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– Greg Bishop, CEO, Leigh Fisheries



The fishermen’s friend

A proven commitment to their community, an emphasis on sustainability for their supply chain and a genuine desire to ‘play fair’ all underpin Leigh Fisheries’ well deserved success as an international exporter.

Under the brand name Lee Fish, Leigh Fisheries market and distribute seafood to wholesalers and supermarkets worldwide. Within 24-36 hours of being caught their fresh fish can be found on tables halfway around the globe. Given this and the minimal handling procedures they commit to, it’s understandable that the quality of the Lee Fish brand is recognised around the world as representing premium-quality chilled seafood.

Behind this success though are a myriad of complexities which need to be carefully managed.

Making local history

Established in 1957 by pioneering families in the coastal village of Leigh, just north of Auckland, Leigh Fisheries is predominantly owned by private shareholders and has associates in Europe, the United States and Asia as well as part ownership in the specialist Lee Lobster operation. The overall business also encompasses ownership of a fishing retailer in South Auckland, as well as a bait company and a pilchard processing company. Local fulltime staff number around 23.

Unlike most other fisheries in New Zealand Leigh Fisheries don’t own boats or employ fishermen. Instead their fish are caught by over 75 independent boat owners New Zealand wide who specialise by species, and elect to have a non-contractual partnership with them in direct recognition of commitment by Leigh Fisheries to ensuring that they are rewarded fairly and consistently for their efforts.

Karen Butterfield, Group Financial Controller for Leigh Fisheries commented: “For our fishermen to fish for us there’s got to be something in it for both of us. Normally within a primary industry the fisher or producer is the lowest paid in chain but we are committed to sustainability of income and growth for both their businesses and ours.”

Friend of the sea

As part of their commitment to sustainability Leigh Fisheries carries certification from the highly regarded international organisation Friend of the Sea. The group’s seal of approval verifies that products are caught using sustainable practices and originate from sustainable fisheries.



Industry: Fishery
Project Type: Implementation

Quick Facts:

<p>Website: www.leefish.ch</p>	<p>Workstations: 3 users</p>	<p>Benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of best practice general ledger • Real time reporting • Complete sharing and visibility of all information across all solutions • Superior management reporting through OLAP cubes
<p>Customer Size: 23</p>	<p>Year: 2010</p>	
<p>Solutions: FRx Currency Translator FRx Reporter Microsoft® Dynamics AX 2009 Microsoft® Windows Server 2008 for Windows Essential Server Solutions Microsoft® SQL Server 2008</p>	<p>Functional areas: Financials, Trade, Logistics3, Master Planning, Production, Resources, Projects, Business Analysis, CRM, Service Management.</p> <p>Scenario: Enterprise Resource Planning, Financial reporting, Business Intelligence, EDI</p>	

Under the Quota Management System (QMS) Leigh Fisheries, along with all other fisheries in New Zealand, is allocated the right to catch specific quantities of particular species of fish. The QMS is critical to New Zealand's reputation as the world's leader in sustainable fisheries management. Visibility of catch and accurate reporting is essential to fisheries to ensure they don't exceed their quota and lose the right to catch and supply desirable species to the world market.

In order to export to their markets in Europe and Asia Leigh Fisheries have EU certification as well as the highest level of accreditation from MAF, both of which are notoriously difficult to achieve and maintain.

When fresh is best

Operating on a 'less is best' principle, Leigh Fisheries do as little as possible to the catch of the day.

Their fish are predominantly caught on long lines, which although a far more expensive option than nets minimises damage to the fish and maximises its sale price for both fisherman and company. Once caught the fish are immediately iced by a fisher to kill them and placed in an icebox. The boxes are passed on to the carrier who transports them to Leigh where the boxes are stored in the chiller overnight. In the morning the fish are selected according to the orders being filled, graded and weighed and carefully repacked. The entire process sees the fish handled perhaps three times, and each time with great care to preserve its quality and end value. Within 24 hours the fish is at the airport ready to be despatched overseas.

Fish to order

The logistics of catching fresh fish to fulfil specific orders are daunting, especially when they span markets who are expecting to have priority over certain species and want them delivered by certain days. This requires a careful balancing act for the company in order to maintain the long term relationships and high expectations of the market and the supply chain, as well as maximising the shareholders return despite fluctuating exchange rates.

