

## Alba plc

**Alba plc** offers some 2,600 products, including consumer electronics, such as televisions, DVD, video and audio, home domestic appliances, power tools, and telecommunications for both the home and SOHO markets. Group brands include Alba, Bush, Goodmans, Hinari, Breville and Roadstar. The Group sells its products in the UK and throughout mainland Europe through nationwide retailers and major catalogue companies.

### Business Challenge

Alba's business strategy for success is straightforward – organic development supplemented by targeted strategic acquisition. Over the years, this strategy has allowed Alba to achieve sustained growth in its chosen markets and to expand its operations in the UK, throughout mainland Europe and in the Far East.

Alba's financial department is based at the company's headquarters in Barking, Essex where it had been using a basic accounting package. However, as the company grew and the number of employees increased, Alba came to realise that its existing system couldn't cope with its requirements.

"There was no functionality for a company of our size," explains Jon Plank, IT Director at Alba. "BACS wasn't even part of the package." Alba's original technology partner had written the company's existing package, and while Plank says that the offering was good – he felt that it didn't provide the functionality required. It also wasn't PC based and wouldn't produce the integration and ease of use of a Windows-based solution.

Alba decided to take stock of its requirements for a financial management solution and started the search for such a system from scratch. It decided to look on the market for a new partner who could offer the level of expertise the company required.

### The Solution

Alba canvassed a number of companies and examined their products before coming to a decision. Also, its accountants attended numerous seminars and exhibitions to find their ideal match. They were especially keen to find a system that would manage financial-based reporting and handle intercompany transactions.

"Microsoft® Dynamics NAV™ stood out because it had lots of flexibility," says Plank. "Integration would be far easier with the system's built in language – the ability to programme it was very straightforward."

On the 7th April 2003, Alba purchased General Ledger, Cash Manager, Sales & Receivables, Purchase & Payables, Inventory and Application-wide modules from Microsoft Dynamics NAV partner TVision Technology. Alba's finance department was impressed by Microsoft Dynamics NAV's ability to phase implementation, and it started with its accounts, which now could be linked to the company's existing stock and distribution management processes.

This solution is the first installation of Microsoft Dynamics NAV on the IBM iSeries in the UK – and has proven itself to manage more than 1,000,000 transactions a month operating on this system.



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Jon Plank, IT Director, Alba plc

Implementation went smoothly, with as little disruption as possible to a company the size of Alba. The system went live on 7th July 2003 (the upgraded operating system went live earlier) and currently has 40 users.

### The Benefits

- Flexible solution
- Identifies core data quickly and easily
- Windows-based system is easy to use
- End user can interrogate data directly – and at a local level
- Saves time and resources
- Provides employees with remote access to crucial business information

Alba plc implemented Microsoft Business Solutions-NAV business management system when it realised that its existing financial package lacked the functionality required for the rapidly expanding company.

### Conclusion

The system has proved invaluable in identifying core data quickly and easily – which is completely different from the company’s previous accounting package, which was difficult to navigate.

Plank cites the main benefits of the system as the ability of the end user to interrogate data directly. Also “the ability to manage data at a local level is very important – there is no need to call the IT support department, which significantly reduces time spent on calls.”

Microsoft Dynamics NAV has also provided Alba employees with remote access to crucial business information: “the ability to provide information remotely is very important,” explains Plank.

Looking to the future, Alba is looking at integrating Microsoft Dynamics NAV with document scanning applications as well as web-based projects.

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Jon Plank, IT Director, Alba plc

**For more detailed information on how the Alba project was managed and delivered, or for more information on how TVision can support your own project, please feel free to contact Sales on 01932 242001**

### TVision Technology Ltd

Case House  
85/89 High Street  
Walton on Thames  
Surrey  
KT12 1DZ

T. **+44 (0)1932 242001**  
E. **info@tvisiontech.co.uk**  
W. **www.tvisiontech.co.uk**

**Microsoft**  
**GOLD CERTIFIED**  
Partner

 Microsoft Dynamics

