Milcut Inc.

Headquartered just outside of Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin, Milcut Inc.'s sprawling 100,000-square-foot, modern plant is bustling with massive contour cutting machines, hydraulic presses, laminators, and water jets. A major fabricator of soft and semi-rigid materials, Milcut has been a significant business force and employer in the area for over four decades. With the increasing growth of their shop operations in the early 2000s, Milcut turned to Global Shop Solutions ERP software in 2004 to remedy their enterprise resource planning (ERP) efficiency needs.

Milcut's two-dimensional profile saw used to cut intricate profiles in flexible or rigid urethane foams and similar materials.

Precision-cutting machine Milcut uses to cut materials to exact order specifications.

ERP Software Fits Milcut's Many Fabrication Services

"The reason we came to Global Shop Solutions," states John Randall, Milcut's Manager of Quality and Information Systems, "was that we were running into problems with our UNIX-based software system. We simply couldn't apply some of the new technologies with that software -- at least not very easily or inexpensively. So we started looking around for an ERP solution that could replace our system. Our consultant told us about Global Shop Solutions and we asked them to come in to show us a demo."

What impressed Milcut in that first demo was the abundant versatility and functionality of Global Shop Solutions ERP software. To Milcut, where product conception, prototyping, and final production means various work order iterations, having the ability to introduce work orders into the schedule quickly translates into not only more efficient, accurate, and on-time product output, but better communication through real-time data.

"The one thing that really interested us most about Global Shop Solutions, and the thing that really separates them from the competition, is that you can print blueprints directly from work orders," says Randall. "The Document Control™ system was unlike anything we had ever seen."

As Milcut has grown into their ERP software, it continues to accommodate their emerging ERP needs. For example, the Global Application Builder (GAB) allows Milcut to "customize" the software to interface easily with the way they do business.

"With GAB, the people at Global Shop Solutions made the whole process a lot simpler for us," he says. "Global Shop Solutions wrote a script that corresponded to the way we do business. In our inventory, we number parts with the same number used in the blueprints. Matching the software in this way has saved us a tremendous amount of time."

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"For example, where I would've had to have linked, say 4,000 blueprints, with GAB I don't have to link them at all," observes Randall. "The GAB program is really nice for us simply in this respect, and I can see it is going to be a great tool for us in the coming years."

Listening to the Customer

Time and again, Global Shop Solutions not only provides a foundation upon which businesses can more efficiently integrate and analyze data from diverse operational areas, but it often inspires companies to rethink the way they've been doing business.

Many companies, entrenched in outmoded management/production methods and less willing to change, may find such thinking difficult. On the other hand, innovative operations such as Milcut see the obvious advantages that ERP software brings for continuous lean improvement in the age of globalization. This value-added interaction between Global Shop Solutions and its customers, where feedback results in a better product, is the driving force at the heart of Global Shop Solutions research and development.

Milcut President Carl Strohmaier observes that this is the type of service relationship with Global Shop Solutions that has made all the difference in their ERP implementation.

"You know, when we first got the Global Shop Solutions system, we found ourselves questioning why they did certain things certain ways, which we were not used to," he says. "But, over time the more we thought about the process, the more we discovered that there is a great deal of logic in the way they do things. Their process makes it very easy to get what you want in whatever module or program you're in. And, logically, the steps incorporated into their software system makes complete sense to a manufacturing business like ours. You can tell that Global Shop Solutions has built their system by listening to their customers and not to their competitors."

Milcut makes full use of the ERP system. From Automated Purchasing to Advanced Planning & Scheduling, to cost accounting, EDI, and labor measurement reporting, the ERP software has facilitated substantial and continuous savings to their bottom-line. This maximized return on investment is apparent in the front office, where overall administrative costs have gone down considerably.

One of the many Shop Floor Data Collection stations located at Milcut's facility.

"From my perspective, one of the biggest gains in using Global Shop Solutions is that we are starting to run out of 'activities' for the administrative staff to actually do in the office," says Strohmaier. "This is because there is much less paper moving through the office now than before Global Shop Solutions. For example, invoicing is a much simpler process, and it doesn't take our person nearly as much time as it used to, even though the actual number of invoices is up. Payables, check printing, all of that now takes much less time. Order entry is much more efficient than it was before. Piles of administrative work are no longer left over at the end of the day because the work is getting done right away in the course of the work day. This also means we have greater administrative and management visibility because things are getting onto the system much faster. This works its way through the entire plant with everyone getting to do their work quicker and with more economic efficiency."

Service Beyond the Norm

With the rising costs of petroleum-based raw materials such as polyester foam, vinyl, and mylar, it is vital that manufacturers who fabricate products from them find production savings for their customers in other ways. This means enhanced shop floor performance as realized through simplified business operations. A robust ERP software system that is in a constant state of improvement via research and development is the cornerstone of efficiency for modern manufacturing.

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Milcut credits Global Shop Solutions' innovation for its competitive advantages in a changing economy. For Milcut, it is their sense of allegiance to the customer's mission that is the difference between a successful ERP software acquisition, and one less so.

To Strohmaier, Global Shop Solutions rises above the ERP field when it comes to simplifying and quality customer service.

"I think Global Shop Solutions is doing a better job in programming when compared with the competition, and the service is better too," he says. "The people in Global Shop Solutions' research and development are just amazing and very talented in terms of what they're capable of doing. They can take an idea and develop it for you. This is what they did when they wrote the blueprinting script for us. The bottom-line is that there's so much the Global Shop Solutions system is capable of doing, and we've found it beneficial to take the time to learn the system so we can make the greatest use of it. This, in turn, translates into greater benefits for our company."

Randall agrees.

"Global Shop Solutions is updating their software constantly and they simply do a better job at it than their competitors," says Randall. "You have a situation where many companies update once a year, and they consider that as a lot. But with Global Shop Solutions, you're seeing major positive changes practically every quarter, which I think is great."

Because the world is a dynamic, fluid place where change is constant, Global Shop Solutions never rests when it comes to innovation in the manufacturing software industry. Milcut appreciates the creative effort that makes Global Shop Solutions the leader in ERP software solutions for small and medium-sized companies.

"Now, we see that we're having different sorts of needs emerging at Milcut, and it's very nice to know that Global Shop Solutions is already at work on meeting those future needs with the software," Randall states. "In other words, some of the things we are hoping for are things that you are actually already planning for future releases. This is what makes our relationship with Global Shop Solutions a particularly special one for us."

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