

## Laying the Foundations for Effective Reporting



After realising their previous accounting application was no longer up to the task, Atlas Concrete seized the chance to update to a flexible, powerful ERP system that could meet all their reporting needs and integrate with their new sales order capture system.

### Customer Overview

For more than half a century, Atlas Concrete has manufactured and supplied concrete and related products to Auckland and its surrounding regions. Between the company's 4 business divisions, Atlas manages every part of the concrete creation process; from quarrying the stone for aggregate and dredging the sand, all the way through to selling building products and precast concrete slabs.

Since its beginnings in the 1940s, Atlas has grown alongside Auckland. From its start as simply a family-owned business, the company now employs over 280 people in 9 branches, and operates a fleet of more than 120 concrete delivery trucks. And as Atlas has grown, so has its need for reliable, flexible financial management and reporting across all of its divisions.

### The Challenge

Things came to head in 2006 when Atlas management realised the company's phenomenal growth meant their existing application, Global, could no longer meet their reporting needs. Company Accountant, John Horanyi comments, "While Global had been good for us in the past, we'd just become too big and complex for it to manage. We desperately needed to upgrade to something that would suit the size of the company we'd become."

Atlas put the search out to competitive tender, and spent some time defining their requirements. A well-supported, easy-to-use financial management / ERP system that simplified both ad hoc and consolidated reporting across divisions was a bare minimum. Before the tender, consolidation had involved manually assembling information from multiple spreadsheets: a tedious and time-consuming process that allowed potential inaccuracies to slip in.

Beyond this, however, they also wanted to free up the time and energy they'd previously spent re-keying information between systems. This meant the end solution had to integrate with their sales order software, Command; and automatically reconcile with their banking system. And finally, Atlas needed confidence that the product they chose would continue to be supported on a long-term basis.

### The Solution

After carefully considering Atlas's needs, Olympic Software had no hesitation proposing Microsoft Dynamics GP, coupled with their GP2Bank electronic banking application. "GP is flexible enough to meet Atlas's reporting needs now, and scalable enough to continue meeting them as the company grows," explains Olympic's Lead Consultant, Diane Terry. "Not only could Atlas quickly and easily create the ad hoc reports they needed, but consolidating reports across their diverse businesses suddenly became a breeze!"

Combine this with the powerful extensibility that would allow direct integration with Command and save their staff having to double-enter information, and Atlas agreed they were onto a winner.

### Implementation

Atlas asked Olympic to install Microsoft Dynamics GP for each of their business divisions, set up all integrations, train their users, and offer expert advice on how best to host the solution across multiple locations.

Additionally, Terry recalls, in the course of the implementation, the company discovered unexpected opportunities to create more efficient processes around their use of Command. Working together with Atlas, Olympic recommended new procedures that would save the company time and money.

### The Results

Knowing exactly where the money is coming from and going, across business divisions and branches, is critical for any business; and the new financial / ERP system ensures Atlas management clearly understand exactly how the company is performing at any given point in time.

On top of this, now that consolidated reporting is simply a matter of running pre-defined reports (rather than manually manipulating spreadsheets), Horanyi reports that the time it takes him to run month end processes has shrunk "from an average of 3-4 days down to less than a single day across all four companies".

And by reducing the need for staff to re-key information between applications, the new integrations are saving the company yet more time day-to-day. All in all, agrees Horanyi, the new system has truly laid the foundation for more efficient, effective reporting at Atlas.

### Highlights

- Atlas Concrete sought a new ERP / financial management system that would meet reporting needs that had increased with growth.
- Atlas decided on Microsoft Dynamics GP for its powerful reporting capability, flexibility, and ability to integrate with existing systems.
- Olympic provided the software, integrations, project management, post-implementation support services, and end-user training.
- Atlas management can now get a clear picture of company performance, with reporting available at cost centre level; and the company is saving days each month through consolidated reporting and reduced rework.

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