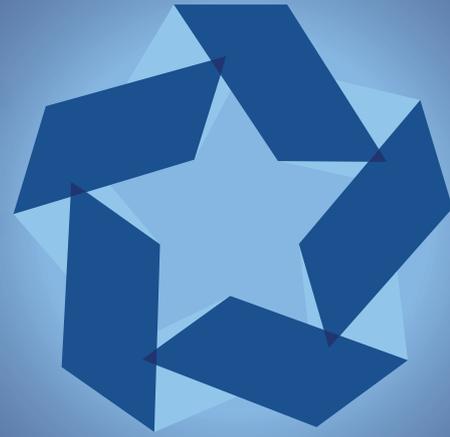


CASE STUDY

HANNIBAL INDUSTRIES INC.



Published in *The Record*, Autumn Issue 2018.

BLUESTAR PLM®
PLM inside Dynamics 365

CONFIDENT PRODUCT CONFIGURATION

Hannibal Industries chose Bluestar PLM to enable standardised, automated processes for the design and configuration of custom solutions

BY LINDSAY JAMES

Founded in 1985, Hannibal Industries is a leading pallet rack and steel tube manufacturer that employs around 400 people at its plants in Los Angeles and Houston. To create unique solutions based on customers' requirements, Hannibal used a configurator that had



been developed in-house and integrated with the company's Microsoft Dynamics AX enterprise resource planning (ERP) system. But after the employee who created the configurator left the company, maintenance and improvement became a challenge. In addition, creating and printing CAD drawings throughout the process was a time-consuming process that opened the door for potential error, as the production department was not always aware of changes made since a drawing was received.

Seeking to resolve these issues, Hannibal considered three solution providers before choosing the configuration module in Bluestar PLM. This solution stood out because it is built inside the Dynamics 365/AX ERP platform, making it easy

to seamlessly bridge the flow of data between engineering and operations.

"This immediately made the process less burdensome on our design department."

*- Farooq Mohammed,
Director of IT at Hannibal Industries.*

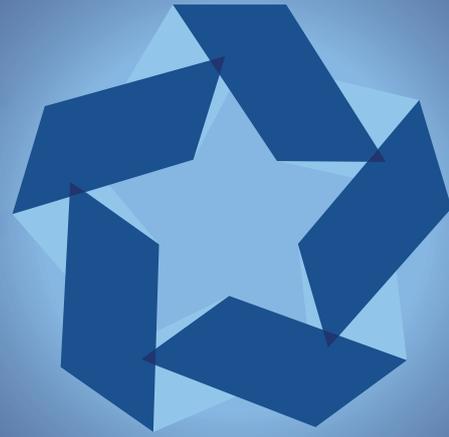
"When we developed our AX Product Builder configurator we had to make all kinds of changes to Dynamics AX and the

two programs were having difficulty working together," says Farooq Mohammad, director of IT at Hannibal Industries. *"These customisations caused significant challenges in transferring the old configurator to the new modern Bluestar PLM configurator and so the initial deployment took longer than we expected. However, the Bluestar team from PDM technology was always there to support us. It has incredibly deep knowledge of Dynamics AX and, if a problem arose, it would respond immediately, even when on vacation. In fact, in our company Bluestar is a rock star!"*

Hannibal's new configurator does everything the company wanted, and more. *"With Bluestar, not only did we receive a configurator which is stable and easy to work with; we also have a configurator that can create drawings for us,"* says Mohammad. *"This immediately made the process less burdensome on our design department."*

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Being able to generate and distribute drawings to production, scheduling and planning departments has also reduced the risk of error. *"The drawings for each part are now available with the click of a button,"* says Mohammad. *"That means we know the drawing we've printed is the right one to work with."*

Even better, the whole process has been speeded up. *"Previously, it took us two to three minutes just to configure one part, then we had to create the drawings manually afterwards"* says Mohammad. *"With Bluestar, it takes about 90 seconds to both configure the part and create the CAD drawing. There is really no comparison when it comes to what you can gain by having software like that."*



Ensuring that the system was adopted by Hannibal's long-standing employees was another challenge, but the solution's ease of use won them over. *"It can be difficult to change the culture among people who have worked in the same position for more than 20 years, but they have bought into the new system and they're enjoying using it"* says Mohammad.

Because the configurator does everything the company wants it to do, Mohammad's IT team has more time to develop the business' efficient use of IT. And having an ERP-based PLM solution, rather than a standalone system, brings further benefits to the business. *"The way Bluestar PLM interacts with all the other areas of our ERP system makes it very powerful,"* says Mohammad. *"When people are using it, they know it's Bluestar, but they don't have to learn two discrete*

"The way Bluestar PLM interacts with all the other areas of our ERP system makes it very powerful,"

*- Farooq Mohammed,
Director of IT at Hannibal Industries.*

systems because it's all part of one package. In addition, because Bluestar is scalable, we can always add more to it without worrying about the expertise of one employee."

Hannibal is now in the process of transitioning from Dynamics AX 2009 to Dynamics 365. *"We've just implemented Bluestar PLM in our Houston facility, which uses the new Dynamics 365 environment,"* says Mohammad. *"The whole implementation took about two and a half months, which is lightning fast in this industry."*

With the Houston deployment successfully completed, Los Angeles is next in line. *"We're planning to convert to the new system in Los Angeles in January,"* says Mohammad. *"From that moment, we will go to the advanced features of Bluestar, such as engineering/production change management features."*

Looking ahead, Hannibal's partnership with Bluestar looks set to continue. *"Currently, Bluestar helps us with production level drawings, and eventually we'd like to extend that to the full configuration of the warehouse,"* says Mohammad. *"Based on what I've seen, I know Bluestar can do that."*

About Hannibal Industries Inc.:

For more information please visit :

hannibalindustries.com/

[linkedin.com/company/hannibal-industries-inc/](https://www.linkedin.com/company/hannibal-industries-inc/)

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