

Case Study

“Providing Expert Business Technology Services & Ongoing Support, Green Beacon Solutions Extends the Power of Microsoft Dynamics® AX for AliMed”



At A Glance

A Trusted Advisor - Green Beacon is an extension of AliMed's team and a valued, expert resource.

Business Process Improvements - Projects include CRM, EDI and financial systems, among others.

Managed Services - Green Beacon provides high-value, lower cost support, maintenance and advisory services.

A Growing Company, a Busy IT Staff, and a Trusted Partner

In business for more than 30 years, AliMed is a medical supply distributor and manufacturer offering more than 70,000 unique products. The company is confronted with rapidly changing business dynamics as more processes, customer interactions and engagements are conducted on-line instead of through off-line catalogs. The IT organization has needed to evaluate and ultimately overhaul much of its environment - including its enterprise resource planning (ERP) system. They are ensuring the company's critical IT systems are well-supported and “future-proof.”

But AliMed's IT team, like many, is lean and over-extended. Fred Fish, the company's MIS manager, and his team are responsible for five critical areas - infrastructure, compliance, the corporate Web sites, projects to drive business performance improvements, and operations support. Operations support accounts for nearly 80 percent of the MIS team's time. With only 20 percent of bandwidth left to focus on the other areas, including important projects, Fish relies on talented external partners. Chief among them is Green Beacon Solutions. Green Beacon partners with clients to implement integrated financial, supply chain, sales automation, and marketing business solutions built on proven Microsoft technologies.

AliMed first engaged Green Beacon in 2008 to integrate Microsoft Dynamics AX with Starship, AliMed's shipping platform, and Microsoft® CRM. With the successful completion of these initial projects the relationship between the two organizations evolved into a long-term, trusted partnership. Today Green Beacon provides AliMed with implementation expertise across many technologies, and Managed Services for Microsoft Dynamics AX - including support, maintenance and advisory services.

“Green Beacon is tremendously valuable to my organization and acts as a true partner – extending the expertise, ability and depth of my own team,” said Fish. “The benefit of working with Green Beacon is the on-going access to experts in ERP, CRM and other technologies vital to our business. We are consistently engaged with Green Beacon on multiple projects and they always bring best practices, relevant experience and worthy suggestions.”

Powering Business Process Improvements

As any IT organization in manufacturing recognizes, the ERP system provides the backbone of operations – impacting processes from shipping and receiving to customer tracking and product management and development. As a primarily Microsoft-based shop AliMed liked the ease of use, functionality and strong vendor presence that came with Microsoft Dynamics AX.

It was important to AliMed that Microsoft Dynamics AX integrate with their shipping and receiving system, as AliMed ships 800 plus packages per day. So Fish engaged Green Beacon to recommend, design and implement a solution. Green Beacon recommended Starship and AliMed appreciated its ease of use, and the fact that it ran on thin clients – saving costs while allowing AliMed to increase the number of shipping stations on the floor. The system was also more physically secure and easier to manage as it could live on a server in the data center, rather than out on the shipping floor – a rather hectic environment.

“Through this initial engagement we gained great confidence in Green Beacon. The engineers were very talented, the work was completed on-time and the implementation as a whole went very smoothly,” said Fish.

Green Beacon Is AliMed's Trusted Advisor

Other projects with Green Beacon have followed. In each one, Fish reports Green Beacon has shown the same dedication to collaboration and communication, responsiveness, and ability to create and implement best-practice based solutions that have positive impact on AliMed.

“After three years of working together they are really a trusted partner, and act as an extension of our team. With Green Beacon we essentially double our staff, adding experts in the specific projects we are undertaking,” said Fish.

And Green Beacon's expertise is diverse. “Whether the project is related to shipping, CRM, financial accounting or the web site, Green Beacon has been able to provide us dedicated experts,” continued Fish. “I've learned that if it is an integration issue with AX, Green Beacon is able to do it for you.”

