

Strategic acquisition and  
due diligence case study

# JBT builds value by strengthening its strategic acquisition capabilities

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## An ambitious strategic vision

John Bean Technologies Corporation (JBT) is a leading global technology provider to the food processing and air transportation industries. Shortly after forming a new senior executive team in 2014, the company began pursuing an ambitious growth strategy, including inorganic expansion. The goal was to expand JBT's product and service offerings through the targeted acquisition of leading providers of complementary technologies, particularly in its food processing technology segment.

Crowe has helped JBT pursue this ambitious strategy by providing buy-side due diligence services on a series of large acquisitions. In addition, JBT management turned to Crowe for help establishing and documenting a uniform and consistent acquisition methodology that would be repeatable and sustainable in the long term.

*"The M&A professionals at Crowe have been invaluable in helping us pursue our long-term strategic vision. In addition to providing us timely and high-quality due diligence services, they have helped us bolster our own internal acquisition processes and capabilities."*

– Brian Deck, Chief Financial Officer, JBT

## About John Bean Technologies Corporation

Formed in 2008 by a spinoff from FMC Technologies, JBT draws on a heritage of invention and industry firsts that dates to the founding of the Bean Spray Pump Company in 1884. Today JBT is an industry and market leader in two major industry sectors:

- JBT FoodTech develops and delivers innovative freezing, protein processing, in-container processing, and fruit and juice processing systems to multinational and regional food processors.
- JBT AeroTech is a major provider of ground support and gate equipment and services to commercial airlines, airports, air-freight carriers, ground handling, and military customers.

Together, JBT's two business segments generate more than \$1 billion in annual revenues, and the company has maintained consistently strong growth trends in both business lines.

## Due diligence on a global scale

One of the challenges JBT faced in executing its ambitious acquisition strategy was the need to manage multiple, large-scale transactions simultaneously. In addition, since the pursuit of global opportunities in new markets was essential to achieving JBT's long-term vision, management also recognized it needed supporting teams with extensive international expertise and strong global capabilities.

Crowe provided critical strengths in both areas, performing buy-side due diligence for a series of large-scale acquisitions, all of which were completed within the last few years. The acquired companies included:

- Stork Food & Dairy Systems – a Netherlands-based provider of integrated aseptic processing, sterilization, and filling systems to the beverage and food processing industries. This €47 million acquisition added complementary processing and filling technologies to JBT's liquid foods product portfolio.
- A&B Process Systems – a leading U.S. provider of processing systems for the food and beverage industries. This \$102 million acquisition further supported JBT's protein processing and liquid foods portfolio and added a large field-service operation that strengthened JBT's installation and aftermarket business.
- Cooling and Applied Technologies – a prominent manufacturer of chillers and injection, marinating, weighing, freezing, and refrigeration systems for the poultry industry. This \$90 million acquisition provided a highly complementary lineup that enhanced JBT's presence in primary and secondary protein processing.
- Aircraft Maintenance Support Services (AMSS) – a privately held manufacturer of military aviation equipment based in the United Kingdom. AMSS enhances JBT AeroTech's military offerings and expands its existing products' availability to foreign militaries.

- PLF International Ltd. – an England-based provider of powder filling systems for the global food and beverage markets. The £28 million acquisition adds PLF's expertise and complementary products to JBT's liquid foods business and provides an integrated solution to JBT's portfolio.
- LEKTRO Inc. – a manufacturer of electric aviation ground support equipment. LEKTRO provides JBT AeroTech with a more comprehensive and compelling offering of commercial aviation ground support equipment by expanding its range of products into electric towbarless aircraft pushback tractors for narrow-body and smaller aircraft.

Timely and high-quality due diligence services from Crowe enabled JBT to maintain momentum on all six of these critical transactions – and on its broader accelerated global growth strategy.

*"The deep expertise and extended capacity of the Crowe advisory services group, coupled with its global reach and international capabilities, have been essential contributors to our successful acquisitions."*

– Debarshi Sengupta, Executive Vice President, Corporate Development, JBT

## Building value – a repeatable, sustainable process

In addition to specific due diligence services, Crowe helped JBT enhance its corporate acquisition capabilities. After it was spun off from FMC Technologies in 2008, JBT had been pursuing acquisition opportunities on an ad hoc basis, relying on individual expertise and capabilities in the specific functional areas involved.

As it formed a dedicated corporate development function and elevated M&A oversight to the executive level, management recognized the importance of developing a systematic acquisition

methodology and a repeatable process that would document and build on this institutional knowledge, enabling new teams to build on the successful practices and procedures from earlier acquisitions.

To do that, Crowe advisory team specialists collaborated with the corporate development team to create an M&A Acquisition Phase Playbook. This comprehensive document provided JBT executives and project teams with a consistent approach and effective tools for conducting mergers and acquisitions.

The playbook's major components included:

- A process reference model that defined processes, relationships, process steps, and key controls
- Facilitation tools such as templates, checklists, meeting agendas, and presentation outlines for the various process steps
- Reference guides that provided more advanced presentations, examples, illustrations, and procedures
- Training materials that helped teams orient and execute their assigned tasks

Additionally, the playbook was augmented by a companion volume, the M&A Integration Phase Playbook. The M&A playbooks proved to be valuable resources in helping JBT successfully manage several subsequent acquisitions in both the FoodTech and AeroTech businesses.

*"The M&A playbooks that Crowe helped us develop have proven to be valuable resources that add significant value to our organization."*

– Debarshi Sengupta, Executive Vice President, Corporate Development, JBT

## Learn more

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