CASE STUDY

AGRIS Accelerates Growth with Cultura

Background

AGRIS Inc., established in 1978, is a leading software provider for the Grains, Oilseeds, and Agronomy markets. In 1999, AGRIS was purchased by John Deere Agri Services Incorporated. During the years under Deere ownership, AGRIS developed solid relationships with many US Grains and Agronomy companies but struggled to find the right strategic fit within a renowned manufacturing organization like Deere. New leadership at Deere came to realize that its core manufacturing business was too far removed from AGRIS’ vertical market software niche and as a result, began looking for opportunities to spin off the AGRIS business to a solid, long-term player in the Ag Software space. Key criteria for this new home for AGRIS included commitments to employee development, a passion for agricultural technology, customer centric thinking, and an organization on solid footing to make continued investments in the AGRIS business.

“We went from simply pushing software to becoming a truly mission-critical solutions provider for our customers.”
—Lyle Hartz, Director, Sales and Marketing, of AGRIS Inc.

“John Deere wanted to put us in the arms of somebody who would be able to give us the best opportunity for success”
—Lyle Hartz
Evaluating the Alternatives

The two strategic options to consider were the consolidation of AGRIS into one of the few remaining but smaller Ag Software players in the US, or finding a new owner willing to maintain the autonomy and grow the business. Given the key criteria set out by Deere for the divestiture, the latter of these two alternatives presented the most attractive way forward.

Cultura Technologies, a recognized specialist in operating Agri-food focused software businesses, had been in contact with managers at John Deere in the past and were looking to make further investments in the US Ag Software marketplace. Managers at Deere recognized that Cultura’s philosophy of acquiring good companies and helping them become great, through leveraged expertise and resources, was a perfect fit for AGRIS’ needs.

Moreover, the executives at Deere were impressed with Cultura’s track record of success, as well as its philosophy of buying companies for the long-term. As such, they were confident in Cultura’s ability to help take AGRIS to the next level, while providing a permanent home to their customers, products, and staff.

Growth, Growth, and More Growth

Since the carve-out, AGRIS has been able to achieve unprecedented levels of growth. In the four years since being acquired, revenues increased by 70% in a consistently upward trend. This has largely been a result of Cultura’s leadership team working with the managers of AGRIS to apply Cultura’s proprietary metrics, as well as putting the right methodologies and best practices in place to guarantee success.

“We probably would have been marginally successful without Cultura; but with Cultura, we are able to achieve much greater levels of success by leveraging their expertise and experience.”

—Lyle Hartz
The opportunities to network and learn from business leaders in similar industries has been crucial in driving ideas at AGRIS. Cultura has been able to help the organization position itself for future growth by introducing new opportunities and advising on how to take advantage of them. This has caused a greater emphasis on customer-driven innovation and created a better understanding of the international marketplace.

Moreover, since Cultura’s parent, Volaris Group, keeps its portfolio businesses decentralized and autonomous, employees at AGRIS have a renewed sense of empowerment to run the business.

In the end, John Deere made an excellent strategic decision for AGRIS and coming to that understanding was the best thing to happen to AGRIS, customers, and its staff. Since joining the Cultura family, AGRIS has been able to thrive and the future continues to look bright.

“I have no plans to retire because I’m having too much fun. Growth is always fun.”
—Lyle Hartz

“Cultura and Volaris Group were able to provide support and guidance, but ultimately left it up to us to make our own decisions.”
—Lyle Hartz
About Cultura Technologies

Cultura’s name has its roots in the words “agricultura,” which is Latin for agriculture, and “cultivate,” which is to foster growth or development. Our company culture is people-focused. We believe in strong customer relationships and that the strength of our people and their expertise can make the difference in delivering customer-centric solutions that enable Agri-Food businesses to efficiently produce, process, and deliver quality food and bio-products. Cultura is all about connecting people and processes across the broader Agri-Food supply chain, helping to nurture Agri-Food advancement through technology.

Learn more at www.culturatech.com/joincultura

About Volaris Group

Volaris Group acquires, strengthens and grows vertical market technology companies enabling them to be clear leaders within their focused industry. Volaris Group companies provide specialized, mission-critical solutions to vertical markets around the world including Agri-Food, Asset Management and Logistics, Justice, People Transportation, Marine and Rental Management. Volaris Group is an operating group of Constellation Software Inc.

Learn more at www.volarisgroup.com