

**CLIENT:**

Stephens &amp; George Print Group

**SOLUTION:**

Microsoft Dynamics NAV 2009 PrintVis

**INDUSTRY:**

Printing

**PROFILE:**

Implementing a complete end-to-end ERP solution

**The Project**

In January 2008, Crimsonwing was appointed as the supplier for Stephens & George Print Group's new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) System. Stepping away from the industries' typical MIS solution, Stephens & George could see the benefits available to them using a fully integrated ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) system. After careful review, the award winning Microsoft Dynamics NAV PrintVis platform was selected as the platform of choice, as it offers the full benefits of an ERP solution with the additional print-industry specific modules inbuilt. The objective was to implement a system flexible enough not only to cope with the requirements of a comprehensive print business whilst adapting to the ever changing market, but also providing a solid core system with a clean user interface.

**Client Information**

Stephens & George, founded as a family business back in 1912, has its headquarters in Merthyr Tydfil, South Wales, with offices in London and Edinburgh, employing over 220 people. Their passion and area of expertise is sheet-fed litho printing, specialising in magazines and commercial products.

Stephens & George are proud of their heritage. This coupled with their core values of honesty and hard work, with an unparalleled knowledge, ensures they continue to raise the standard within the printing world. On-going investment in cutting-edge technology and IT helps Stephens and George maintain their place at the top of the industry, providing total print solutions focused on the requirements of their customers. In 2011 they were named PrintWeek Magazines' Business magazine printer of the year.

**Background & Requirements**

Andrew Jones, Group Managing Director at Stephens & George, explained why a new solution was necessary: *"The need for one system was crucial, as the flow of data needed to be seamless. Where previously we were using different systems for ordering, marketing, production, etc. we now enjoy visibility from the first process of finding a potential client right through to profit analysis on that client after work has been completed."*

The management team had already highlighted that a key issue was the lack of information obtainable from their



previous MIS configuration. It was becoming increasingly difficult to access reliable information. With the segmented structure of the systems in use, it meant reports had to be run on multiple platforms and viewed in tandem, which was awkward and time consuming. The team also wanted to address the information flow throughout the organisation, with best practices incorporated in all departments.

The system also needed to provide accurate management accounts and analysis tools to help the company maintain a competitive edge, whilst monitoring job profitability. This was all to run in a live environment as unfortunately, due to the current economic climate, the system also had to manage credit limits to help Stephens & George maintain control on cash flow exposure.

*“The ultimate goal for the business was to understand how our own business worked, where costs were incurred and where profits were created. Firstly we need to have a clear and effective flow of information from area to area and then use that information to make key decisions. The system has given us clarity in our thinking turning decisions that traditionally could have been seen as risky into an action based on solid facts with data to strengthen its case”* said Andrew Jones, Group Managing Director.

## **The Solution**

Stephens & George approached Microsoft to find out more about their applicable platforms as well as highlighting suitable implementation partners, Microsoft suggested Crimsonwing, based on a background and solid competencies within the Print and Media industry. Crimsonwing was able to demonstrate the benefits of Microsoft Dynamics NAV PrintVis, the only fully integrated print-specific ERP platform at that time. Crimsonwing is the exclusive UK distributor for this printing vertical. The buy-in to the system at Stephens & George was instantaneous as the whole team could see the benefits of a solution with real time data and a single point of entry with the added benefits of an optimised printer’s workflow.

With the initial implementation completed and established, Stephens & George started to explore the additional functionality available to them within the Microsoft Dynamics NAV PrintVis platform. Thereafter, the approach was to bring their Sales team on to the system and introduce them to the CRM module. This allowed Stephens & George to use the same customer data as the production and finance teams and capture all correspondents related to their contacts within the same system. This also allowed for Microsoft Dynamics NAV PrintVis to integrate with Outlook exchange, so all appointments and tasks were synchronised between the two systems. The new Campaign and Contact management allows feedback on targeted sales and one off estimates.

The PrintVis vertical provides a flexible print related estimating package where new processes and machinery can be configured as the business evolves. Job costing is captured and deviations from the estimates are highlighted allowing the group to scrutinise profitability on a job by job or client by client basis. Automated stock controls were implemented where purchased items are automatically added to inventory and consumed against the actual orders processed.

