solution for themselves and the entire organization."*

The first job for PPI was to upgrade headquarters to a newer version of Microsoft Dynamics NAV to benefit from the latest functionality of the product, including business intelligence capabilities, new add-on solutions as well as integration with Microsoft Office 2007. PPI Application Managers then worked with North Sails to understand any vertical requirements for the sail manufacturing industry. They subsequently developed a core functionality module, tailor-made to their needs and that would be needed in all countries by North Sails. This incorporated the need for customer prepayments, as well as adding functionality to meet European Union (EU) requirements of reporting back on stock bought and sold in the EU. PPI also linked Microsoft Dynamics NAV directly into North Sails' own design and production system so that data could be transferred automatically.

Henning Lund, Vice-President at PPI, says: *"Microsoft Dynamics NAV is the perfect solution for growing businesses such as North Sails that operate in multiple countries and need to consolidate business data quickly and accurately. Thanks to our partner organization, we are able to offer customers an efficient, centrally-managed roll-out of a corporate core solution in their subsidiaries world-wide. North Sails did not have to look for a partner in each of the countries where they have operations."*

*We were able to offer North Sails the peace of mind of having one single point of contact for all the roll-outs. We took care of implementing the core solution with the right partner in each country, guaranteeing fast implementation within just 18 days. Customer satisfaction is also important for us, during the implementation projects and after. If North Sails need any help from us after implementation, they just have to call us."*

The project roll-out started in 2006 with the initial upgrade at headquarters. Since then, there have been successful implementations of Microsoft Dynamics NAV at North Sails operations in Belgium, Spain, the United Kingdom and New Zealand.

## Great benefits for North Sails

North Sails is already succeeding in building a strong financial backbone for the company. Using Microsoft Dynamics NAV for financial consolidation is helping managers gain greater financial control over operations by gaining an accurate picture of the business, while financial administrators are making considerable productivity gains by replacing time-consuming administrative tasks with automated processes.

## Managers gain financial control over business

By choosing Microsoft Dynamics NAV, managers at North Sails could gain more control over each operation. Having a standardized environment for accounting and reporting makes it easy to consolidate and analyze all financial data at headquarters. This data is then sent back to each operation with regular reports, providing managers in each country with a common view across the business.

Lars Ive says: *"With the same accounting plans and financial system in place, for the first time I have an up-to-date picture of the entire business and can make accurate comparisons*

*of performance between operations. This knowledge can be shared with managers so we can proactively make changes to the business. Having this information available encourages country managers to contact each other to share knowledge from successes and challenges. Such business insight can only strengthen our position."*

## Financial administrators boost productivity

Financial administrators at North Sails are more productive since the rollout of Microsoft Dynamics NAV. Despite completely changing the financial processes in each country, the flexibility of Microsoft Dynamics NAV meant that user training took less than two days, and administrators were quickly familiar with the new solution. Since then, working life for financial staff has become significantly easier. Tedious manual tasks have been considerably reduced, replaced with automated processes that give financial staff more time to spend on higher value tasks. Ive says: *"Financial staff no longer have to re-enter data between systems. All tasks that require data gathering—such as ending and closing the books—are much easier now that information can be transferred automatically between systems. Completing annual reports takes less than two weeks, taking away months of previously time-consuming activities for financial administrators."*

## Solution frees up staff for customer-focused activities

Since the introduction of Microsoft Dynamics NAV, employees at headquarters and local offices have had time freed up so they can focus on customer-facing activities and drive new areas of development with sails design and building.

Ive says: *"Having a new financial infrastructure in place with Microsoft Dynamics NAV means we can spend more time on the work that*



*drives our business forward—sail production and development. This is important because we have more time to spend on keeping our customers happy.”*

## About Partner Power

Partner Power is a global provider of Microsoft Dynamics solutions and services specializing in creating value for international organizations with offices in more than one country. When you work with Partner Power, you tap into the knowledge and experience of a global organization made up of the leading Microsoft certified professionals working locally in 53 countries.

The Partner Power product portfolio consists of Microsoft Dynamics AX, Microsoft Dynamics NAV, Microsoft Dynamics CRM and over 75 proven industry-specific solutions. Partner Power offers international organizations the largest range of implementation and consulting services based on Microsoft Dynamics in the world. Partner Power services are built on best practices from thousands of live cases in a variety of industries across the globe.

With our unique international focus, exclusive committed partnership model, and flexible way of working, we deliver solutions and services that enable international organizations to increase control, improve efficiency, and boost collaboration across multiple sites and cultures before, during and after your international project.

## Do you want to learn more?

Please contact Partner Power International.

---

Address	Christianshusvej 193, DK-2970 Hoersholm
Phone	+45 7674 3100
Internet	<a href="http://www.partnerpower.biz">www.partnerpower.biz</a>
E-mail	<a href="mailto:info@partnerpower.biz">info@partnerpower.biz</a>

---