



## Overview

**Country or Region:** United States

**Industry:** Retail Industry – Specialty Retailing

### Customer Profile

The Cable Shopping Network (CSN) is a fast-growing category leader in multi-channel sales of collectible coins and numismatic continuity programs.

### Business Situation

CSN needed to manage growth while maintaining best possible service quality, increase customer retention, improve visibility into inventory and customer information, and increase efficiency in order fulfillment.

### Solution

The company implemented Microsoft Dynamics® AX together with Junction Multi-Channel Retail (JunctionMCR™) from Junction Solutions as the unified infrastructure to support and streamline business activities.

### Benefits

- Accurate, real-time visibility into inventory and order fulfillment
- Boost service excellence with streamlined fulfillment and inventory management and planning
- Improved customer satisfaction and quality control

“ Instead of talking about technology, today we talk a lot more about what we want to accomplish and where we want to take the business. We are also very happy with the solution’s cost of ownership. ”

**Jay Poplawski**  
 Co-CEO and Co-Founder  
 Cable Shopping Network

# CSN Achieves Streamlined Order & Inventory Management, Improves Customer Service

The Cable Shopping Network (CSN) sells collectible coins through multiple channels, engaging thousands of customers in continuity programs. The company had plans to grow; however, the technology previously in place lacked the flexibility and reliability to support CSN’s complex operations and commitment to service. To achieve its goals, the company implemented Microsoft Dynamics® AX together with Junction Multi-Channel Retail (JunctionMCR™) from Microsoft Gold Certified Partner Junction Solutions. With the integrated solution, CSN has accurate, real-time visibility into inventory and customer data, streamlined order fulfillment and has, through a joint venture, doubled its transaction volume, without needing to invest in expensive customization. Today, customer fulfillment is efficient and accurate, with a 97% error-free order fulfillment rate. The sales team can close more business and retain customers effectively. Executives confidently plan for continued growth knowing the solution has the flexibility and stability to support them.

## Situation

Serving customers throughout the United States, the Cable Shopping Network (CSN) offers a wide variety of collectible coins. The company’s offerings include the well-known statehood quarters, proof sets, ancient coins, coins retrieved from shipwrecks, and international collectible coins and notes. CSN also offers exclusive programs, such as presidential dollars and a national parks coin series. The company’s headquarters, call center and warehouse are located in Scottsdale, Arizona.

CSN markets and sells through many different channels: paid programming on TV, live TV shows, catalogs, direct mail, outbound telemarketing, and e-commerce. Approximately 400,000 customers have purchased at least one item from the company, and that number is increasing. Says Jay Poplawski, Co-Founder and Co-CEO of CSN, “We

aim to be the leader in collectible coins with U.S. consumers and provide the best possible customer service.”

## Managing Continuity Programs and Activity Spikes

Many CSN customers participate in one or more continuity programs, which are programs where a customer subscribes to a series and receives the offer items at regular intervals, accompanied by regular billing. Continuity programs are a big revenue driver for CSN, making up for about half of the company’s revenue annually. It is essential for CSN to manage continuity programs with optimal levels of reliability and service excellence to maintain good, lasting relationships with these customers.

During CSN’s live show and infomercials, the call center can receive spikes of 300 or more simultaneous calls. Representatives in the outbound sales group use assigned lists of accounts to call customers when valuable numismatic products become available for purchase. CSN makes approximately 29,000 customer shipments every month, but during two weeks in December, it ships as many as 70,000 packages.

### Outgrowing Inflexible Technology Tools

To help manage its business, CSN previously used the Ecometry software. However, the technology was unable to support CSN's specific needs, particularly CSN's complex continuity program requirements. Carolyn Burke, Fulfillment and Property Manager at CSN, explains, "We assemble sets of coins in many different configurations and ship them to customers at a set schedule. The prior software could not effectively reflect the variety in products, accommodate shipping schedules, or facilitate reliable inventory



reconciliation. When we went live, we were coming up on our high-volume, end-of-year continuity season and simply could not imagine going through another busy season with the headaches we experienced with the prior software."

