

ZAGAT SURVEY

Solution Overview

Industry

Publishing

Microsoft Business Solutions Partner

IBM Business Consulting Services
New York, New York, USA

Scenario

A growing company, Zagat Survey was unable to manage their increasingly complex business with a limited accounting package.

Company Profile

Zagat Survey publishes approximately 45 guides to dining, travel, shopping and leisure for more than 70 cities worldwide available in print, online and for PDAs.

Benefits

Microsoft Business Solutions increased Zagat Survey's control over manufacturing inventory, brought new functionality and efficiency to online order processing and improved financial reporting capabilities.

Software Used

Microsoft Business Solutions—Great Plains

- Financial Management
- Supply Chain Management
- Manufacturing
- Customization Tools
- E-commerce
- EthoTech Quick Track
- Microsoft Windows® NT®

Demographic Information

Number of Employees: 110
Number of Users: 25

Migrated from QuickBooks

Zagat Survey needed a powerful business system capable of complex inventory control, order trafficking and online ordering. Microsoft® Business Solutions—Great Plains® gave Zagat Survey an off-the-shelf solution that has boosted the company's productivity at many levels.

Using consumer survey responses, Zagat Survey produces guides to dining, travel, shopping, golf, movies and other leisure activities. Founded in 1979 by Tim and Nina Zagat, the company began with the *New York City Restaurant Guide*. Today, Zagat Survey produces approximately 45 titles covering more than 70 cities worldwide.

Growing Out of QuickBooks

Originally, Zagat Survey managed their business using QuickBooks. As the company grew, the limited accounting package was unable to support the increasing complexity of the business. With inadequate capabilities outside of general ledger, QuickBooks did not provide Zagat Survey with a way to monitor outsourced manufacturing processes, control inventory or traffic sales orders from receipt to fulfillment. The company resorted to working via shared spreadsheets, which were not only inconvenient to busy staff members, but often inaccurate.

"We needed something that was more robust and could handle the needs of our growing business," says Steven DeLorenzo, Zagat Survey's Chief Operating Officer and Chief Financial Officer.

The principal requirement of Zagat Survey's new business solution would be control of sales order trafficking from order to fulfillment. As a substantial part of the business, Zagat Survey provides products to corporations for use as corporate gifts, promotional items or sales incentives. These guides are sent to outside vendors for customization, which includes the "gold-stamping" of a corporate logo or information on the book's cover. Zagat Survey needed a way to accurately and efficiently track this process. Additionally, the company needed a system with budget control capabilities, enhanced financial reporting and an online order entry system.

A Ready-Made Solution

With this list of requirements in hand, Zagat Survey began looking at the available options, including tier-one solutions. Given both time and budget constraints, the company did not want a system that would require extensive consultation and customization. Through Microsoft Business Solutions reselling and implementation partner, IBM Business Consulting Services, Zagat Survey discovered Microsoft Business Solutions—Great Plains.

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Chief Financial Officer
Chief Operating Officer
Zagat Survey

As the busy season was quickly approaching, Zagat Survey needed a fast implementation with guaranteed functionality. IBM Business Consulting Services worked with Zagat Survey to develop a thorough project plan. Together they set an aggressive 10-week implementation timeline.

Sophisticated Inventory Control

As IBM Business Consulting Services completed the implementation and configuration process, staff at Zagat Survey began to see the advantages in the open architecture of Microsoft Business Solutions. IBM Business Consulting Services readily adapted the Manufacturing Order module to Zagat Survey's unique specifications, including multiple routings to outside vendors within each order.

"I was very impressed with the flexibility of the module, the configuration options available and our partner's skill in being able to utilize those options to create something that suits us to a tee," DeLorenzo says.

Ease & Efficiency in Online Sales

Zagat Survey also implemented the eOrder module, an e-commerce storefront designed to be simple to implement, maintain and use. The company also added Quick Track, a third-party solution that allows Zagat Survey to load tracking information and automatically check real-time shipping information to verify delivery status.

eOrder immediately began to increase the efficiency and service level of the ordering processes. Zagat Survey is now open for business 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Additionally, eOrder makes it possible for customers and staff to quickly check the status of an order at any step along the way.

On the backend, eOrder has eliminated redundant data entry, as orders are automatically entered in the sales order module and are available for immediate processing. This seamless workflow has increased the speed of order processing, eliminated the risk of error and saved staff valuable time and effort.

Streamlined Processes throughout the Company

Microsoft Business Solutions has enhanced financial operations as well. Previously, Zagat Survey had to manually extract data from QuickBooks and enter it into a spreadsheet to produce their financial reports. The company now utilizes the FRx Financial Reporter module to instantly produce a variety of reports including departmental statements, budget reporting and most importantly, reports by individual product line. These reports enable Zagat Survey to make more informed strategic decisions, allowing managers to set direction based on current, accurate, and relevant financial data.

Microsoft Business Solutions has eliminated a significant number of inefficient manual processes and provided many new capabilities that have improved the overall health of the business. A scalable solution, Zagat Survey is confident that the solution will continue to help grow the business.

For more information about Microsoft Business Solutions, visit www.microsoft.com/BusinessSolutions

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