



# Killer apps

Three software programs add muscle to get the job done

by Lisa Rosetta

Randy Owens is in the business of taking temperatures. His Orem-based company sells a smattering of high-tech thermometers, data loggers and pH and humidity instruments. As president of ThermoWorks, however, it's Owens' job to track other key indicators of change: sales, cash flow, net profit, receivables, payables, inventory and bank balances. And he does it in real-time with a single, integrated business application called NetSuite.

"I'm able to see those numbers constantly, and I'm able to drill down on something if it looks a little unusual," he says.

In this economy, taking the temperature of your company is critical. A good business application can help you keep tabs on important metrics, such as sales, but can also improve the speed and efficiency with which you get the job done.

And that's important, says Bob Neezer, CEO of COMPLETExRM, a Salt Lake City-based software company, because "in a fairly

tough economy, I think we're all going to be asked to do more with less."

So which application is right for you?

## Enterprise resource planning: Microsoft Dynamics NAV

When Horizon Food Group outgrew its homegrown business application in 2001, it sought a solution that could handle multiple locations and companies for better financial management. The \$70 million Livermore, Calif.-based business, which has a plant in Salt Lake City, comprises three companies: Horizon Snack Foods, Ne-Mo's Bakery and La Tempesta Bakery Confections.

Horizon Food Group settled on Microsoft Dynamics NAV, an application that enables businesses to automate, integrate and better manage finance, manufacturing, human resources and other processes. Roger Beard, Horizon's director of information systems, says the application helps track inventory and schedule production. For

example, if it takes two hours to create a batch of dough, and the company needs to produce 200 batches a day, Dynamics NAV helps managers calculate how much time and raw materials they will need, and estimates the required labor and production costs.

It also gives Horizon Food Group a bird's-eye view of its operations.

"All the costs are visible: freight, fuel, raw materials," Beard says. "It gives you visibility from a management perspective of how we're doing."

Executives and their employees can look at balance sheets, set up inventory, ship products and record financial transactions. Beard says one of the application's best features is its flexible reporting capability, which allows him to schedule reports to run automatically.

Microsoft put in its latest version of Dynamics NAV a feature that allows human resources to enter information about new

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employees and what resources they'll need for their jobs. If he needs a computer, an e-mail gets fired off to the IT department; if she needs a phone, an e-mail is sent to provisioning. "It babysits everybody and makes sure everything gets done in a timely fashion," says Beard, who hopes to make the upgrade sometime in 2009.

**Customer relationship management: PlanPlus Online**

Jointly developed by FranklinCovey and COMPLETExRM, PlanPlus Online is an online calendar that is accessible anywhere you can log onto the Web. But it does much more than schedule appointments: It helps increase personal productivity by using a goal-setting and weekly planning application, and also manages projects and contacts.

"At some point, Microsoft Excel just does not work," says Brady Uselman, an internal consultant for CEO Space Utah. "It's really crazy, but it's what people are using."

CEO Space Utah, a local chapter of a national training and development company, was growing so fast it needed help managing its information and leads. PlanPlus Online was the answer, says Uselman. The program tracks contacts, tasks, sales opportunities and more, and can support hundreds — even thousands — of customers with ease, according to the company's Web site.

"A manager can be very, very effective by checking people's progress anywhere in the world," says Todd Simons, senior director of software at FranklinCovey Products. When a sales process step is due, users can easily set a date for follow-up that will appear on a daily task list. Sales teams can collaborate on a single database from anywhere in the world, and managers can quickly report on the sales pipeline and related sales activities.

Because it's offered over the Internet,

there are no file servers, installation hassles or need for an IT staff to run it. "It's very conducive to a small business who needs a rich application to compete, yet they don't want to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars to have, say, a Microsoft application or some of the more (costly) CRM applications out there," says Simon.

**The big picture view: NetSuite**

From the time his marketing department gets word of a lead to when it closes the deal, AdvancedMD President and CEO Eric Morgan says NetSuite is key to making that process smooth.

NetSuite rolls up three functions into one business application: customer relationship management, enterprise resource planning and e-commerce capability. "You could say we're running our whole business on it. It's extensive and pervasive," Morgan says.

AdvancedMD, a Salt Lake City-based medical billing software company, once relied on a handful of programs. Now, "We have a full perspective of our clients, from beginning to end, and our business really from front to back," Morgan says.

With NetSuite, sales representatives can view a customer's entire record, including support cases and billing issues, according to the company's Web site. Warehouse managers, for example, can instantly view approved sales orders, and accounting personnel are able to review support issues when calling customers to collect payments. "It's a whole, 360-degree view of what's going on," said Jim McGeever, CFO of NetSuite.

At ThermoWorks, orders are received over the phone, online and through direct mail. NetSuite, Owens says, provides an integrated package "where our people can speak to the customer and see all of its records in front of them, and track opportunities and quotes that are related to the transaction."

In the past, McGeever says, many large companies bought multiple applications and paid top dollar to thread them together. Now, these companies are moving to a suite approach to save time and money. "The people who tend to buy our product tend to have outgrown small applications, such as QuickBooks,"

AdvancedMD's Morgan says his company has deployed the program extensively, which has provided a high level of automation. "I think we're doing things companies five and 10 times our size still struggling with and the reason is this product." NetSuite, he adds, is user-friendly and was easy to customize. Because the application is software as a service proffered via the Internet, AdvancedMD isn't tied in to any internal systems and is spared expensive upgrades.

Morgan says he can't imagine switching to another application. "Certainly we wouldn't be able to run our business with the (same) level of information and automation without it" ■

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