Gearench

Founded in 1927 in a small school building in Houston, Texas, Gearench manufactures and distributes high-quality tools for the oil industry, including wrenches, vises, tongs, flange tools, gears and pinions, pump shop equipment and more. Its first product consisted of a hand tool for use on small diameter pipes. Since then, the company has developed more than 40 product lines for use in various areas of the oil industry including exploration, drilling, production, refining and completion.

Gearrench plant in Clifton, Texas

TITAN Flange Aligning Tool

Gearench Keeps 'Em Drilling

Oil has always been a big part of the Texas landscape, and it's companies like Gearench that help to keep the industry and the equipment it uses thriving.

Not surprisingly, the company outgrew its small schoolhouse roots a long time ago. It has also gone global in a big way. Although its 60+ employees still operate out of a single location – a 87,000-square-foot facility located just outside of Clifton, in the heart of central Texas – the company now sells its products all over the world, in retail outlets and through distributors.

"If there's an oil well, gas well, or mining operation, whether it be gold, silver or zinc, we sell tools to that industry," says David Burden, General Manager. "We've also developed tooling for water well and trenchless technology drilling, power generation utilities, and general industrial markets. Our primary goal is to make products that help our customers improve their performance, capabilities and safety records."

To that end, Burden and his team pays close attention to product quality. Gearench has been certified under the ISO 9001 standard since 1995, and currently maintains a quality system compliant with the ISO 9001 2008 standard. In addition, the company has earned the American Petroleum Institute (API) quality certification on many of its oil industry products.

Better Reporting, Less Data Entry

A relatively new customer, Gearench went live with the ERP software in November 2010. Previously, they had been using a less robust ERP software that lacked Global Shop Solutions ERP software's industry-leading database capabilities. As a result, the old ERP system could not keep up with Gearench's ever-growing business.

"Reporting was a huge problem," recalls Burden. "Everything had to be custom written by programmers, which required additional time and expense. And we constantly had to go in and out of multiple screens and programs to find the information we needed. With Global Shop Solutions, we simply go into Supply & Demand and drill down to as much information as we want, all the way to down to who's running the job and how much time they've spent on it. Our previous system had no such capabilities."

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One of the first areas to benefit from the ERP software upgrade was sales. Gearench maintains a variety of pricing structures, broken down by customer, product lines, and other criteria. Prior to Global Shop Solutions ERP software, salespeople had to consult a printed price list and manually look up the correct price or discount. Now all pricing information is instantly available from one screen. Salespeople simply enter the customer or part number and the system automatically assigns the correct price to the sales order.

According to Burden, the quoting process has also gotten much faster and efficient.

"We often send the same quote to multiple distributors," he explains. "In the old system, we had to manually enter every piece of information for each quote. Now we just change the customer name and number and Global Shop Solutions automatically sends out the quotes. Whoever receives the order takes the quote and turns it straight into a sales order. This has been a big time-saver for us!"

Dashboard Management Simplified
As general manager, Burden has responsibility for overseeing every department in the company. To stay on top of so many different areas, he begins each day with a quick review of the Business Intelligence Dashboard.

"I start by looking at bookings and shipments, and then move to on-time delivery performance to make sure we don't have any slippage in that area," he says. "I track accounts receivable agings to see how we're doing with receivables. And I look at a lot of router histories and make adjustments so that we can estimate costs more accurately. With the Business Intelligence Dashboard, I get all the up-to-date information I need in a matter of minutes."

Down on the shop floor, production workers make extensive use of the Document Control™ feature, which imports a wide variety of external documents for easy viewing within the ERP system. Any document can be scanned and attached to a specific part number for instant access. Currently, shop floor personnel are using Document Control to look at drawings that contain specific parts information. In the near future, Burden also plans to link work instructions and other documents related to parts production.

As with most Global Shop Solutions applications, production workers are not the only ones simplifying their jobs through Document Control.

"Our sales department also uses it on a regular basis," notes Burden. "When customers have questions about the size or dimensions of a certain product, our sales reps can access the information without having to exit the system and go to a different viewer to read an AutoCAD drawing or some other external document. Everything is right there in Global Shop Solutions in an easy-to-read PDF format."

