



ZOOK Relies on Naviona to Adapt Microsoft Dynamics for Complex Engineered-to-Order Manufacturing

Industry

Engineered-to-Order Manufacturing

About ZOOK

ZOOK manufactures metal and graphite rupture disks, pressure-safety devices used in applications ranging from transportation and industrial equipment to aerospace. Its engineered-to-order products can vary significantly in size, material, pressure specifications, testing requirements, and documentation.

Highlights

- Built a custom product configurator for complex engineered-to-order requirements
- Cut a data consolidation process from 95 hours to 2 hours
- Reduced customer certificate creation from 30 minutes to 2 minutes
- Reduced shipping data entry from 20 minutes to 2 seconds per shipment
- Now helping ZOOK migrate a highly customized Dynamics NAV environment to Business Central

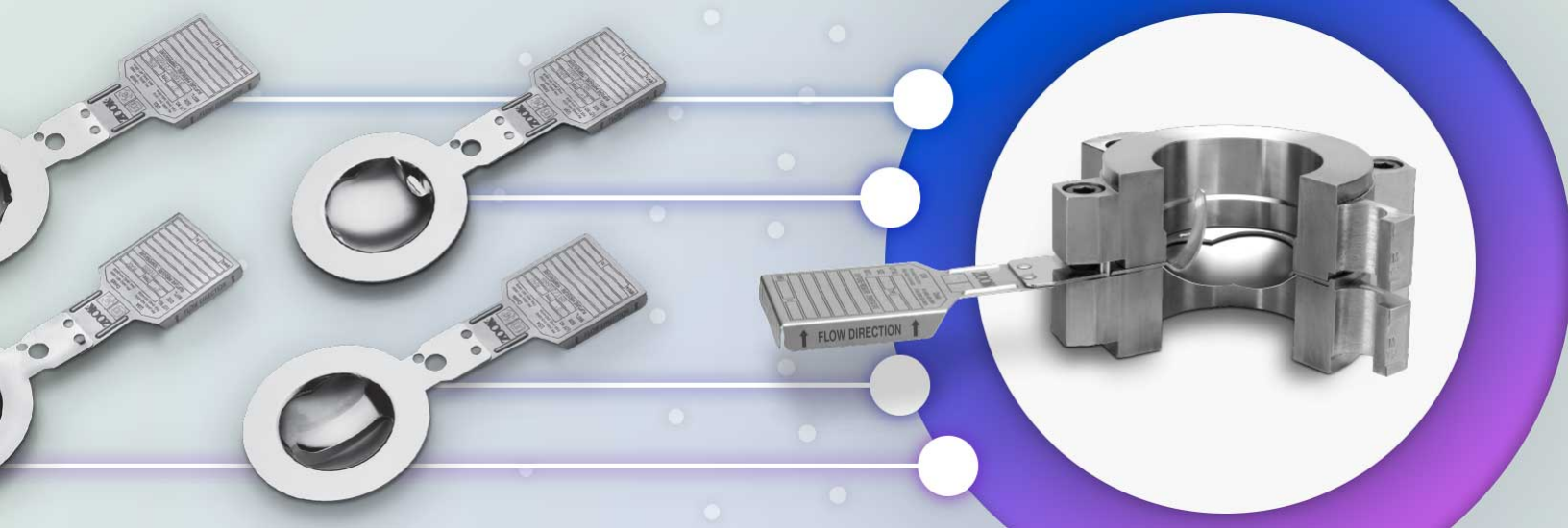


Supporting Manufacturing That Doesn't Fit a Standard Mold

ZOOK does not manufacture thousands of identical catalog items. Much of its business is engineered to order, with products built to specific safety requirements. That complexity carries through the entire operation, including engineering, production, quality, testing, certification, inventory, and shipping.

John McNulty, IT Director at ZOOK, says Naviona's understanding of those processes has made the difference.

"Naviona understands manufacturing, but more importantly, they took the time to understand our manufacturing. They start with the business process and then determine how the software should support it. They've been able to build the solution around our business instead of forcing our business to fit the software."



Over the years, Naviona has helped ZOOK extend Microsoft Dynamics NAV to support processes that would be difficult to accommodate with standard ERP functionality alone.

Building a Custom Configurator for Complex Manufacturing

ZOOK's manufacturing requirements were already testing the limits of standard software when it first implemented Dynamics NAV.

"We originally tried to use an ISV product configurator, but our needs were too complex. Our products involve different measurements, specifications, production requirements, and inspection rules. It isn't as simple as selecting a few options and determining which components are needed."

The team at Naviona helped build custom configurator functionality around those requirements.

