

Solver helps major agribusiness company keep growing, with insights that deliver healthy profits today and support sustainable operations for healthy farmlands tomorrow

FORECASTING FOR MODERN FARMING

Solver helps major agribusiness company keep growing, with insights that deliver healthy profits today and support sustainable operations for healthy farmlands tomorrow. Altorag AG is Australia’s largest broad acre agribusiness, managing over 153,000 hectares of land. Their vertically integrated business model incorporates farming, fertiliser, fuel, grain storage, piggery, and logistics divisions.

As a result of recent mergers and expansions, Altorag Ag has become the largest broadacre agribusiness in Australia. With 8 operational divisions in 42 locations spread out across the country, Altorag Ag depends on insight from their business systems to optimise farming operations.



INDUSTRY
Agriculture

ERP
SAP Business 1

“ Thanks to Solver and FUJIFILM MicroChannel, we met our goal and now have a strong forecasting foundation in place.

– Maurice Felizzi, Chairman of Altorag



CHALLENGES

Altorag Ag believes in “bringing heart to modern agriculture.” That means protecting farming communities and farmland for future generations, while leveraging technology for efficient operations and growth. The company had invested extensively in modern farming equipment, but still ran their office using an older accounting software system and Excel spreadsheets. They identified a need to modernise their business and accounting systems and move to the cloud for increased efficiency and visibility across the enterprise.



Along with the acquisition of a new ERP solution, Altorag Ag sought out a budgeting and forecasting tool to help them meet their sustainability and profitability goals. Solver was chosen because of its ability to handle complex future forecasts, and not just use historical data to report on the past. Every quarter, Altorag Ag executives want to be able to update their financial and operational forecasts based on predicted weather, raw material costs, and other factors.

THE SOLUTION

One of the challenges Altoro Ag had in creating budgets and forecasts is that they had multiple systems running multiple areas of their business – accounting farming, inventory, transportation, agronomy, grain trading, among others. Without enterprise-wide visibility, business units were working in silos.



Each of the line of business systems were fed into the Solver Data Warehouse to create singular data source that could be used for budgeting and reporting. But because multiple systems were being upgraded and replaced at the same time, Solver and FUJIFILM MicroChannel consultants had to work in lockstep with Altoro Ag team members to deliver a “future proof” data model. With data standardisation and governance procedures in place, more systems can be brought into Solver as the business evolves.

THE RESULTS

“The first phase of the Solver project was a whirlwind,” says Maurice Felizzi, Chairman of Altoro Ag. “Our new shareholders wanted reliable financial and operational forecasts – like yesterday. We couldn’t produce what they needed with the systems we had. With high stakes and a short deadline, I chose Solver and FUJIFILM MicroChannel because I trusted them to deliver – and they did.”



Once the data warehouse was in place, the next step was to get the staff engaged with the project. The finance team was not so sure they wanted to learn a new program, and besides, they did not have time. They had all their regular work to do, plus in their minds, Excel worked just fine. The project team banded together to get the finance team on board. “With Solver, our team can enter which crops we’re planting, how much rainfall we expect, and the input costs, and Solver will spit out a budget almost instantly.” says Maurice Felizzi. “Where Excel held us back, Solver allows us to soar. There was no way we were going back to spreadsheets.

“One of the key features that got users excited about Solver was the ability to populate data at a global level. Once all key assumptions and inputs were entered, budget and forecasts were available for each individual property, crop, and business unit. What took weeks now takes minutes. “Working with FUJIFILM MicroChannel and Solver has been a seamless experience for us. We just call Shelley, and she takes it from there.” says Maurice Felizzi. “They’ve been a real partner every step of the way, helping us realise our vision for modern farming with enterprise-wide insights.

