

## GLOBAL SHOP SOLUTIONS CASE STUDY

# MELTRIC Corporation

Working with power and electricity can put even the most experienced workers at risk. Fortunately, there are companies like the *MELTRIC Corporation* to make those jobs safer. Headquartered in Franklin, Wisconsin, MELTRIC is a leading producer of industrial duty plugs and receptacles – including UL and CSA switch rated plugs and receptacles.



One of the Industrial Plugs MELTRIC manufactures.



An assembler building the product & using the Shop Floor Data Collection station.

Designed for mining, manufacturing, oil and gas and other industries that require high-powered electrical equipment, MELTRIC's heavy-duty, electrical hazard protection products save time and money while protecting workers from on-the-job electrical risks.

MELTRIC products are available for both hazardous and non-hazardous locations and come in a variety of amp and voltage ratings to comply with North American and international standards. Product lines include standard duty, switch rated, multi-pin, high ampacity, and single-pole products, and are used by companies around the globe.

### **Making 24-Hour Delivery A Reality**

MELTRIC manufactures upwards of 14,000 different products, most of which are made to order. It also advertises 24-hour delivery times for most of those products. According to Manufacturing Manager Ken Keefer, following through on the company's ambitious delivery times requires moving every job through the shop floor as quickly and efficiently as possible. To accomplish this goal, MELTRIC uses Global Shop Solutions ERP software.

"If you advertise 24-hour delivery, you better be able to follow through," says Keefer. "Global Shop Solutions has many features that help us achieve fast turnaround times, including its superb customization capabilities. In fact, the ability to *customize the software* to meet our needs is the main reason we chose it for our ERP system."

How does Global Shop Solutions ERP software contribute to MELTRIC's 24-hour turnaround time?

For starters, the *Advanced Planning & Scheduling* (APS) module enables MELTRIC to efficiently manage shop floor capacity. At a glance, planners can identify machine, workcenter and labor capacity to determine accurate delivery times for each order. The software also speeds the processing of new orders by enabling MELTRIC to *build BOMs and routers* on the fly.

“Creating 14,000 individual BOMs would be impossible,” notes Keefer. “When an order comes in and we don’t have a BOM for it, we use Global Shop Solutions to copy a BOM from a similar order and then tweak it to the exact specifications of the new order. We do the same with routers, which saves time and gets the job into production much quicker.”

### **Fast, Efficient Production**

Once jobs are on the shop floor, the **Document Control** module saves time by electronically linking customer instructions and drawings to the router. Operators can view these documents using the **Shop Floor Data Collection** stations at each workcenter, eliminating the need to track down the information. They can also view inspection sheets and complete the documentation without leaving their stations.

In addition, the ability to issue inventory in real time allows customer service reps to know if incoming orders can be filled within the customer’s desired delivery time. Before committing to a delivery, reps can check the status of inventory (using the popular **Supply & Demand** module) to verify that MELTRIC can ship when they say they will.

“The visibility of data in Global Shop Solutions is one of the real strengths of the software,” says Keefer. “Everything we need to know about an order can be accessed from one screen. Operators can see what orders they need to do next, and can quickly process them on the Shop Floor Data Collection stations. Everyone knows when an order comes in and when it needs to go out, which gets us all working on the same page.”

### **Saving Time with Auto Purchasing**

On the purchasing side, what used to take four hours now requires about 15 minutes. Under MELTRIC’s old system, purchasing was largely a manual process. In contrast, the Auto Purchasing feature automatically creates a list of parts that need to be ordered.

“All I have to do is review the list and identify which parts to order, by when,” says Keefer. “Auto Purchasing then creates the purchase order so I don’t have to do it manually. It also combines all the parts from a particular vendor into one purchase order – even when those parts are for different jobs.”

### **Customizing with GAB**

Ask Keefer to identify Global Shop Solutions ERP software’s most useful feature and he doesn’t hesitate – the ease of customization through the **Global Application Builder** (GAB). This powerful feature enables users to modify screens and create custom programs without the time or expense of outside programmers.

Keefer has used GAB to make numerous improvements throughout the company. For example, MELTRIC pays split commissions when one sales rep makes a sale in another’s territory. Calculating the proper commission percentages used to be a complex and time-consuming process. MELTRIC wrote a custom GAB program that automatically determines the right commissions, saving time and keeping the reps happy.

Another GAB program has improved the traceability of orders by enabling MELTRIC to track everyone who touches an order.



*A material handler moves inventory to location. All buckets have inventory barcoded tags with inspection green tags.*

“We get about 100 orders a day, and each one is different,” explains Keefer. “With this program, everyone who touches an order scans their ID, which indicates they now ‘own’ the order. At any point in time, we know who has the order and what they’re doing with it. If a customer calls in, we can instantly see the status of their order based on who owns it at that time.”

A third GAB program speeds the process of forecasting parts purchasing. MELTRIC gets most of its parts from its parent company in France, which gets them from other French suppliers. To avoid running out of parts when those suppliers shut down for August, MELTRIC has to be able to accurately forecast their purchasing needs and order in advance.

“Based on past usage, the GAB program helps us calculate how many parts we’ll need and by when,” says Keefer. “That allows me to create the purchase orders and send them well in advance of the August cut-off date. Moreover, it has reduced the time it takes me to complete this process from two months to one week.”

### **The Flexibility to Compete**

Ultimately, Global Shop Solutions ERP software helps MELTRIC compete more effectively in a market where fast turnaround is of the essence.

From the superb traceability of each order – knowing where every part went and when – to the real-time inventory numbers, MELTRIC has instant access to the data it needs to determine if they can instantly ship to a customer. They can also determine when and why an order gets stuck at some point in the manufacturing process and take appropriate action.

Meanwhile, Global Shop Solutions ERP software’s robust reporting features enable management to make more informed decisions. For example, managers can run reports on the company’s network of 2,000 distributors to identify hot or cold spots and direct their attention and resources accordingly. And the seamless integration of data within the system makes it easy to track customer issues and quickly resolve them.

“In our old system, we had to back all the way out to the main menu to look up information on a part,” says Keefer. “With Global Shop Solutions, moving between screens is intuitive and easy. We simply click from one screen to the next to gather all the information we need to make timely decisions.”

“Bottom line is that Global Shop Solutions gives us the flexibility we need to handle what the customer wants,” concludes Keefer. “It’s a powerful business management tool, made even better by its remarkable customization features.”