

# K3 helps Kiowa gain more benefit from its Dynamics NAV investment

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Simply Dynamics ERP

**Microsoft**  
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**Kiowa** 

INDUSTRIAL HOSE | HOSE ASSEMBLIES | FLUID POWER

Kiowa Ltd distributes Maintenance, Repair and Operations (MRO) products, high quality hose assemblies and fluid power products.

By having the right partner support, Kiowa has discovered that its Microsoft® Dynamics NAV enterprise resource planning (ERP) system is helping them to achieve their business aspirations. Working closely with K3 Business Solutions (K3), Kiowa demonstrates that it is an exemplary ERP user and has learnt how IT can support business expansion.

Established in 1991 in Lincolnshire; Kiowa Ltd is a family owned business that has grown steadily and now distributes more than 60,000 industrial products. The company's rapid growth over the past 22 years is a result of its dedication to providing first class customer service ensuring technical expertise, quicker access to products and shorter lead times on delivery. This is coupled with its policy of selling high quality branded products and working in partnership with the leading industry manufacturers such as Festo, Gates, Trelleborg, Merlett and Snap-tite.



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## Making IT central and useful

K3 has supported Kiowa’s Dynamics NAV system since 2010, with Tim Barker as account manager providing business consultancy to Kiowa’s management team. The company works hard to gain every possible benefit from Dynamics NAV making it central to its business by providing automation and efficiency throughout its sales, warehousing and distribution processes.

“Everything goes through Dynamics NAV. We have 60,000 SKUs in the system, which will grow to more than 100,000 over the next couple of years. We transact in the region of 400 quotations a day and fulfil about 150 orders each day, so the system has to be responsive. We have to make each order move through the business quickly to maximise efficiency and K3 has configured the system to enable this to happen,” says Anthony Towers, Commercial Director, Kiowa.

Kiowa also uses NAV-to-Net software to integrate its ecommerce website with Dynamics NAV and QlikView to provide detailed, easy to understand management reports. In addition, Kiowa is looking at how to exploit the benefits of an integrated CRM system, which will help automate mobile sales as well as improve customer relations. This will extend the functionality of the Enterprise Resource Planning, (ERP) system with the mobile sales team using Android tablet PCs to improve their connectivity with the office while working remotely.

## Working together is the best way forward

When K3 took over the management of the system, one of the first things it did was to ensure that Kiowa was not experiencing operational difficulties with the software. After the initial optimisation of the system, Tim Barker and his colleagues concentrated on understanding Kiowa’s short and medium-term business goals. It was then a matter of getting to grips with how technology would play its part in achieving them. K3 also helped the management team to investigate and evaluate other products that could support Kiowa’s business aspirations.

“Our initial reaction to bringing K3 on board was concern. We are an SME employing 40 people and we knew that K3 had much bigger customers than Kiowa, but we need not have worried. They have always provided a personal service and we’ve had full support from the beginning whether it has been technical help, marketing or account management. Importantly, there has always been a one-to-one relationship with K3 that works well for us,” says Anthony Towers.

“We are a relatively young company with great potential and K3 recognises this. We are focusing on expansion and we average about 15 per cent growth year-on-year. So K3 knows we are growing quickly and can see that we are moving swiftly towards becoming a 50 user company and all that will entail”.

## Understanding the needs of the customer

Market knowledge plays an extremely important role in modern business. Tim Barker, therefore, ensures a good flow of management information to Kiowa so that the company is aware of new technological benefits that it ought to consider. This entails looking carefully at Kiowa’s business and establishing how it could advance more readily with the right technology in place. K3 is also able to suggest best practices to the company to enhance its operations.

“I have a quarterly review meeting with Tim Barker. He also goes through some of the latest technology developments he feels could benefit the company and I can share these with the rest of the management team. There’s no cost to us for this business advice and we have taken up many of his suggestions, which are proving beneficial to the company,”

This close working approach, K3 believes, is essential to helping the Kiowa team think strategically about how IT can help them continue to succeed in its markets. For example, Kiowa is looking at how Dynamics NAV can support manufacturing of custom hoses, built to customers’ exact requirements.