Those other initiatives include:

- **Improved Sales Reporting** – Green Beacon implemented a database to normalize historical sales information from the legacy system to work seamlessly within AX. This automated a painful manual process for AliMed's sales team as they leveraged data to create sales forecasts and review performance.
- **Knowledge Database for Customer Support** - AliMed's customer support team requires immediate access to significant amounts of information in order to address customer questions regarding the thousands of products. Green Beacon helped implement a Microsoft CRM knowledge-sharing database where support

Testimonial

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representatives can find, update and add frequently asked questions. This saves considerable time and effort in providing prompt response to customers and training new employees.

- **Fully-Integrated EDI** – After a couple of false starts with other vendors, AliMed engaged Green Beacon to integrate its legacy EDI solution, Softshare, with Dynamics AX, allowing employees to start the process from within AX, instead of opening another application. This allows for easier and faster exchange of information between AliMed and its partners and suppliers.
- **Automated New Account Integration with AX** – As AliMed’s business moves from offline catalogs to the Web, Green Beacon is writing a complete set of integration software for our new Website including, customer accounts, ship-to addresses, sales orders, inventory status, order status, and other important information.
- **Streamlined Invoice Processing** – Green Beacon streamlined the past due invoice process for AliMed. Previously, employees labored to fax or email individual invoices, but the system is now automated, saving significant time for the accounts payable department.

The companies are currently working together to build out another AliMed organization on Dynamics AX. The new organization, focused on consumers, instead of hospitals and medical suppliers, needs to address the nuances of business-to-consumer operations – from credit card processing to content and marketing changes. Green Beacon is creating the Dynamics AX environment that will support this initiative.

Testimonial

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Managed Support

Because of the strong working relationship and positive experiences AliMed chose to move to Green Beacon for SmoothSail Managed Services of the Dynamics AX environment. Green Beacon provides on-going support, maintenance and consulting. With in-depth knowledge of the product and AliMed’s environment, Green Beacon is able to deliver service and insight customized to ensure AliMed’s current and future objectives are met.

“This is truly the best of both worlds,” says Fish. “We get quick response, a closer partnership, lower costs, and high-value support from Green Beacon, while maintaining a back-line escalation to Microsoft when necessary.”

A High-Value Partnership

AliMed continues to increase in scope and scale, yet the IT team remains the same size. Fish credits Green Beacon with enabling the IT department to effectively support the Dynamics AX business applications, MS CRM and various, integrated third party software products. “We want to do a lot of things in IT to improve business performance and ensure our company is well-positioned for growth. A lot of these projects involve extending the functionality of complex tools. Every time we’ve asked Green Beacon to help with a project, the solution has turned out well.”

About Green Beacon Solutions

Green Beacon Solutions enables companies to achieve an ongoing return-on-investment from their Microsoft Dynamics business solutions. Backed by highly skilled, cost-effective resources with strong technology and industry expertise, we work hard to understand our customers' objectives, challenges, and needs to ensure that we deliver the solutions that they require.

We constantly strive to improve our practices, delivery methods and understanding about how our interactions impact our customers business. It is this commitment to providing expertise, guidance and value that makes our relationships successful and lasting.



GREEN BEACON SOLUTIONS

Green Beacon Solutions implements integrated financial, supply chain, sales automation, and marketing business solutions built on Microsoft technologies within the distribution, professional services, banking, and manufacturing industries.

Since 2001, we have delivered unique software, consulting, and managed service solutions, built upon our project LightShip Methodology and integrating our CompassPoint Solution software accelerators to help clients quickly and cost-effectively meet their goals.

Our clients demonstrate their satisfaction through repeat engagements and service recommendations. By choosing Green Beacon Solutions, companies choose a trusted advisor with recognized market experience who guarantees project success by meeting their business objectives, project budget, and timelines.

Company:

- Established in 2001
- Headquartered in Boston, Massachusetts
- Offices in New York, Philadelphia, and Houston
- Specializing in the design, development, and implementation of Microsoft Dynamics Business Solutions and after-market support services for many leading ERP and CRM software packages.
- Microsoft Gold-Certified Partner
- Serving over 100 Microsoft Dynamics customers globally