



SUCCESS STORY

Investment Management Firm

ENTERPRISE

FINANCIAL SERVICES

HEALTHCARE

PROFESSIONAL SPORTS & ENTERTAINMENT

PUBLIC SECTOR

Leading Investment Management Firm Manages Complex Processes Using Microsoft Dynamics CRM as Enterprise-wide Operational Platform

CHALLENGE

Replace a legacy CRM system serving as the foundation of business operations— with no impact to the firm or its clients whatsoever.

This investment management firm had a complex business infrastructure built around a legacy CRM system. It was tightly integrated with other mission-critical systems across the organization, including financial applications, document management, and marketing systems. All operational activities went through or heavily relied upon the CRM system, and it was considered to be the key data hub for 2,000 users. Compliance and other internal regulatory departments also considered it the system of record for audit purposes. In short, the CRM system was the cornerstone of this firm's operations.

However, the legacy system was antiquated and quickly becoming an expensive liability. The manufacturer was no longer supporting new versions of software. The system was integrated with an array of both contemporary and legacy technologies, some with no resources to support them. The IT department was constantly being tasked with developing custom applications, which meant unmanageable solutions were being deployed and often unaccounted for. Furthermore, the system could not scale with the firm's growth and inhibited new operational needs.

Despite all the issues with the legacy system, management was apprehensive about switching to a new solution. Although confident they could find a CRM platform to meet their needs, they wanted to ensure the switch could be made without a risk to business operations, which could have a serious impact on their clients.

The goals for the new solution were two-fold:

1. The software needed to serve as the cornerstone of the firm's operations, including ensuring compliance at all times, managing complex security needs, scaling to business growth forecasts, and minimizing custom development, thus driving down total cost of ownership.
2. The solution provider needed to have skills and experience in planning, building, and coordinating enterprise-level CRM projects for financial services companies. Not only did they need to understand and be prepared to handle a project of this magnitude, but they must also be able to manage the high level of risk involved.

ABOUT THE CLIENT

A privately owned, independent money management firm headquartered on the West Coast, with tens of billions under management for more than 27,000 private clients and over 150 large institutions, including Fortune 500 corporations, governments, foundations, and endowments.

Zero downtime

Scalable solution for global growth

Business continuity from day 1



Gold Customer Relationship Management
Gold Enterprise Resource Planning
Gold Cloud Customer Relationship Management

SOLUTION

The firm chose Microsoft Dynamics CRM because it offered the flexibility and robust features to support their business requirements. Selecting an implementation partner was the next critical step. The firm took advice from a peer—a global investment leader known for its strong culture of risk management—and hired AKA. That company had chosen AKA because of their excellent reputation managing complex, enterprise-level CRM projects for investment management firms.

With so much depending on one system, as well as the magnitude of the project, the final transition could cause harm to the firm's investors if not executed flawlessly. Yet, AKA's team was confident. With the necessary up-front planning, skilled resources, and project managers with razor-sharp attention to detail, even the largest, most complex project could be accomplished, and go-live could be successfully executed within a small window of time.

APPROACH

Careful planning and analysis were critical to successfully transitioning a complex, widely integrated system and massive amounts of data without disrupting operations.

The key to a successful transition was meticulous planning and analysis of the current system and business processes, taking into consideration both the current state and desired goals for the future. After inventorying the entire system—hundreds of application integrations, processes, security, reporting, and data—the team architected a solution and a plan, including timelines and the right personnel to get the job done.

An added element of complexity for the implementation team, however, was the firm's requirement that virtually no other systems or processes would be eliminated. Each was mission-critical with a specific purpose, so the goal was to determine the least impactful way of keeping the integrations in tact to maintain business continuity. AKA created a model that evaluated integration type and complexity, resulting in accurate estimates in an area that often causes projects to fail. Additionally, preserving the current data structure for reporting minimized risk to the company's and day-to-day operations.

Tackling with the data component of the project was another monumental task. In a typical migration, much of the data is archived. However, this firm needed to keep all of its data accessible for real time auditing, marketing activities, and historical capture of all client relationship activities at a moment's notice. As a financial firm, every customer interaction is tracked, so the database—nearly a terabyte—needed to be assessed, broken apart, and restructured to fit into a new data model.

Replace a system supporting operations and 2,000 users

Integrate more than 50 mission-critical applications

Convert 1 Terabyte of data without loss

Go live within 48 hours

Coordinate a team of 50 to get the job done



RESULTS

Throughout the project, the team prepared for the big weekend...go-live. With every step, the go-live task list was fine-tuned to ensure everything was accounted for and a quiet transition could happen over a weekend. The goal was to be up and running on Monday morning, with clients never knowing anything had happened. The process started at 5 PM on Friday, and by 5 PM on Sunday, production testing had been completed, the system was live, and preparations were being made for opening hours in Europe.

The implementation was flawless—and as guaranteed, zero downtime and no data loss—and the resulting Microsoft Dynamics CRM solution produced the results the firm required:

- Integration with over 150 mission-critical applications and data jobs
- Creation of a simplified user interface, providing users with a central location for information
- A more scalable system, capable of expanding with the firm into new markets
- A reporting environment leveraging the latest Microsoft technologies, yet keeping the current data model to avoid adversely affecting ongoing reporting needs and downstream applications that consume this data
- Security that controls data access for any role at any stage in the client relationship, depending on interaction—data on a need-to-know basis, automated through Dynamics CRM
- Responsiveness in marketing, providing the agility to quickly change and communicate campaigns and messaging
- Adherence to compliance, capturing all information needed to have a complete paper trail
- All employee-client contact tracked in the system, allowing for more accurate reporting for performance reviews and compensation

AKA also trained and mentored the firm's development staff, which led to smooth responsibility transfers as the project matured. In the end, the firm not only had a fully integrated system, but they were poised to grow and support their business independently.



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Luke Magnus
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AKA Enterprise Solutions

ABOUT AKA ENTERPRISE SOLUTIONS

AKA helps asset management, investment banking, private equity and wealth management firms transform the way they do business with world-class solutions built on Microsoft Dynamics CRM and ERP, as well as Office 365, business intelligence, and mobility. A combination of deep technical expertise, years of experience working in financial services, and a highly collaborative approach has earned us an unmatched reputation for delivering ongoing return on investment.



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