



## CLIENT SOLUTION CASE STUDY

# Midwest Industrial Supply Improves Inventory Accuracy, Boosts Productivity With Dynamics 365

## MICROSOFT DYNAMICS 365 FIELD SERVICE

### Leading in materials solutions

Midwest Industrial Supply (MIS) has provided environmentally friendly solutions for roads, runways, rail, mines, and industrial facilities since 1975. The company is a leader in dust control, roadway stabilization, erosion control, rail lubrication, and deicing products. Based in Ohio, MIS operates throughout the United States.

The company serves customers across the transit, mining, construction, and steel industries that need products applied with precision over large, remote areas. At MIS, customer service professionals (CSPs) are responsible for driving trucks to customer sites and applying the materials. To track all inventory, scheduling, and fulfillment activities, CSPs used a variety of manual, disparate processes. They relied on outdated portals, paper time sheets, fax machines, mobile phone photos, phone calls, and more to relay information between the field and office.

"We had 20 CSPs who worked 20 different ways," says Eric Ludwig, IT Manager and Special Projects at Midwest Industrial Supply. "We'd lose three to five days in our order-to-cash cycle due to inputting information into our system manually."

MIS wanted to run more efficiently overall by improving inventory tracking, providing faster service to customers, getting paid sooner, and optimizing its employees' time. The company knew that its future depended on using technology to increase productivity, reduce waste, and boost ROI. It also knew that any technology it chose needed to be easy to adopt and significantly streamline the day-to-day tasks of its hardworking CSPs.

### CLIENT OVERVIEW



[Midwest Industrial Supply](#) (MIS) is a leader in dust control, soil stabilization, lubrication, and deicing products for transit, construction, and more. Staff tracked field service activities using manual, disparate tools, and the company wanted to standardize processes. With support from partner Velosio, MIS adopted Microsoft Dynamics 365 Field Service and Power BI. Now, the company has dramatically increased operational efficiency and productivity, reduced waste, accelerated order-to-cash time, and improved line of insight in the performance of the business.



## Taking a digital leap

For guidance on moving to the cloud, MIS turned to longtime partner Velosio, a Gold competency member of the Microsoft Partner Network. Velosio provided demonstrations and recommended Microsoft Dynamics 365 Field Service to digitize and centralize all data on field service activities. MIS already used some Microsoft products and wanted to further consolidate solutions with one vendor, while offering its employees tools with a familiar interface.

The company decided to roll out Field Service and provided one-on-one training with CSPs around the country to aid a seamless transition. MIS staff also use the Field Service mobile app, so MIS adopted Power BI for data analytics and visualization, easily feeding the tool data from Dynamics 365.

The company also plans to continue enhancing its capabilities in the future by deploying Connected Field Service and Dynamics 365 Remote Assist to incorporate AI, the Internet of Things, and mixed reality.

## Increasing operational efficiency

By centralizing its field service activities, MIS has already improved efficiency and productivity. CSPs can view orders and submit follow-up activities in real time, which is helping to accelerate the process. “We see all activity stages in the Dynamics 365 Field Service dashboards, so dispatchers know the exact location of drivers and if they still need to submit orders,” says Ludwig. “Dispatchers can request a work order submission, and someone sees it and takes care of it immediately because it’s an integrated system.”

The dashboards in Field Service connect to Power BI, where MIS can visualize the data for at-a-glance insights. The company is shifting from processing orders by the end of the month to processing on a rolling basis. “With a batch mentality, we only had a couple days a month where we saw the full picture, and the other 28 days were hazy,” says Ludwig. “With Dynamics 365 Field Service and Power BI, we have instantaneous data, which gives our sales team and inventory managers greater decision-making confidence.”

As a result of this real-time data, MIS can invoice more quickly and has also reallocated staff resources due to efficiency. “We improved the order-to-cash time by five days or more,” says Ludwig. “We also reallocated resources and found more value-add work for two full staff who used to input paper notes into our previous system.”

## Improving accuracy, reducing waste

With improved internal processes, those efficiencies cascade in the business to help dial in accuracy and minimize waste. CSPs drive less and use materials more optimally, which benefits the environment and supports the company's sustainability goals. For example, by monitoring product inventory on trucks, MIS knows if a truck will come back and need a crew for offload or if it can send the truck straight to the next customer site.

"Our drivers aren't on the road as much, which reduces our carbon footprint," says Ludwig. "By tightly managing our inventory with Dynamics 365, we don't produce extra material that we'll have to dispose of."

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- Eric Ludwig

*IT Manager and Special Projects*

## Building customer trust

Customers—especially large iron and steel companies—rely on MIS to provide records of past applications so they can file monthly, quarterly, and annual reports. This requirement has always been a core part of MIS's business, but it used to take a lot of time and manual effort. "We can support our customers with reporting and compliance more easily since we adopted Dynamics 365 Field Service and Power BI," says Ludwig. "Our drivers capture data onsite, send it to the office through the app, and those reports are now automated so we can quickly supply them to customers."

Ultimately, the company is making these technology updates and improving operations to offer its customers the most reliable, innovative service possible. Concludes Ludwig, "We build long-term relationships with our customers—25 to 30 years in some cases. If they're successful, we're successful. With Dynamics 365 Field Service, we just got better at building the trust that customers rely on."

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