For CSN, customizing the software had become costly and upgrades were

unreliable. The software also lacked the features needed to manage high volumes of customer interactions and continued growth across CSN's multiple channels. In addition, CSN was preparing for a merger with The Coin Vault, which would result in substantial increases in customer traffic, product complexity, and fulfillment requirements. Says Poplawski, "We urgently needed a technology tool that could closely reflect our expanding business. We also wanted to gain much stronger capabilities to serve and retain the continuity customers whose business we go to great expense to win."

### Solution

The professional networks of CSN leaders soon brought the company into contact with Microsoft and Junction Solutions. CSN decided against performing a time consuming evaluation of software vendors and their offerings. Instead, CSN closely reviewed the advantages of implementing Microsoft Dynamics AX together with JunctionMCR from Junction Solutions and asked for several demonstrations to verify the technology would fit the company's business. "We realized that both Microsoft and Junction Solutions had clear visions for their products, were strongly committed to advancing them, and had the resources to do so," explains Poplawski. "We also understood that Junction Solutions was ready to become

“The solution is extremely scalable. The recent merger has almost doubled call volumes, transactions, and fulfillment needs. The solution adapted smoothly without causing an increased administrative workload.”

**Kevin Krieger**  
IT Manager  
Cable Shopping Network

familiar with our business and offer strong, dependable support.”

CSN was satisfied that Microsoft Dynamics AX and JunctionMCR could effectively support the company's continuity business with regularly scheduled shipments and

billing, and adapt to its multiple sales channels. Together with Microsoft Dynamics AX, JunctionMCR also offered a number of other capabilities important to CSN, including flexible order processing, inventory planning, warehouse operations and order fulfillment.

"The decision to select Junction Solutions and Microsoft was clear for CSN," said Jeff Marker, Senior Vice President, Retail Practice, Junction Solutions. "CSN saw the robust functionality that Microsoft and Junction Solutions provided and it fit their business like a glove, offering them the technology that could take their business to the next level."

### Fast Implementation with Experienced Partner

The implementation proceeded under a rapid timeline because CSN needed to have the new technology tools ready for its busiest season in December. The solution was implemented in several phases, starting with a pilot project for a single continuity program, followed by a companywide rollout of Microsoft Dynamics AX and JunctionMCR. CSN gained the capabilities to manage almost all business activities with the integrated solution. The deployment and user training took place in time to support December's busy season. A third phase included the implementation of the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) module of Microsoft Dynamics AX for the outbound sales and customer service representatives. The entire project was complete by the end of February 2008.

The solution integrates with Microsoft Excel and Microsoft SQL Server to facilitate efficient business reporting, analysis, and communications. JunctionMCR enables streamlined shipping and billing of continuity programs. The Junction Solutions' team also implemented business rules to assign accounts for outbound sales and campaign management activities, and streamline picking and shipping processes.

### Complete, Integrated Business Management Infrastructure

Today, 78 CSN employees use the integrated solution:

- Poplawski and the company's leadership team rely on the reporting capabilities in Microsoft Dynamics AX and JunctionMCR to assess business performance, mostly by reviewing sales results and the return on the company's investment in different channels. Kevin Krieger, IT Manager at CSN, says, "I used to provide reports to executives when they requested them. Now, they generate their own reports, at their convenience, in the format they find most practical."
- Burke and the warehouse and fulfillment teams work with the solution to manage inventory, assembly of product sets, picking, packing, and shipping. Says Burke, "Junction Solutions worked closely with us to fit the solution closely and quickly to the way we work. Even our less computer-literate team members rapidly became comfortable and proficient in working with the solution's intuitive graphical screens."
- Inbound call center and outbound sales team members rely especially on the CRM and sales order management components of JunctionMCR, built into Microsoft Dynamics AX. Marnie Morgan, Call Center Manager at CSN, says, "The system provides detailed customer order and shipping histories, along with notes on any issues and escalations. By the time a representative escalates a customer situation to me, I'm fully informed at a moment's notice and can work with the customer to provide the best service possible." Outbound sales representatives rely on the solution to present their lists of accounts—to whom they offer products

that might interest them—and credit card verifiers use it to resolve issues with expired or about-to-expire credit cards. In addition, Morgan reviews her team members' individual and collective performance through reports that the solution generates.

