



SOLUTION BRIEF

Customer Profile

In 1986, a recreation minister named Caz McCaslin, started the first Upward Basketball league at a church in Spartanburg, South Carolina. This league was different from other leagues because the emphasis was placed on Christlikeness and good sportsmanship, not the final score of the game.

Business Situation

Fast growth and an ineffective deployment of Siebel drove Upward to select a partner who could deploy an end-to-end Dynamics solution to meet its unique business environment

Solution

- > Microsoft Dynamics GP
- > Microsoft Dynamics CRM
- > Microsoft Office 2007
- > Microsoft SQL Server

Benefits

- > Scaled to business growth without adding additional staff
- > Dynamics CRM saved the company \$400,000 over two-year period
- > Eliminated manual re-key of data
- > Sales and service professionals are more proactive and can better assist churches
- > Automated program tracking with automated milestones
- > Better reporting and real-time access to data

Industry

Non-profit; Christian Organization

ePartners Success Story

Onward and Upward with Improved Efficiency and Streamlined Business Processes



At Upward Unlimited, it's about playing sports and having fun, but more importantly, changing hearts and lives through salvation and ministry.

Upward is an evangelistic sports ministry specifically designed for k-5 through sixth grade boys and girls that promotes salvation, character and self-esteem. Upward is growing by leaps and bounds, increasing revenues 20-30% year after year. Upward began as a small basketball program at seven churches and now has participation from over 2,000 churches and over 500,000 children. In addition to basketball, Upward offers programs in cheerleading, soccer and flag football, as well as camps in these particular sports.

The Upward program has been used in over 40 countries through church mission trips and global offices in South Africa, Ireland, and Mexico. "We learned that worldwide, only 4% of children ages five to 12 reside in the US," says Pamela Westbrooks, Vice President of Administration for Upward. "We have put a plan in place to reach out to these children with sports rather than through traditional missionary programs."

Scaleable

Upward first implemented Microsoft Dynamics GP in 1998, only two years after its inception, with the assistance of a small local CPA firm. "Although we were a small company back then with revenues of a few hundred thousand a year, we saw the vision and selected a package that would grow with us," says Westbrooks. Since 1998, Dynamics GP has scaled as the company has grown into a \$28 million organization. "We are a unique company in that around 75% of our transaction flow is in a four-month period from November to January," explains Westbrooks. "For example, during that timeframe last year, 320,000 kids played basketball all over the country through church-sponsored Upward programs, and we need a system we can count on."

Upward selected ePartners to provide an end-to-end Dynamics solution. "ePartners understands our company and our unique business processes," says Westbrooks. "Our main focus at Upward is not the bottom line. Instead, we are driven by our mission of introducing children to Jesus Christ by creating opportunities to serve through sports. When I talk to ePartners I hear their excitement about helping us to support our mission and the programs we are executing." At the same time it invests back into its evangelist programs, Upward and its board of directors understand the importance of investing in technology and streamlining processes where necessary.

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Replacing Siebel

Upward's 20 regional and service employees were utilizing Siebel as a stand-alone CRM application and it wasn't working. "No one had up-to-date information, and most people were still tracking things in separate spreadsheets because the Siebel user interface was difficult and the system didn't match our business needs," says Westbrook. "It was not working, and we knew we needed to do something about it." At this time, Upward looked to ePartners and Microsoft Dynamics CRM.

"Dynamics CRM is awesome!" says Westbrook. "It has helped us respond more efficiently and effectively to all of our church partners. Due to this major improvement, we have saved over \$400,000 over the past two years because we have not had to hire additional service representatives. This allows us to invest more resources in developing our programs to further our mission."

Upward's regional and service teams use automated processes to track churches and assist their Upward leagues. For example, when churches attend the required two-day Upward Leadership Training Conference and order their customized brochures online (used as an advertising tool), CRM captures this information and puts key dates in place. Service representatives are prompted to call and follow up after the brochure order to see how recruitment is going, follow up after the player evaluations, the first game, and after the End of Season celebrations.

"We were not tracking any of this information prior to implementing Dynamics CRM," says Westbrook. "There was no integration between the service and accounting data, so information had to be keyed twice, and often participant kits (containing uniforms, CDs, bibles and awards) were lost." Dynamics GP and CRM are integrated, providing up-to-date information for analysis and to query for further information. We have discovered information that is helpful in servicing our church partners. It's information that we never had before."

ePartners customized several fields in Dynamics CRM for Upward. For example, each church has a different screen within the system for each sport it offers. Additionally, ePartners has deployed several third party products to support the Dynamics deployment at Upward.

Future plans

"As we prepare for our goal of reaching one million children in a season by the year 2011, we are fully confident in the ability of Dynamics to support our business software needs," says Westbrook. Upward has a plan to upgrade to Dynamics GP version 10 in early 2008 and add cash flow management and advanced distribution. "ePartners continues to provide 'out of the box' answers to fit the uniqueness of our business."



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