DesignPro Automation

Founded in 2004 in a spare room of a rented house in County Limerick, Ireland, DesignPro Automation is a leading provider of precision automation and machine build services to a variety of industries, including pharmaceuticals, medical device, aviation, automotive, cosmetics and renewable energy.

DesignPro's headquarters is one of the largest machine building facilities in all of Ireland.

One of DesignPro's assembly lines used to manufacture their industrial automation solutions.

A reliable partner to some of the world's largest multinationals, DesignPro provides turnkey solutions from problem analysis to design, prototyping, build, installation and maintenance to build specialized machines and superior automated robotic solutions.

As a young growing company, DesignPro followed a familiar path within the manufacturing industry – relying on separate software systems and manual processes to manage the business. As the business continued to grow amid the rapidly evolving manufacturing environment, the need for an integrated ERP system to simplify manufacturing processes became paramount. Madeleine Collins, Quality Manager for DesignPro, led the ERP research, selection and implementation team, which resulted in going live with Global Shop Solutions ERP software in October 2020.

"We needed to get more organized and efficient, which required automating our manual processes and making real-time data available throughout the business," says Collins. "We looked at ERP systems of various types and sizes, and Global Shop Solutions seemed like the best fit. It had the capabilities we needed, was easy to use, and provided the training necessary to quickly get employees up to speed on using the software."

Process Changes Yield Immediate Results

DesignPro's primary goal after going live with their new ERP system was to improve the speed and accuracy of data collection, starting with labor time. To ensure this outcome, Global Shop Solutions implementation consultants worked closely with Collins to accurately migrate data from the company's old systems and properly set up automated data collection processes in the new system. It didn't take long to begin seeing significant results.

Previously, employees manually filled out time sheets to track their time. Now, they digitally log into each job or job sequence using the Shop Floor Data Collection screens located on the shop floor. DesignPro also designed routers and work orders to match procedures so that all production steps and processes are reflected in the work orders, which are now created in the ERP system rather than by hand.

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"In the past, we didn't know how many hours we actually spent on a job, which prevented us from getting an accurate read on budget versus actual," says Collins. "Now that employees log their time directly into the system, processing labor hours takes a fraction of the time it used to. We can see the whole history of what people are doing at any given time. And, with the work orders and time clocks providing accurate live data, we have much better control over costing and pricing."

Upscaling Inventory and Purchasing
Purchasing and inventory processes have also made great strides in a very short time. The price of parts and materials DesignPro needs to build their products often fluctuate on purchase orders. Previously, design and purchasing personnel used data from a manual spreadsheet to get the best price. Now, purchasing data goes straight to the inventory module, so purchasers can see fluctuations in pricing and make purchasing decisions to get the lowest price.

Creating part numbers has improved inventory control as well.

"When we completed jobs in the past, any part overruns often got put into a box and stashed away in a corner where they were soon forgotten," says Collins. "Now we put them where Global Shop Solutions says that part number is supposed to go, and they remain available within inventory for the next job that needs them."

"We've also significantly reduced double purchasing by making the design department aware of parts already in inventory," she says. "When migrating data from our old systems into Global Shop Solutions, we carried over 100,000 Euros of inventory that had been sitting around for years. Now it's getting used because the system lists it as inventory in stock."

Color-Coded Screens and Robust Dashboards Tell the Story
Collins uses a variety of screens and Dashboards in Global Shop Solutions to get a quick overview on the current status of employees, processes, jobs in progress and more. Her first task of the day involves making sure shop floor personnel are logged in. As the day goes on, she refers to the Labor Performance Dashboard to check the labor balancing status.

Paul Collins, the founder of DesignPro.

"Our goal is to have every direct worker average at least 80% direct labor hours per week," says Collins. "The Dashboard reporting lets us know what employees are doing so we can accurately track direct versus indirect. Determining accurate labor costs has made our schedule more accurate."

Collins uses the color-coded Work Order Dashboard to check the status of work orders. Red alerts her to late work orders so she can notify supervisors to take appropriate action and complete the job on time. She also uses the Supply and Demand screen for issuing parts. DesignPro often buys the same part from different vendors, and Supply and Demand helps ensure the right part number goes on the purchase order before sending it to the vendor.

"I especially like the Work in Progress Dashboard because we can see actual project hours in real time," says Collins. "When those hours go red, it triggers us to run a report to start finding out why."

So far, Collins ranks the Auto Purchasing module as the biggest time saver due to its ability to book purchase orders according to the line items. Using the BOM Work Order feature, she can import line items directly into the project. Global Shop Solutions then checks inventory and identifies what needs to be purchased so she can easily create the purchase order.

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Superb Overseas Support

The combination of local support from Global Shop Solutions' U.K. office and company headquarters in the U.S. played a key role in DesignPro's purchasing decision. When technical issues arise, Collins can often resolve them by troubleshooting with the U.K. office. When a problem can't be resolved, she opens a ticket and works with the U.S. support team, receiving friendly, responsive service from far across the sea.

DesignPro employees gaining insights into their business while using their ERP software.

So it's no surprise that when Collins talks to people about Global Shop Solutions, she starts with the company before getting into details about the product.

"Global Shop Solutions offers a great software package, but what stands out for me is the people and the support," she says. "Everybody we've worked with in the U.K. and U.S. has been amazing. The support team is very knowledgeable about the software and sincerely interested in helping us solve the problem."

"Global Shop Solutions also offers strong online support," Collins concludes. "I can often figure things out by watching one of their online training videos. When I can't, I reach out for help, knowing I will get the answer in a timely manner. Being new to the software, we still have a lot to learn. I know we can count on getting the help we need, when we need it."

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