"Sales also uses the Customer Relationship Management application in a similar fashion," continues Burden. "They use it to give tracking numbers to customers who call in after an order is *Fully assembled Hydra-Tork Unit* shipped, or to clear up any questions a customer might have as to when or how it shipped. Because it's all there on one screen in one location, sales reps can give customers the information they need without having to say, 'I'll call you back later.'"

Tackling the Big Jobs With Ease
With more than 40 different product lines, Gearench jobs range from the relatively simple to the highly complex. According to Materials Manager Keith Hollingsworth, Global Shop Solutions ERP software handles the purchasing and production scheduling of all the different jobs with ease.

But it really comes in handy with products like Hydra-Tork, a large device used by oilfield service companies to make up or break out downhole pipe and tool joints. Gearench assembles the Hydra-Tork from the ground up, a complex process that requires 70 to 80 individual work orders to complete.

Why so many work orders?

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Gearench has to buy numerous couplings and fittings, which are used to make a subset of a big assembly. Once completed, the sub-assembly then goes into an even bigger assembly. Then there are the fabricated parts and tools that have to be made from scratch and added to the final assembly. The manufacturing process starts with machining a few parts and moves to fabricating a sub-assembly base. Then it joins that base with a hydraulic console, and adds the tools on top of it. Gearench builds each component up to and including the final assembly, with each part and each component requiring a separate work order.

What impresses Hollingsworth is the ease and efficiency with which Global Shop Solutions ERP software manages the workflow of this lengthy process.

"When someone gets a work order for a component, they just log into the system and complete that job," he says. "Then we pull the components for the next work order and complete that job. This continues, one work order at a time, until we build the Hydra-Tork all the way up. Global Shop Solutions tracks all our hours and materials costs and builds the job level by level. The best part is that all the work orders are tied to the initial sales order, so that at any time we can find out what we need to know simply by calling up the sales order and drilling down from that one screen."

"Before Global Shop Solutions, I had to do the entire planning and scheduling process manually," adds Hollingsworth. "I pulled up every item for each work order and write down on a tablet where we were short of parts or materials. Then I pulled up all the components I needed for that item and wrote those down as well. I broke down the entire assembly process from start to finish until I had everything written down that I needed to issue work orders and purchase orders. As the job unfolded, I checked off all the items on the tablet as they got released to work orders. What used to take me a full day, now takes about an hour with Global Shop Solutions."

PETOL Slim Grip Tongs

Global Shop Solutions ERP software even makes it easy to track labor costs on large, complex jobs with its Shop Floor Data Collection stations. Employees simply scan their badges and the work order, and the system tracks the exact time spent on a job or job sequence. At any point in time, management can quickly identify who's working on a job, how many hours they have in, and how close they are to completion.

Record Sales Is No Problem

Ask Burden to name the most important benefit of Global Shop Solutions ERP software and he doesn't hesitate: it's ability to facilitate a smooth flow of information throughout the company. But he also appreciates the system's intuitive screens and easy navigation.

In November 2010 (the month Gearench went live with Global Shop Solutions ERP software) the company enjoyed its largest sales month ever – without any of the operational problems that often accompany sudden spikes in sales. Burden gives Global Shop Solutions ERP software much of the credit for Gearench's ability to handle the sudden increase in business virtually problem-free.

"Global Shop Solutions just makes it so easy to find the information you need," says Burden. "If we get a big order and our materials manager wants to drill down to look at the components and history, everything is there at the push of a button. Before, we had so much trouble jumping from menu to menu and trying to look at historical data, including historical data that lived outside our system. Now we can look at everything inside Global Shop Solutions."

"The fact that we were able to get through the largest sales month we've ever had with a brand new software, says a lot about how easy Global Shop Solutions is to use," concludes Burden. "We're currently on pace to set a new annual bookings record, and Global Shop Solutions lets us handle it with ease. My materials manager constantly says he doesn't know what we do if we were still using the old system."

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