"The custom configurator does much more than define the product. It also determines how the product needs to be produced, inspected, and what information is required throughout the manufacturing process. That custom functionality is what allowed NAV to support the complexity of our business."

Cutting Certificate Creation from 30 Minutes to 2 Minutes

Every ZOOK safety product requires detailed documentation. Historically, creating those certificates was a highly manual process.

"We have hundreds of improvements to Dynamics NAV that may seem small individually, but they are the vital, under-the-hood things that allow our company to operate efficiently."

John McNulty, IT Director
ZOOK

"Information was collected from multiple sources throughout production, including inspection data, test results, material information, and other records. Someone would gather all of that information and manually create the customer certificate in Microsoft Word, which tied up skilled employees and introduced opportunities for data entry errors."

Naviona helped ZOOK automate the process.

"A certificate that might have taken about 30 minutes to prepare can now be produced in about two minutes. More importantly, the data is consistent and accurate because it comes directly from our production database. If we ever need to verify something, we can drill down into the system to see where it came from."

The original solution also became a foundation ZOOK could expand.

"Naviona didn't just create one document for us. They created a system we could use to build additional documents ourselves. Today we produce around 30 different documents depending on the product, customer, country, and requirements. We sell in more than 170 countries, so that flexibility is important."

Turning a 95-Hour Data Consolidation into a 2-Hour Process

At one point, ZOOK was operating three NAV environments. Eventually, they needed to consolidate and merge data. However, the standard approach presented a major challenge.

"We were trying to merge sales and historical sales data, and we estimated that the process could take anywhere from 70 to 95 hours. We needed to complete the work over a weekend, so that simply wasn't practical. And that estimate was only to merge the sales data, not production or other historical data."

Naviona developed a tool that allowed ZOOK to copy and merge tables between separate NAV environments.

"Naviona took a process that would have taken days and reduced it to about two hours. That's a good example of what they do for us. They understand the underlying problem and come back with a solution that makes a complicated process much simpler."

Reducing Shipping Data Entry from 20 Minutes to 2 Seconds

ZOOK encountered another unique challenge at its Canadian operation. The existing shipping integration used in the United States did not support UPS Canada.

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"Shipping was a very manual process, because UPS uses different data structures in Canada. Someone would print the information and then re-enter it manually in the UPS system. It could take anywhere from 12 to 20 minutes for each shipment."

Naviona developed an interface between NAV and the Canadian version of UPS WorldShip.

"Now the process takes about two seconds. We bring the sales order data into WorldShip, send it, and generate the labels. We handle roughly 45 to 80 shipments a day in Canada, many of them international, so eliminating that manual work makes a significant difference."

For McNulty, examples like these illustrate why deep manufacturing knowledge matters.

"We have hundreds of improvements to NAV that may seem small individually, but they are the vital, under-the-hood things that allow our company to operate efficiently."



Manufacturing Expertise That Goes Beyond Software

ZOOK does not view Naviona simply as a company that develops NAV customizations.

"There are times when we bring Naviona a request and, because they understand manufacturing, they will suggest changing the process instead. They may show us that NAV already has a way to accomplish what we need, so we don't even need the customization."

That approach requires the partner to understand both the software and the business.

"With Naviona, we don't have to explain our business every time we call. They know our history and how we operate. It becomes a partnership of guidance and knowledge rather than somebody simply fixing the issue you put in front of them."

ZOOK saw that firsthand when NAV was introduced to its Canadian operation, where metal rupture disks are manufactured using processes that differ considerably from the graphite products manufactured in the United States.

"Naviona already understood one side of our business, but they came in and became students of the metal operation. They took the time to understand the nuances. Once our team in Canada saw that effort and realized Naviona understood what they were doing, they became believers."

"Manufacturers sometimes assume they are too unique for Business Central. We thought the same thing. The real question isn't whether Business Central can support specialized manufacturing. It's whether you have a partner that understands how to bridge any gaps between your business requirements and the platform."

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Bringing Years of NAV Customization to Business Central

ZOOK is now working with Naviona on its next major project: moving from Dynamics NAV to Business Central.

McNulty estimates ZOOK's NAV environment is approximately 30 percent customized after years of development.

"We're looking at everything we've built over roughly 15 years and working with Naviona to ask: Do we keep it? Do we change it? Do we get rid of it? Or can we now use functionality that comes standard with Business Central?"

ZOOK is confident Business Central will meet their needs for the foreseeable future.

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For ZOOK, having the same trusted manufacturing partner guide the transition makes a major change much easier.

"When I tell our management team that Naviona is going to be there with us through the Business Central project, the response is basically, 'Okay, say no more.' There is a lot of confidence that comes from knowing the people helping you make that move already understand your business."

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