

## nChannel Case Study

# Ohio Mulch

nChannel multichannel management platform helps Ohio Mulch manage seasonal bursts and improve customer service

### Overview

#### Country or Region

USA

#### Industry

Landscaping

#### Customer Profile

Ohio Mulch is a landscaping supply business that has been providing innovative products for more than 20 years. They produce and sell more mulch in Ohio than any other manufacturer.

#### Business Situation

Managing the peaks and valleys of a seasonal business can be tricky. Ohio Mulch needed a way to streamline its sales processes for both B2B and B2C customers across almost two dozen eCommerce and physical locations.

#### Solution

nChannel was chosen because only nChannel was able to provide business process, integration, automation, and anywhere, anytime visibility of Ohio Mulch's business.

#### Benefits

- More timely and reliable customer service
- Streamlined order logistics
- Faster order fulfillment
- More consistent and current item management
- Improved inventory management
- More informed decision-making

### Ohio Mulch's Challenge

As Ohio Mulch's landscape supply business grew throughout Ohio and northern Kentucky, their sales channels transformed into a complicated and layered environment, including 28 brick-and-mortar stores and five regional web stores that sold to both B2B and B2C customers. Their physical stores used Microsoft Dynamics RMS for point-of-sale (POS), the web stores were powered by AspDotNetStorefront and their back-end enterprise resource planning (ERP) solution was Microsoft Dynamics NAV.

Some of these systems were connected by outdated (and failing) integration technology, while others had no form of automation and relied on phone, fax, and key entry to communicate. Meanwhile, the amount of data was continuing to grow, manual labor was slowly increasing, and customer service levels were at risk.

Three areas were highly affected by the lack of integration.

#### Bank reconciliation process

Retail sales history reports from all 28 locations came in to Ohio Mulch headquarters on paper. One full-time staff member was solely responsible for manually posting transactions and completing the bank reconciliation. Not only was the risk for error high, but during peak times it was very difficult to keep up with the high volumes of data.

## nChannel Case Study

# Ohio Mulch

### Wholesale customers

A high revenue-generating area for Ohio Mulch is its wholesale channel which is made up primarily of landscaping companies. These wholesale customers typically buy on account but managing that process was extremely inefficient, especially during the busy season when it's not unusual to get a new one each day. Not only did it take up to two days to set up the new account, but when an order was placed in a store, the clerk would have to call headquarters to do a credit lookup in the ERP system and then manually create and send the accounts receivable transaction.

### Multiple regional web stores

Ohio Mulch is organized into five regions and each of them had their own web store. Web orders were faxed to the appropriate physical store for fulfillment which often led to bottlenecks at the store location and delayed fulfillment. Furthermore, if customers wanted to check on the status of their order, they didn't know which store to contact. Once they did reach someone, they were often put on hold or had to be called back while the clerk called around to find out who had the order and when it would be fulfilled. Not only was it time consuming for store personnel, but very frustrating for the customer.

### nChannel's Solution

It was clear that Ohio Mulch needed to streamline their processes and update their technology in order to keep pace with their growing business and still meet the service expectations of their customers. They launched a multichannel management project to address both their brick-and-mortar and web store processes.

### In-store

Ohio Mulch had two options for resolving their in-store issues:

1. Put an instance of the Dynamics NAV system in every store to post transactions and do credit lookups, add the necessary 28 additional seat licenses, and train all in-store staff (including seasonal help).
2. Integrate Dynamics RMS and Dynamics NAV so data could flow automatically between the systems.

They chose the integration route and selected nChannel's cloud-based multichannel management platform as their integration hub. With nChannel's Dynamics RMS Store Operations connector, Dynamics RMS HQ connector and a custom Dynamics NAV connector, Ohio Mulch eliminated a great majority of its manual processes and is now able to:

- Create items in Dynamics NAV and push them to all stores
- Manage pricing by region and by customer
- Post transactions directly to Dynamics NAV
- Automate the reconciliation process
- Instantly create new wholesale accounts so customers can immediately buy in the store
- Conduct credit lookups through the POS system in the store in real time
- Generate accounts receivable transactions and send them to Dynamics NAV

### eCommerce

To reduce maintenance and gain new functionality, Ohio Mulch consolidated its five web stores into a single redesigned site using

## nChannel Case Study

# Ohio Mulch

Shopify. With nChannel's Shopify connector, web orders that were once printed, faxed and manually monitored through the fulfillment process are now routed to the proper store for fulfillment using the nChannel multichannel management platform. To complete the cycle, the nChannel platform automatically sends notification back to Microsoft Dynamics RMS HQ when stores fulfill an order so when customers call in to check on the status of their order, the information is consolidated in one central location.

### Results

After implementing nChannel's multichannel management platform, Ohio Mulch streamlined their order fulfillment process to include total order management from order capture to customer satisfaction.

- New and existing systems are integrated to provide consistent quality service to customers regardless of the customer type or sales channel that initiated the order.
- Item management is managed in one location and syndicated across all channels so data is more current and consistent.
- Ohio Mulch monitors orders via the nChannel platform and can make on-the-fly decisions about fulfillment locations to avoid stock outs and fulfillment bottlenecks at store locations.
- Order statuses are automatically updated to allow service reps to immediately respond to customer inquiries.
- New wholesale customers can make in store purchases on account immediately after signing up.

- Wholesale account balances are more accurate.
- Transaction posting and reconciliation requires less manual labor.
- The order-to-cash cycle is shortened due to faster movement of data.
- Sales processes are more consistent and predictable across all 22 stores and the web.
- Customer-facing employees and managers have visibility to critical data anywhere, anytime to enable better service and more informed decision-making.

### Future Plans

With the success they've experienced so far, Ohio Mulch would like to extend their nChannel implementation to facilitate inventory transfers between stores and reporting in the near future. They also have plans to upgrade to Dynamics NAV 2009 r2 and implement the complimentary version of nChannel's Dynamics NAV connector.

**We were so confident about using nChannel to manage our multichannel environment that we went live the Friday before Mother's Day. It's one of our busiest weekends of the year and our new fulfillment process helped to make it one of the best."**

**- Susan Lucore, Ohio Mulch Controller**