

# ERP solution helps drive fast growth of Formula One team

Team Lotus, the Formula One team that brought the Lotus name back into Grand Prix racing in 2010 and has now been rebranded as the Caterham F1 Team for 2012, has implemented **Microsoft Dynamics AX**, Microsoft's enterprise resource planning (ERP) solution, to enable it to achieve full control and visibility of purchasing and stock during this period of rapid growth

**T**eam Lotus has expanded beyond all recognition in the past two years. In October 2009, it had only 11 members of staff, six subcontract designers, four or five suppliers, and a handful of desktop computers with computer aided design (CAD) software, occupying the company's barn headquarters (HQ) in Norfolk, England. Within 12 months, the company had grown to almost 200 employees, a fully functioning CAD system and a full rollout of Microsoft Dynamics AX, managing 720 suppliers.

## Development of the solution

Microsoft Gold Certified Partner eBECS, recognised internationally for its success in delivering Microsoft Dynamics solutions to numerous organisations across the globe, led Team Lotus to Microsoft Dynamics AX. Highly experienced in the design and delivery of manufacturing solutions, particularly in the automotive sector, eBECS managed the development of the solution across the Team's entire operation.

"Microsoft Dynamics AX is used in the finance, manufacturing and purchasing departments," says Stephen Wilson at eBECS. "From the very first day, even before the FIA confirmed the team's entry into the 2010 FIA Formula One World Championship, we recognised that the ERP system would have to accommodate rapid change and be easy to use but equally provide robust control over the entire enterprise. This relied heavily on our industry knowledge and experience."

"It was imperative to us that the ERP system strictly control and manage our stock," says Richard St Clair-Quentin, commercial manager at Team Lotus. "Our cars are highly engineered, and we use expensive materials, such as



carbon fibre and titanium, so we have to be sure that we have full control and visibility over purchasing, manufacturing, stock holding and material consumption, all of which is underpinned by Microsoft Dynamics AX."

One of the key considerations has been the sheer number of drawings processed, which can amount to more than 100 every day and, in addition, the component parts that go into the creation of a Formula One racing car. At any one time, Team Lotus HQ can hold more than 5,000 separate components, all of which need to be purchased and stored before they are used in the manufacturing process.

The working conditions at Team Lotus HQ often are challenging, with pressure on the team to meet strict deadlines. "Every part of the process has to be right," says St Clair-Quentin. "There is no room for error, so timing is crucial. We have relied heavily on the expertise of the eBECS team to implement Microsoft Dynamics AX to



**eBECS is a specialist in the design and delivery of solutions for manufacturing, distribution and professional services including world class lean and agile business solutions using Microsoft Dynamics AX and Dynamics CRM systems**

**Microsoft Dynamics software solutions from eBECS have helped Team Lotus to achieve F1 success in a very short time. The team will be renamed and rebranded as Caterham F1 Team for 2012**

monitor and manage this process. When the Grand Prix season starts, we drop everything to go racing, and on occasion this has meant leaving eBECS in charge of the wheel until we are back. It hasn't let us down."

## Easy integration and deployment

The ease with which Team Lotus was able to integrate and deploy Microsoft Dynamics AX certainly helped the organisation reap benefits quickly, and just four weeks after go-live, eBECS was able to hand over the running of the solution.

In the future, eBECS expects to broaden the scope of Microsoft Dynamics AX, expanding warehouse stock and manufacturing control, improving supplier management, increasing the facility to report the impact analysis of engineering changes, and implementing financial business process improvements.

"Microsoft Dynamics AX implemented by eBECS is the best solution for our needs," says St Clair-Quentin. "The interface is familiar, which is helpful when the team is growing so quickly and in such numbers; it is scalable, so it can expand with our needs; and it gives us solid financial governance and support in our fast-moving enterprise."

Due to the success of the Microsoft Dynamics AX implementation at Team Lotus, eBECS and Microsoft will now be able to offer similar solutions to other Formula One teams up and down the grid.

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