- Financial and marketing managers access the solution to perform detailed financial analysis and evaluate the company's results from campaigns and spending across the channels it engages in.
- The purchasing department uses the Master Planning module of Microsoft Dynamics AX to plan product sourcing and ensure that CSN has the right inventory on hand when the company needs it. Every night, CSN updates its forecasting reports to help keep product supplies aligned with expected demand.
- CSN's office and warehouse locations run on a single instance of Microsoft Dynamics AX, which also supports the offices and warehouse of The Coin Vault, located in Indiana. After CSN merged with The Coin Vault, the combined traffic and workload approximately doubled while the solution easily scaled to encompass more users, greatly increased numbers of transactions, and a greater breadth of sales channels. Warehouse and fulfillment staff at CSN and The Coin Vault locations can access the company's entire inventory and drop-ship orders directly to customers.

#### Stable, Dependable Solution

Krieger, who is responsible for Microsoft Dynamics AX and JunctionMCR system administration, finds his work to be very different with the new system. "Microsoft Dynamics AX is extremely stable and dependable," he says. "I can spend my time fine-tuning the solution to the business and planning enhancements that we will implement in the future." Currently, Krieger is preparing for an implementation of Microsoft SharePoint Server, which will integrate with Microsoft Dynamics AX. "Integrating Microsoft Dynamics AX and SharePoint Server will provide us with a powerful shared reference point for business information and reporting," he explains. "We will be able to dynamically connect to the database in Microsoft Dynamics AX and review sales trends as they happen. The strong security features in SharePoint Server will make it easy for me to manage individual and group access to the system so they can retrieve the information they need to see."

#### Benefits

With Microsoft Dynamics AX and JunctionMCR, CSN has a scalable, flexible, dependable infrastructure that supports

“CSN saw the robust functionality that Microsoft and Junction Solutions provided and it fit their business like a glove, offering them the technology that could take their business to the next level.”

**Jeff Marker**  
SVP, Retail Practice  
Junction Solutions

Burke comments, "The ease the solution adds to our jobs is priceless. We don't think about the tools, we simply use them to do our work."

#### Take a Winning Business Model to the Next Level

Across the organization, CSN employees use Microsoft Dynamics AX to assess business performance and direct operations in the most profitable manner. Poplawski and the executive team are especially interested in how the different channels perform in terms of sales and how CSN might want to adjust spending on campaigns, broadcast programs, and marketing collateral. Says Poplawski, "The technology reflects our business rules and policies, and gives us the information and tools to make sound decisions and direct business performance for improved competitiveness. We can also use our creativity in developing new continuity programs without being concerned that Microsoft Dynamics AX and JunctionMCR won't have the flexibility to support them."

"When CSN first went live with Dynamics AX, it was a beginning," said Marker. "It was a new beginning for them because it allowed them to take advantage of the functionality and

underlying architecture of Junction MCR and Dynamics AX. They have leveraged that functionality over time to grow their business, expand into new markets,

and make their processes more efficient and cost effective." Krieger adds, "It's very easy to learn and to produce reports to show customer purchasing patterns, so we can target offers to those customers who are likely to be the most receptive. That was not possible before."

In their own areas of responsibility, Burke and Morgan make use of Microsoft Dynamics AX to review individual and team performance. Burke relies on the solution to assess workloads and fulfillment rates of her team. Morgan uses JunctionMCR capabilities, built into Microsoft Dynamics AX, to track and boost representatives' production and call activity.

#### Pursue Accelerated Growth Without Increasing Resource Overhead

With Microsoft Dynamics AX and JunctionMCR, CSN has a scalable solution that can accommodate the company's growth and the spikes in customer activity. Says Krieger, "The solution is extremely scalable. The recent merger has almost doubled call volumes, transactions, and fulfillment needs. The solution adapted smoothly without causing an increased administrative workload."

