SilverLeaf
AGRIBUSINESS SOLUTIONS

Microsoft

Turn Technology into a Competitive Advantage

A Grower's Guide to Microsoft 365 Solutions

Velosio®

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Introduction

Greenhouse growers often make their jobs much harder than necessary by operating in siloed environments. They pull off "daily acts of heroism" to gather the information needed to make business decisions, mostly by juggling spreadsheets. Data inconsistencies or lost data can set you back weeks if not months, and seriously damage your competitive edge. It doesn't have to be so hard. Many growers and their leadership teams understand the value of data and are taking steps to implement a modern data strategy, which includes the cloud. Increasingly, organizations are finding the cloud serves as the best environment for integrating, storing, managing, and analyzing large volumes of disparate data types. You may already own cloud-based Microsoft solutions which you can turn into a competitive advantage.

Microsoft and SilverLeaf Solutions for Greenhouse Growers

Tackle Production Planning and Execution

You're in charge of greenhouse production, and the sales manager just provided you with a month-by-month forecast of expected sales for the next selling season. You now know how many of each flower and plant type—by variety and by color—you need to produce.

How will you create a production plan, and then make sure your production team executes the plan? Will you be able to adjust the plan when the sales forecast changes? Can you pivot if something throws production off—like supply chain shortages or changes to the expected weather pattern?

THE MICROSOFT TOOLS: MICROSOFT DYNAMICS 365 BUSINESS CENTRAL WITH SILVERLEAF

Many greenhouse growers solve this challenge by relying on tools found in SilverLeaf, which runs on Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central in the cloud. With SilverLeaf, you always have access to real-time, accurate data.

Pre-configured Production Planning and Production Execution functions in SilverLeaf automate processes behind the scenes—to produce the precise information that's needed to plan flower and plant production and then execute the plan efficiently. You can also react quickly when changes occur to the sales forecast or the projected production numbers.

After you create your production plan, you can then use SilverLeaf Production Execution features to assign and schedule tasks to each production work center, by day, and by functional area. This function allows you to initially assume labor costs based on estimates and then use the actual production data you collect over time to calculate the production costs more accurately. ◼

Tackle Production
Planning and
Execution

Improve
Collaboration

Drive Data-driven
Decision Making

Better
Costing

Improve Supply and
Demand Management

Improve Collaboration

Costs to produce plants are going up. There's no getting around it, but you can make better business decisions and keep your competitive edge if you collaborate with the tools that you already own.

THE MICROSOFT TOOLS: MICROSOFT 365 AND MICROSOFT DYNAMICS 365 BUSINESS CENTRAL

More than likely, you have implemented and leveraged Microsoft 365 (formerly Office 365) tools, so greater efficiency is already at your fingertips in the form of Teams, Excel, Outlook, SharePoint, OneDrive and more. Microsoft 365 is getting smarter all the time—adding new cloud-enhanced features that can save you time and produce better results for your team.

Microsoft Teams is unique in that it brings together meetings, chat, calls, collaboration, and business process automation in a single app. Microsoft has been innovating in Teams to do things like create more natural and engaging meeting experiences—enabling people to connect seamlessly with those inside and outside of their organizations and provide ways to make remote presentations richer and more impactful.

Microsoft Excel Collaborating on Excel can be challenging, but there are several ways to make it easier. One way is to use Sheet View in Excel. This feature allows you to create a temporary view just for you, so your custom changes won't impact other users. Another way is to use co-authoring, which lets you and your colleagues open and work on the same Excel workbook simultaneously.

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Microsoft Outlook is a powerful email client that can be used to collaborate with your colleagues. Here are some tips and add-ins that can help you enhance your collaboration experience:

Boomerang: This add-in allows you to schedule meetings with your co-workers without a lot of back and forth over who's free when.

DocuSign for Outlook: This add-in provides an easy way to send documents for others to digitally sign.

Templates and Folders: If you find yourself composing the same kind of message every day, save one of them as a template so that you can quickly reference it in the future.

Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central (BC) extends the power of Microsoft 365 with OneDrive, Teams, Excel, and Outlook integration. ▪

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Drive Data-driven Decision Making

**To make effective business decisions, greenhouse managers and frontline staff
need access to accurate data in real time. Otherwise, the resulting actions from
those decisions will be off-target, or the information will arrive too late for the
actions to have the desired impact.**

THE MICROSOFT TOOL: MICROSOFT POWER BI

Power BI makes it easier to track business performance, create strategic plans, and make profitable
decisions on how the business should operate.

Here's a sampling of the types of Power BI dashboards that can assist with managing your
greenhouse business:

Inventory — Gain visibility into the current quantities of your on-hand inventory to
identify surpluses and shortages as well as the current value and cost of your inventory
to determine projected profits. You can break down the data by plant genus, growth
stage, and location. You can also sort by genetics to see the origin of inventory and how
well each plant type has grown.

