

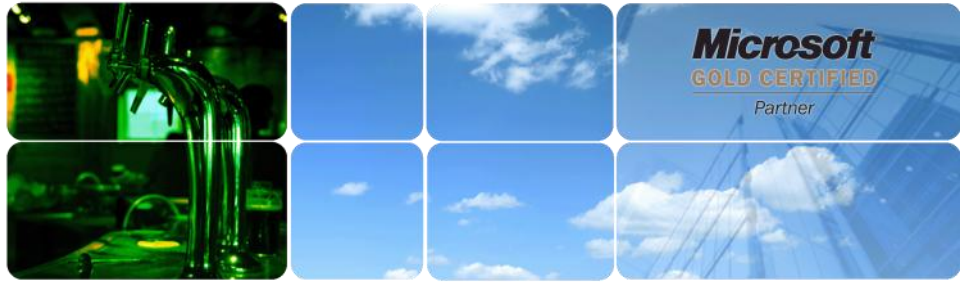
Alphameric Solutions
Client Case Study



"To be able to calculate margin down to store level and analyse the reason for any variances is fantastic. We wanted a solution that would let us view detailed sales information and undertake comprehensive analysis and comparisons so that we could become more proactive in driving promotions and remove products that were underperforming.

We are lucky to be working with a partner that is really experienced with the hospitality market."

Richard Prime
Managing Director
Cooks: The Bakers.



A Recipe for Success

Cooks: The Bakery Ltd is a national bakery chain that operates retail bakeries and coffee shops across the UK, serving freshly made food to 30,000 customers each day.

With manual systems operating throughout the business, the new management team at Cooks recognised that they needed a solution to capture the trading information from all outlets, so that they could use this data to drive the business forward.

"When I joined Cooks, I realised that there was an immediate need to introduce an integrated solution to address the business issues caused by our outdated manual systems," explained Richard Prime, Cook's Managing Director. "At that time we had no measurement of products purchased, no recording of stock, sales or wastage. We were receiving handwritten and often illegible documents from our outlets and as a management team, we were unable to make the rapid business decisions needed in this competitive, fast moving market."

Immediate Controls

The problem highlighted by Richard could potentially affect the future of Cooks. Information received at head office was both slow and incomplete and, in an industry where the production of end products is highly labour intensive, margins can be extremely tight.

Cooks needed to put in place immediate controls to manage the process from end to end, especially since the product range had recently been broadened



across all stores, increasing the pressure on store managers to manage and maintain their stocks more efficiently.

Cooks wanted a solution that could be implemented across the business gradually, so that the management team could prioritise roll-out with the minimum impact upon stores.

"The numbers speak for themselves. We can see that our profitability is improving and we now have accurate trading information available so that we can make informed decisions. Our trading information is more accurate, which means that our customer service is improving and our wastage decreasing. We can now make rapid business decisions based on factual information."

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Having evaluated several options, the company decided to partner with Alphameric Hospitality, citing Alphameric's proven track record in implementing highly successful back office implementations across other major food and drink companies with similar business models.

Enthusiastic Response

The concern that staff, who had been working with manual systems for many years would take time to adjust to the new automated solution, was unfounded.

Initially, Alphameric installed InnTouch – its touch screen point-of-sale tilling – before integrating this with stock, cash and MIS applications, as well as with a new centralised finance system based on Microsoft Dynamics NAV but tailored to meet the unique requirements of Cooks. "Our staff took to the new systems enthusiastically," added Richard. "The solution has completely revolutionised the way we work and has massively reduced the workload at head office, allowing us to reduce our central head count by a staggering 25%."

Traditionally, systems developed for the food and drinks industries have stored data both at outlet and head office, with overnight polling of information between the two.

Substantial Benefits

Alphameric's solution is web-based allowing information generated from each individual till to be immediately available at head office, speeding up the entire process, reducing errors and ensuring that up-to-the-minute information is available.

At the same time, the entire banking and accounting process has been dramatically improved with automatic banking processes matching banked amounts to statements, immediately highlighting anomalies.

Further substantial benefits have been realised when reconciling stock and

order deliveries with invoices as the Alphameric solution automatically links delivery notes and invoices with predefined recipes and sales information, allowing the entire lifecycle of each product (and the items used to manufacture that product) to be monitored and managed from preparation through to sale.

Brilliant!

"The Dynamics NAV solution has worked brilliantly," continued Richard. "There are lots of companies supplying the Microsoft Dynamics NAV software, but without Alphameric's knowledge and expertise we would not have the detailed analysis of the business that we have used to improve profitability."

Before partnering with Alphameric, Cooks employed 5 people to reconcile weekly store banking, 7 to process payroll, 5 to process delivery notes and 6 within the internal accounts department – a total of 23 staff. With Alphameric's solution now in place, Cooks has reduced that number by over 50%.

"The numbers speak for themselves," explained Richard. "We can see that our profitability is improving and we now have accurate trading information available so that we can make informed decisions. Our trading information is timely and more accurate, which means that our customer service is improving and our wastage decreasing. We can now make rapid business decisions based on factual information."

They Understand The Market

"We are lucky to work with a partner that is really experienced in the hospitality market and has understood from the outset what we have been trying to achieve," concluded Richard.

"The measurable results and clear business benefits that Alphameric's solution delivers means that we now have an infrastructure in place to support our stores and provide a solid technology platform for the future."