To stay afloat in such an environment requires constant attention to the next catch and the next order. This is a challenge requiring great planning abilities and complete visibility when you are unable to guarantee the makeup of your catch, or stockpile for longer than overnight to fulfil orders to 100% accuracy. The needs of a growing market for Lee Fish by premium New Zealand restaurants add to the complex equation.

Greg Bishop, Chief Executive Officer of Leigh Fisheries is forward planning virtually 24/7. "To support the markets we've developed we can't let them down without losing them. We can't let our associate companies down, or our fishermen or our shareholders. We also have to ensure our pricing delivers value to the market and an income to our supply chain, as well as the company. There are so many logistical factors which impact on us but we can't just turn on the freezer, or leave fish in the chiller for 3-5 days to make up an order. Our brand is all about delivering fresh fish, and that's exactly what we do."



Old systems

Leigh Fisheries legacy system, Fish Pack, has served the company well for many years, managing the initial catch from boat to packing, compliance certification through to sales and export documentation. The data generated by this system would then need to be input into the quota management system, Solutions, to generate quota returns to the Ministry of Fisheries as well as pay the fishermen and act as general ledger.

Uncertainty about the practicalities of on-going development and achieving the degree of visibility and reporting required in an increasingly challenging business environment saw them re-evaluate the future of both systems.

When Karen Butterfield joined Leigh Fisheries she had already had exposure to Microsoft Dynamics AX and was able to see how it could integrate with and support the Fish Pack and Solutions to improve the overall correlation and dissemination of data to the benefit of the company. Other key areas requiring improvement were around the general ledger, where considerable manual intervention was required to overcome its lack of functionality.

New systems

1 October 2010 saw Leigh Fisheries implement Microsoft Dynamics AX with leading Dynamics partner Koorb Consulting.

Although they had a relatively small amount of users the primary value of the solution to Leigh Fisheries was not only in delivering a best practice general ledger but enabling the development of OLAP cubes.

The subsequent integration of Fish Pack, Solutions and Dynamics AX now sees a flow of information from one to another and crucially through to the Ministry of Fisheries online QMS.

From a central data repository the cubes produce a range of real time views and reports which provide valuable information to Greg Spencer Bishop. "We've got a cube which gives us a catch analysis from Fish Pack data, one for our quota management system and another for our financials from Dynamics AX. They give me the information I need at my fingertips to make the right decisions. For example our quota cube lets us do our quota management reporting more cleverly, showing us all of our quota purchases, costs, and the balances that we've got left as well as our month-by-month usage. This sort of visibility helps us decide our next steps and plan our allocation of monthly prepayments for quota across our profit and loss."

The cubes allow the company to analyse the impact of foreign exchange fluctuations and other variables. After years of having systems which produced data which was unable to be utilised in this manner Greg Spencer Bishop sees the cubes as presenting huge opportunities to explore possible outcomes and options and be able to validate decisions to stakeholders in the company. "Now with the cube we're going to be able to report, be able to analyse historically all of those things."

Role centres will be one of the next things Leigh Fisheries explore and the expectations are high. "We know that Dynamics AX gives us day-to-day value," says Karen Butterfield, "but the really exciting things for us as a company are what role centres and cubes can deliver."

Dynamics AX has also enabled quicker reporting, for example moving from time consuming and complex spread sheets and setting up FrX reporting instead has reduced a half day's work to a mere minute.

The Ministry of Fisheries are more than happy with Leigh Fisheries system's ability to capture, monitor and report on quota. "Our system makes us unique", said Greg Bishop "it provides complete transparency and traceability from catch through to sale and includes the individual fisher's name and the boat name on labels. Customers enjoy being able to identify with the catcher as well as the company behind the brand."



About Koorb Consulting

Koorb is a 100% NZ owned company - privately owned and operated by the Directors, Nicholas Birch and Paul McDowell-Hook. Both Directors work in the company. The company was established over 12 years ago and has offices in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin.

The main focus of our business is implementing and supporting Microsoft Dynamics AX and Dynamics CRM. Our 30+ certified consultants together comprise the largest Microsoft Dynamics AX and CRM practice in New Zealand. All are certified and have extensive and wide ranging industry experience.

We have implemented and are supporting close to 60% of all Dynamics AX sites in New Zealand. This is a direct reflection of our strong leadership, highly experienced people and proven methodology.

In both 2007 and 2010 we won the Microsoft Partner Award for the Dynamics ERP Solution of the Year.



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