Stephens & George identified that the important part of their implementation was to not only drive production, but to ensure that every aspect of the business feeds into the correct ledgers. Now monthly group,

departmental and cost centre accounts are produced. Also an automated payroll system was incorporated into Microsoft Dynamics NAV PrintVis offering full time and attendance, P11d and HR.

Since its inception, Stephens & George have never looked back and have continued to push the system out both internally and externally. They have expanded their warehouse capabilities and introduced a full bar coded warehouse solution; using the latest Microsoft Dynamics NAV/.NET integration. The front end was built for the handheld computers, allowing Stephens & George to receive, issue, return and consume goods using 2d and 3d bar codes directly feeding into PrintVis. This has allowed for accurate analysis reporting of paper wastage and actual consumption.

The company has also started implementing the latest JDF/JMF workflow, which interlinks the pre-press (Agfa) and press room (Heidelberg), with PrintVis as the central communication hub of the solution. Job definitions are produced for all orders allowing some levels of automation in the pre-press area. The data is then passed on to the press room again adding further information for the production process. With the JMF definitions being present in the file structure, the pre-press and pressroom machinery is able to deliver live messaging back to Microsoft Dynamics NAV. This allows increased automation and provides real-time machine feedback for analysis by the management team, who monitor quantities produced, waste, time taken and the even spectral data showing the quality of the sheets being produced.

***“The Crimsonwing support has been excellent. The skills of the support staff are phenomenal. All issues are formally logged and given a unique ID. From there the issue is assigned to the small team dedicated to Stephens & George and the issues are generally solved in a timely manner.”***

Michael Donovan, Technical Manager, explained further, that *“The best part of having such support is that ideas can be converted into actual modifications quite quickly. There is no waiting for the next release of the software – the release you have can be built on by yourselves and the system can change as quick as your business requires it to.”*

## Benefits

*"The PrintVis vertical has allowed our commercial departments to produce higher levels of work without the need for additional labour. The flow from estimate to order is painless and allows for a high-level of flexibility, which is needed in the ever changing world of print. Purchasing practices have improved and entries are posted into the financial ledgers with ease. With one system we have been able to remove many software packages with their expensive upgrade and support costs"* explained Michael Donovan, Technical Manager.

Stephens & George are making enormous time savings on the back of the new system and processes put in place. With the help of the automated monthly stock controls and the reports from the standard package, the original 4-day stock management process has been condensed into just one hour. The invoicing area benefitted from the improved processes. Accurate invoicing to paper, email or automatic external accounting systems was achieved and trimmed back their invoice times from 10 to 3 working days.

The purchasing process was made more fluid now that items can be purchased in relation to their use in a client's order.

Job creation and full factory scheduling was introduced so machinery can be loaded up with work in advance of the production becoming available, predicting future factory throughput and sale levels. This streamlines the process and facilitates advanced planning for production, which is now able to manage a variety of machinery and tasks.

For added value in the despatch process, the Company's transport management was incorporated within Microsoft Dynamics NAV PrintVis, with daily despatch manifests linked to Purchase Orders for contractors. This catered for accurate cost analysis which allowed Stephens & George to streamline their fleet and provide an improved service to the client base through the effective use of subcontractors and combining shipment by regions/postcodes etc.

*"We'd thoroughly recommend both Microsoft Dynamics NAV PrintVis as a package and Crimsonwing as an implementation and support partner. The package is tried and tested in the business world, yet is flexible enough that you can tailor it to your specific business needs. The quality of support is first class and the knowledge of the system is excellent"* commented Andrew Jones, Group Managing Director.



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[www.stephensandgeorge.co.uk](http://www.stephensandgeorge.co.uk)



PrintVis is a comprehensive standard ERP/ MIS solution for the printing industry. The platform is built on, and certified for Microsoft Dynamics NAV. PrintVis fulfils the most advanced needs for all the tasks and processes in the administration and production of pre-press, press and post-press. PrintVis is a modular system and can be adapted you every clients unique needs. It is JDF-certified and integrates to all JDF enabled and compatible products/ systems.

[www.printvis.com](http://www.printvis.com)



Crimsonwing Ltd is an international IT solutions provider, developing and implementing leading-edge solutions for European companies to gain a competitive advantage. The company offers flexible, cost-effective solutions for ERP, especially in the print sector, eCommerce and custom development. Being able to integrate various different technologies enables Crimsonwing to deliver a full service and an integrated solution. The company is a Microsoft Gold Certified Partner.

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