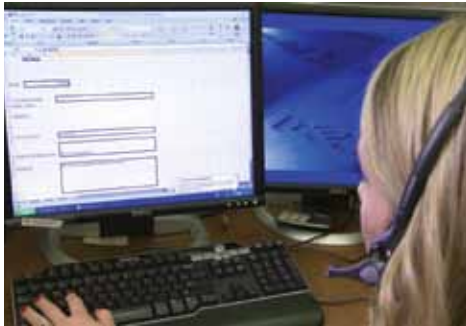
Observing intense end-of-year business, Morgan notes, "With Microsoft Dynamics AX, we've been able to efficiently and comfortably handle all the annual shipments for our continuity



programs and manage the huge volume of customer orders that need fast shipping in time for the holidays.”

#### **Boost Service Excellence with Streamlined Fulfillment**

Customers directly benefit from CSN's implementation of a connected, streamlined business infrastructure. Through the company's new self-service portal, customers can make orders, and track shipments, at their convenience, by using information served to them through Microsoft Dynamics AX, reducing calls about order status coming into the call center. As Morgan points out, “The solution empowers us to deliver



on CSN's commitment to providing outstanding service quality, no matter how busy we are.”

Microsoft Dynamics AX and JunctionMCR enables the expedient and efficient delivery of customer service within the call center. For example, many of CSN's customers are enrolled in multiple continuity programs. In

the old system, the customer's information for each program was in a separate screen. Now, each customer's complete information is integrated into one view, eliminating the delay of toggling through multiple screens. Also, it is common for a customer to have the same name as several other customers in the database. With the new solution, representatives can identify a customer by phone number or other unique identifiers. “This allows us to locate the customer's correct information in seconds,” says Morgan. “We can also make and track any exceptions to policies and terms with great ease.”

The fulfillment and warehouse team enjoys a similar experience. Says Burke, “We can run jobs in half the time because there aren't as many steps as there used to be, so we can ship more packages in a day. Continuity shipping is automated, accelerated, and dependable, no matter how varied and complex the product configurations are. With our

complex product kits, our back orders would stretch out to upwards of 30 days, but now we are always within two weeks, even during the busy holiday season.” At the same time, by taking advantage of new efficiencies and more dependable workflows with Microsoft Dynamics AX, Burke and her team are able to spend more time on quality control, reducing the error rate and ensuring shipments are packed correctly to avoid damage. Burke adds, “Our rate of error-free order fulfillment is at an all-time high and well above 97 percent. We're very happy with that ratio.”

#### **Increase Customer Retention and the Ability to Close Sales**

Retaining customers in the company's more than 25 continuity programs makes a critical difference to CSN's revenue stream. Billing goes directly to customers' credit cards, and resolving issues related to declined or about-to-expire credit cards is an essential task that a small group of dedicated professionals in the call center performs. Says Morgan, “Our ability to resolve credit card problems has led to being able to recapture 40-50 percent of declines. The process is now much faster. In Microsoft Dynamics AX, we're presented with a list with the right account details as soon as declines happen—we don't need to wait.”

Inbound and outbound call center staff also takes advantage of the CRM capability of Microsoft Dynamics AX by recommending products of possible interest to customers, based on their purchasing history. Even during peak call times after the company's TV broadcasts air, call center employees find it much easier to upsell while customers' interest is acute. And, when sales representatives sometimes have a short time span to offer sought-after, limited quantity products, they can reach their accounts and close transactions quickly. Also, with real-time inventory visibility, they can see right away whether or not the item is still in stock before they process the order. Morgan points out, “It greatly helps sales that inventory today is always available in real-time, as needed, so that we can close business with customers responding to broadcasts, catalogs, or campaigns and ship immediately.”



#### **Junction Solutions**

Junction Solutions provides vertical-specific software applications and services that help organizations enhance operational performance, reduce costs, expand delivery channels and strengthen relationships. Built on Microsoft Dynamics® AX and designed specifically for Food & Beverage and Retail companies, Junction Solutions' innovative offerings focus on enterprise resource planning, (ERP), supply chain management (SCM – demand, order, warehouse, yard and distribution management), human capital management, merchandising, order entry management, call-center management, eCommerce engagement and fulfillment.

For more information, please visit [www.junctionsolutions.com](http://www.junctionsolutions.com).

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#### **Inspirational software and services for Food & Beverage and Retail companies**

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