



CASE STUDY

# Metal Exchange Corporation embraces sustainability, empowers employees and drives agility with new digital tools

Family-owned business pivots to support emerging markets while keeping customers at the center

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### Business situation

Metal Exchange Corporation (MEC) started in 1974 as a regional scrap trading company and has since grown to be a global leader in the trading and manufacturing of non-ferrous metals, including aluminum, copper and magnesium.

“Our growth has been driven by a variety of factors, but the motto of our founder, Morris Lefton, was ‘If you don’t go, you don’t know,’” said Tom Marklin, Vice President of Information Technology, Metal Exchange Corporation. “What he meant by that was that our customers had to be at the center of everything we do and if we wanted to be successful, we needed to visit the customer, see their operations and understand their needs.”

Like many industries over the past few years, the pace of change in manufacturing has been dramatic. One of the areas that MEC has focused on developing is its precision manufacturing capabilities, including the highly specialized production of precision parts for the automotive and aerospace industries. Additionally, the emergence of new customers in the electric vehicle (EV) market was a result of an increasing focus on sustainability and combating climate change.

To become a partner of choice in the EV market, MEC needed to drive agility and address the needs of new customers who are already 100% digital and in need of partners who can deliver high-quality parts at speed and scale.

### Did you know?

Aluminum is one of the lightest metals that exists, making it a natural choice for EV manufacturers looking to make vehicles that are efficient, aerodynamic and safe.

### Solution

Business applications are at the core of any manufacturing or business transformation, but it was critical for MEC to connect the dots across its people, processes, external suppliers and subcontractors to maintain its focus on operational excellence.

Working together with Avanade, MEC deployed **Microsoft Dynamics 365** to set up a greenfield manufacturing operation to handle and fulfill orders from its newest customers. MEC relied on Avanade’s agile methodology to drive the implementation, which enabled the company to adapt and deploy quickly.

### Results

With its modernized business applications platform, MEC has achieved business benefits, including:

- **Agility, speed and flexibility.** MEC chose Dynamics 365 because of its architecture and the opportunities created by the **Microsoft Power Platform** suite of tools. MEC’s own IT staff can extend and expand the capabilities of its new platform without costly or risky customizations to the Dynamics 365 base code, enabling it to spin up small extension solutions in a matter of days.
- **Focus on sustainability.** With its new Dynamics 365 platform, MEC can now accurately capture scrap throughout the manufacturing process. Recycling more aluminum saves more than 90% of the energy that would be needed to create a comparable amount of the metal from raw materials. This is a win for MEC customers who are being asked to account for the sustainability of their suppliers, and for MEC as it focuses on being both a responsible and profitable business.
- **Speed-to-market.** Using the Minimum Viable Product concept within an agile methodology, MEC was able to focus on limiting the scope to do what was absolutely necessary first, then build out capabilities based not only on its goals, but also on its observations and experience. This enabled MEC to get to market faster and resist the temptation to do everything at once.

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### About Metal Exchange Corporation

Metal Exchange Corporation is a private, family-owned company with global headquarters in St. Louis, Missouri. It is one of the most diverse providers of non-ferrous metals. Founded in 1974, Metal Exchange Corporation and its family of companies are industry leaders in non-ferrous metals, from purchasing to manufacturing and processing. With offices in Zurich, Shanghai and Singapore, Metal Exchange Corporation has the international presence needed to link suppliers and customers around the globe. Metal Exchange Corporation's other affiliated companies are Metal Exchange Trading, Pennex Aluminum Company, Continental Aluminum and Electro Cycle, Inc.

### About Avanade

Avanade is the leading provider of innovative digital, cloud and advisory services, industry solutions and design-led experiences across the Microsoft ecosystem. Every day, our 56,000 professionals in 26 countries make a genuine human impact for our clients, their employees and their customers. Avanade was founded in 2000 by Accenture LLP and Microsoft Corporation. Learn more at [www.avanade.com](http://www.avanade.com)

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