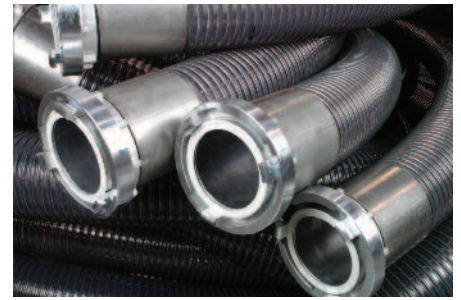
## Establishing new standardised approaches to technology

Kiowa’s current Dynamics NAV system is subject to customisation. Tim Barker is now working with the company to ease its transition to Dynamics NAV 2013, which will allow Kiowa to remove a substantial number of specific modifications to the original system. This will enable Kiowa to take advantage of a standard Dynamics NAV system that can facilitate relatively inexpensive upgrades instead of costly bespoke work.

With Microsoft providing annual upgrades to Dynamics NAV 2013, K3 is encouraging its customers to take the plunge so that they may benefit from a standard ERP software package that is more easily and cost-effectively upgraded allowing them to use the latest technology as it becomes available. This ensures that K3’s customers have the competitive advantage of new technology and can apply up-to-the-minute best practices that new software functionality enables.

“One of the great things about K3 is that the company encourages us to use a standard system. The more bespoke the system, the more heavily K3 will have to support it, which is costly to the user. K3 therefore looks to contain and reduce the ongoing cost of the system,” adds Anthony Towers.

Like all of K3’s customers, Kiowa is invited to educational sessions and customer days where they can meet other Dynamics NAV users and share experiences. Tim Barker also ensures that he keeps open lines of communication between him as the primary account contact. This means that should Kiowa’s management have a new idea they can run it by him to find out whether the software is able to help bring it into working reality.



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## Trust and respect are the foundation of business relationships

When you look at the Kiowa and K3 relationship, it is easy to see a three-tier IT and business support structure.

First is Kiowa's internal IT management facility. This is further supported externally by K3 Managed Services so that any issues can be dealt with swiftly and effectively. Then there is Tim Barker as a trusted advisor providing business consultancy and troubleshooting.

Trusted advisor status is not given lightly and stems from unbiased, non-sales pitch approach to account managing Kiowa's IT needs. It is more about ensuring the existing software performs for Kiowa and that good, relevant ideas are introduced regularly that will enhance the business.

"One of the key reasons for installing Dynamics NAV in the first place was to get away from bespoke, single source software and allow us to work with any vendor that suits our needs. We, therefore, choose to work with K3 – and that is a big difference – because the company supports our business very well. K3 provides good solutions through the company's knowledge of the software we use and applying it to our business needs. If we ever have an issue, K3 always comes through with an answer,"

The K3 team appreciates Kiowa's outlook, of continually wanting to develop and grow the business. This proactive approach enables K3 to fine-tune its partnership with the company, ensuring that the technology it supplies meets Kiowa's business aspirations. This means carefully balancing what the company wishes to achieve with what is feasible with today's technology. For example, the integration of Kiowa's ecommerce website with Dynamics NAV using Nav-to-Net demonstrates how modern IT systems can provide substantial benefits to both Kiowa and its customers.



### Simply Dynamics ERP

#### About K3 Business Solutions

K3 Business Solutions is a leading provider of business management solutions to the distribution, wholesale and fashion industries.

With over 25 years experience in delivering integrated business management solutions encompassing, Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and Business Intelligence (BI), we deliver that all important powerful and future proof business critical solution, which delivers best practice, processes and functionality, designed specifically for your business and your people.

We are renowned for our unique personal service, our skill of listening to our clients and offering expertise that allows us to deliver the right solution, on time and on budget.

K3 Business Solutions is part of the K3 Business Technology Group. K3 is the largest Microsoft Dynamics partner in the UK and thrive on global recognition from Microsoft, including being a valued member of their elite Inner Circle and Presidents club, which in turn reaps benefits additional benefits for our customers.

Contact us to find out how K3 business solutions can help you improve business processes to drive increased efficiencies and overall profits.

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