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## Van Hage Case Study – Improving Business Process leads to Success

### The Client

Established over 50 years ago, Van Hage operates three garden centres which sell a wide range of products including plants, furniture, clothes, gifts, and even delicatessen foods. The most recent store, in Peterborough, was opened in February 2010 and has already been voted “Best Garden Centre in the Midlands” by the Garden Centre Association, as well as receiving awards at the East of England Show and being called “a miracle of timber, metal and glass” by the Daily Telegraph.

### The Challenge

Van Hage has been using Microsoft Dynamics NAV since 2001. Over that time, its business needs have changed and Van Hage no longer felt it was making optimal use of the system. Additionally, the flexibility offered by Dynamics NAV allowed users, who had been trained many years earlier, to adopt some of their own specific ways of working. In some cases this led to inconsistencies between working practices, even within departments and frequently resulted in confusion for new users.

With the imminent opening of the Peterborough store, the time was right to realign business and software processes to prevent what were relatively small issues from growing into major procedural problems. David Ogilvie, Finance Director, said “in today’s challenging economy we wanted to find more efficient ways of working with our existing systems to minimise the additional costs of running the extra store, and to simplify the training process for new staff. We also needed to start thinking about some of our business processes, which had worked well as a smaller company but may not cope as our business expanded”.

Adept Software has worked with Van Hage for several years in a consultancy capacity, and with its extensive business systems and Dynamics NAV knowledge Adept was the natural choice of partner to advise on how best to move forwards.

### The solution

To gain a thorough understanding of the issues, Adept spent time analysing the tasks carried out by members of staff from all parts of the business while interviewing them to find out what aspects of their jobs cause frustration and what was on their wish lists of improvements. The results of this process were compiled to form a cohesive set of business procedures, underpinned by the strengths and capabilities of Dynamics NAV.

Following discussion and fine-tuning, Adept’s recommendations were accepted by Van Hage ready for a phased implementation, focussing initially on the Peterborough store.

# Case Study



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To support the implementation, Adept produced training materials for all staff and carried out on-site training courses. Once the new procedures have been successfully embedded at Peterborough they will be rolled out the other two stores, followed by head-office process improvements.

## The Outcome

Says Chris Luther, IT Manager, “we now have a clear idea about how our business systems will support us into the future, and know we’ll see great efficiency savings across the business as new procedures are put into practice. The model is better suited to our continued growth. Our users are happier having well-defined, consistent operating procedures and managers have increased confidence that information in the system, such as stock levels, is accurate – quite a feat with over 200,000 items on sale”.

Following the implementation of these core business processes Van Hage asked Adept to advise them on other aspects to support their growth, including the implementation of software to manage their IT support desk and improvements to management reporting. Development work has taken place to provide better insight to information already stored within the system, giving a clearer picture of what works, what can be improved, and allowing managers to make more informed decisions about the business.

Looking to the future, Van Hage is planning to increase the level of customer service it offers by introducing some innovative new schemes, working with Adept as an implementation partner. “We are confident that Dynamics NAV gives us the tools we need to rapidly adapt to a changing market place, and support us in further enhancing the company’s enviable reputation”, says Ogilvie, adding “Adept are a partner we feel we can trust, and we look forward to continuing to work together”.