Production — View plants by different stages of growth and where plants are located.
Project the capacity of work centers (machines and people) to process plants and get
them ready for delivery to customers. Determine how many resources to schedule and
measure employee piecework productivity.

Financials —Produce high-level dashboards that various stakeholders can drill into.
This includes presentation-ready financials for senior management, investors, and
the board—while also providing department heads with information to analyze the
performance of their teams.

Sales — Compare the performance of regions or locations, and drill into the information
to understand why one area might be experiencing a spike in sales while the numbers
lag for another. This helps determine if trends are due to sales team performance, a
change in market conditions, or climate changes. Performance can be sorted by product
codes and product categories to determine why products, customers, and salespeople
over-perform and under-perform.

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Better Costing

For greenhouse growers, it's more important than ever to accurately track cost. Costing data needs to be accurate for fertilizer or containers, packaging, soil, labor, electricity, and water, etc. But many growers operate with siloed data which doesn't take all these factors into account.

THE MICROSOFT TOOL: MICROSOFT DYNAMICS BUSINESS CENTRAL WITH SILVERLEAF

- BC and SilverLeaf assist with costing in the following ways:
- Reduce or eliminate manual processes and reliance on spreadsheets.
- Standardize processes and business data.
- Connect sales, finance, and operations with a single end to end solution.
- Track customer agreements to access details about prices, discounts, delivery dates, product availability, and fulfillment status.
- Integrate with ordering platforms used by your retail customers.
- Understand cash flow and financial state of business.
- Forecast yield based on production history.
- Monitor consumption rates, demand trends, and product popularity.
- Track inventory testing and related data for analysis, issue mitigation, & production planning.
- Forecast demand to drive production plan.
- Procurement planning.
- Track expected vs actual cost.
- Understand the true cost of production.
- Track sales campaigns and impact on revenue from discounts and marketing efforts.
- View dashboards with expected output by location, variety, and other measures.
- Use preferred costing methods like LIFO, FIFO, standard or average.
- Can export to Excel and make mass updates to overhead and labor, etc., and import back in.

Tech Tip: Microsoft Dynamics 365 BC Role Center allows you to define the data that's important to you on a dashboard. Such as top five customers, favorite accounts, or an integrated Power BI report that you like.

Improve Supply and Demand Management

Matching inventory to customer demand sounds simple enough. Essentially, the process involves comparing the sales forecast to what's available now, what will be available, and where it all needs to go. But it's something many greenhouse growers spend an inordinate amount of time on. They try to corral all the spreadsheets floating around that detail the sales forecast, available inventory, production orders, sales orders, and purchase orders. Even if all this information is gathered, it can be difficult to reconcile the numbers.

THE MICROSOFT TOOL: MICROSOFT DYNAMICS BUSINESS CENTRAL WITH SILVERLEAF

The process of managing supply and demand starts with feeding your demand forecast into SilverLeaf. The demand forecast shows what your sales team expects to sell over a period. You can then look out over the next week, month, quarter, or any other time span that's pertinent to your business to see the projected demand—by item, by location, and other item categories. You can also compare this year to last year and see how close the forecasted demand is compared to the actual demand.

Then you can compare demand to inventory, identifying shortages and overages. With SilverLeaf, you always know what you have available to sell in real time—because everything is in one system with current updates on customer demand, inventory, sales orders, purchase orders, and production orders.

CONCLUSION

Production planning and execution, collaboration, data insights, costing, and supply and demand management are essential for any grower that wants to operate efficiently, remain competitive, and generate a healthy profit. By utilizing technology, growers can make informed decisions about pricing, resource allocation, and cost reduction, which can ultimately lead to greater success and profitability. With Microsoft tools, you can determine the value of your crops as they grow, even though they are not yet finished goods. You can also gain a much better understanding of costing by varietal, and can determine the correct pricing models, as well as which varietals are most profitable. You can tie inventory valuation back to the General Ledger. You can also determine what will be available to sell after the growing cycle and account for things like price increases in fertilizer or other variables.

ABOUT SILVERLEAF

When it comes to growing and bringing your products like flowers, shrubs, trees, and plants to market, you need a modern solution that simplifies daily operations and provides you the production reporting and analytics you need to gain visibility into your operation and make better decisions.

Dynamics 365 Business Central and SilverLeaf provide a comprehensive and user friendly grower management software solution that can be configured to fit your business today and still accommodate tomorrow's growth. With an integration between financials, production, inventory, shipping and other key workloads, you're easily able to manage, measure, and track performance in real-time, no matter if you're in the office or the greenhouse.

If you have questions or want to learn how SilverLeaf can help your business, connect with us today.

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