



# Serving up success in the hospitality sector - How HSO helped KSG provide the foundation for dynamic growth

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“KSG is reaping the rewards from implementing Microsoft Dynamics AX and is achieving operational efficiencies across all areas of the business from finance to back office warehousing and logistics, to front end customer service. HSO’s expertise in delivering this kind of capability has been key to the success of this project. It has a flexible approach and has worked hard to understand KSG’s challenges and business objectives and to ensure they get the most from their investment in Dynamics AX software.”

## CHALLENGES

- ✓ Driving efficiencies across the company's key operations
- ✓ Migrating through new versions of the ERP software
- ✓ Keeping pace with the ongoing growth of the company

## SOLUTION

- ✓ Migrated to the next generation of ERP software in the form of Microsoft Dynamics AX

## BENEFITS

- ✓ Long term business scalability
- ✓ Greater business productivity as a result of improved processes
- ✓ Increased efficiencies through extended capabilities of the solution
- ✓ Operational agility

The restaurant and hospitality services sector is a fast-moving and highly competitive environment where being able to deliver operational efficiencies and react quickly to dynamic changes in the market is critical to driving business advantage and building an edge over rivals.

**As a market-leading provider of restaurant and hospitality services and contract catering, Irish-owned and operated, KSG Catering has built a reputation for excellent food and outstanding service.**

KSG serves twelve million customers annually in 120 locations and employing upwards of 1,100 personnel – and its keynote, diversity. KSG restaurants feed customers in healthcare, education, pharmaceutical, manufacturing, retail, travel, entertainment, business and industry sectors. It operates everything from newsagents based at hospital sites to independent style coffee shops to fine dining and hospitality in blue chip companies.

KSG has differentiated itself on many levels from its competitors by sourcing fresh locally produced ingredients and a purpose built training centre with City & Guilds accreditation. Their people are the best in the industry and they have been leaders in providing pioneering wellness programmes to their clients. It has been these core principles that have been the catalyst to their success.

## BUSINESS CHALLENGES

Driven by the need to support ongoing growth across these diverse target markets, KSG has for many years leveraged enterprise resource planning (ERP) software to drive operational efficiencies across the business. Initially, this was in the form of the Microsoft Axapta solution and this met KSG’s needs well over a number of years.

KSG was very happy with the functionality but as business growth accelerated over time, the system was increasingly struggling to keep pace. KSG decided it needed to make a change but was keen to stay in the Microsoft fold and made the decision to migrate to the next generation of ERP software in the form of Microsoft Dynamics AX.

“We had reaped the rewards of working with Microsoft Axapta and we achieved extensive benefits including far-reaching operational efficiencies and cost savings from using it,” said David White, ERP Software Manager at KSG.



"Therefore, when it came to upgrading our system, the approach was more of an evolutionary process than a complete revolutionary change. We wanted to remain within the Microsoft fold and so switching to the next-generation solution, Microsoft Dynamics AX was the logical choice.

**"HSO was extremely patient with us in terms of the project management, training and consultancy they provided. They took time to understand and adapt to our business needs rather than attempting to impose their own solution on us which impressed us."**

DAVID WHITE, KSG - ERP SOFTWARE MANAGER

KSG was also crystal clear from the beginning that it wanted HSO as its implementation and development partner for the new Microsoft Dynamics AX project. It already had a longstanding relationship with HSO and it had built a close trust-based relationship. It also valued HSO's experience and expertise in this area. It knew that HSO had developed a proven methodology from running many hundreds of successful Dynamics AX projects over a number of years. Moreover, it valued the company's support service and its depth of expertise of the retail sector globally.

"We had an ERP system that was in place for ten years and that had firmly bedded in, that we manipulated in our own way to be able to extract the data in a format that was required by the business and if HSO had tried to impose an approach on us, it simply would not have worked."

**"HSO was adaptable to our needs from the start even while guiding us through the process of what was new in Microsoft Dynamics AX. It was a big challenge but HSO rose to it well."**

DAVID WHITE, KSG - ERP SOFTWARE MANAGER

## THE SOLUTION

One of HSO's main roles was to facilitate the migration of KSG through different versions of the solution. "HSO was our guide through this evolutionary process. They have been key in streamlining the whole process for us," continued David White. "The HSO expertise coupled with the stability and strength of Microsoft Dynamics AX has given us complete confidence. We now have a safe reliable platform in place on which to operate ERP. And it's flexible too. That's key to us as a business as we are expanding fast and with dynamic business models that continuously evolve, the implemented solution has the capabilities to manage."

Further underlining the confidence that KSG has in HSO, the actual switchover itself from Axapta to the multi-tenanted privately hosted cloud solution, Dynamics AX, was achieved on a 'big bang' basis, with KSG switching off the old system on one day and switching the new one on the next. With the assistance of HSO, KSG devised a training strategy and competency centre that delivered a smooth operational transition with no interruption to weekly KPI reporting.

## THE BENEFITS

KSG is already using the platform extensively to drive efficiencies across many of the company's key operations. All of its finance functions from purchase orders right through to the generation of the profit and loss (P&L) accounts are handled through Microsoft Dynamics AX as well as including the retail-warehousing element of the business and weekly KPI reporting is managed over the platform.

All of this amounts to a significant expansion of the capabilities that KSG had enjoyed with its previous ERP solutions. Once again, HSO's understanding of and expertise in the technology has been key here. The company has also played an invaluable role in what can be the one of the biggest banana skins on any ERP project - handling the migration of data from one system to another.

HSO's extensive experience of working on ERP projects has proved invaluable in working with and integrating where necessary different data formats and structures; in helping KSG assess which types of data needed to be moved from one platform to another and in cleansing vast volumes to ensure optimum data quality. In addition, the company has played a critical role in training up the KSG team on all the new Dynamics functionality, processes and potentials.



KSG provides restaurant services for 2500 employees at Microsoft Ireland

HSO's influence has extended beyond training and advice into a more focused strategic consultancy role at KSG. It has for example, carried out an extensive gap analysis project, designed to compare desired performance with actual performance and consider areas where ERP can be effectively applied to help to close the gap between the two.

Working alongside KSG's senior IT decision-makers, HSO is focused on development work to embellish the system and improve existing business processes or even add new ones where required. The focus of this joint approach is on using technology where applicable to help people and the wider business automate their approaches to drive efficiencies and achieve their operational goals.

It is a focus that has paid dividends so far with the company continuing to expand across many different sectors. KSG's growth will continue to be built on firm foundations. The Microsoft Dynamics AX platform provides that assurance and thanks at least in part to the help that HSO provides, it's a platform that also supports operational agility, fast time to insight and the ability to deliver efficiencies that together drives long-term business success.

## About HSO

HSO is a leading provider of innovative enterprise business solutions that improve the results of our clients. Founded in 1989, HSO specialises in implementing, integrating, optimising and maintaining enterprise solutions based on Microsoft Dynamics AX, CRM and Office365.

HSO works with multinational enterprises in industries such as Distribution, Retail, Manufacturing and Services.

Learn more at [www.hso.com](http://www.hso.com)