

## GLOBAL SHOP SOLUTIONS CASE STUDY

# Swissturn/USA

Founded in 1987, *Swissturn/USA* is a privately-owned Swiss screw machine job shop offering a variety of custom machined parts and flexible job shop services. Using automated, high-precision lathes, the company specializes in producing small metal and plastic components for medical and laboratory instruments, office machines, valves, munitions, gun parts, and a variety of consumer products.



*Swissturn headquarters in Oxford, MA.*



*The secondary/finishing department, where parts are washed, counted, deburred, and undergo secondary operations.*

Operating out of a new 25,000-square-foot facility in Oxford, MA, Swissturn produces a mix of standard and made-to-order plastic, aluminum, brass and stainless steel turned parts. The company's precision lathes all have secondary capabilities – such as slotting, cross-drilling, cross-tapping, and back drilling – that eliminate the need for further machining once parts come off the machines. In addition, automatic bar loader capabilities enable Swissturn to run their lathes unattended overnight to facilitate large-volume runs while keeping labor costs to a minimum. ISO 9001 certified since 1998, the company is currently registered to the latest ISO 9001:2008 standard.

In 2004, after using a DOS-based production management system for a decade, second-generation company owner Ken Mandile decided the time had come for a change. He began researching different ERP system vendors, and soon settled on Global Shop Solutions. Mandile liked the many different applications available in Global Shop Solutions ERP software, but one screen in particular sold him on the system: [Supply & Demand](#).

"We really liked the ability to find out everything you need to know about a job or a part from one screen," recalls Mandile. "The other systems we looked at didn't have anything as good as that screen, and Global Shop Solutions has continually improved it by adding more features. When a customer calls in to check on an order or an employee has a question about a part, we automatically go to Supply & Demand."

### **Accurate Inventory Traceability**

At any given time, Swissturn has about 80 to 100 active jobs on the shop floor – some of which can involve up to 100,000 parts in one run. Keeping each job moving through the shop floor on time and in sync with cost estimates presents perhaps the biggest challenge for Swissturn.

"We run two full shifts every day, and often run jobs unattended overnight," says Mandile, "so the ability to track the status of a job at any time is critical for us. Global Shop Solutions gives us instant access to everything we need to know about a job, from who's clocked in on a particular machine to when a job will be finished. You name it and we can quickly find it in Global Shop Solutions."

Making parts to order also presents inventory management challenges, especially with raw materials. Using Global Shop Solutions ERP software, Swissturn can ensure they have enough inventory to satisfy customer demand without overstocking and putting an unnecessary dent in cash flow.

Global Shop Solutions ERP software also provides easy traceability of raw materials and finished parts – an essential requirement for many of Swissturn’s medical device customers. When a customer has a question about a material or part, workers can quickly identify the lot number and email the certification without having to dig through paper files or hunt it down on the shop floor.

### **Kanban Inventory Management**

Swissturn also manages Kanban orders for many of its customers. In this inventory arrangement, customers place blanket orders for up to 18 months’ worth of parts, and Swissturn agrees to keep a certain amount of inventory on the shelf to meet demand. That way, customers can pull inventory when needed without having to stock it at their production plants. Global Shop Solutions ERP software facilitates this process by automatically notifying management when inventory falls below designated levels.

“One of our largest Kanban customers makes medical devices,” says Mandile. “When their inventory drops to a certain level, they email a Kanban card directly to our shipper, who pulls the inventory and ships the same or next day. Our agreement stipulates that we must ship within 48 hours of receiving a Kanban card, so we have to maintain a sufficient level of inventory. We know the rate at which they typically use the parts, so we enter the data in Global Shop Solutions and set a minimum level for the parts we need to have on hand. If our inventory drops below that level, Global Shop Solutions automatically tells us to issue a work order to make more parts.”

### **Managing Multiple Jobs Via Supply & Demand**

As a long-time Global Shop Solutions ERP software user, Mandile is a big fan of the software. However, it’s Valorie Ray – Swissturn’s Office Manager of 18 years who oversees many different areas of the business – who insists she couldn’t live without it.

“With our previous DOS-based system, we could only do things one screen at a time,” she says. “Everything had to be done manually, and trying to get reports or access data in a different part of the system was like pulling teeth! In Global Shop Solutions, everything is fully integrated, making it infinitely easier to access information about a job, part or customer.”

Ray is also a huge fan of the Supply & Demand screen, using it to drill down to manage a wide array of tasks ranging from inventory to order entry, sales, purchase orders, and invoicing. From this one simple screen she can check inventory codes or call up shipping information. She can quickly access purchasing data to check on the status of raw materials orders. She can even access quality information in the unlikely event that a customer needs to return a part.

“If a customer calls to ask about a part, I immediately go to Supply & Demand,” says Ray. “I can tell them when it was shipped, how many were shipped and when it should arrive. If it hasn’t shipped yet, I can tell them why and when they can expect shipment. And I can do it without having to leave my desk to track down the information from different people or departments. Customers love being able to get an answer while they’re on the phone.”

Ray also appreciates Global Shop Solutions ERP software’s robust reporting – both built-in and customizable. Each day she reviews the Open Order report to keep tabs on jobs in progress. She regularly checks inventory and purchasing reports to assist with the buying of raw materials. Global Shop Solutions ERP software even helps with Swissturn’s ISO registration by tracking much of the data needed for the documentation process.

“Global Shop Solutions provides a lot of standard reports that we use all the time,” says Ray. “But we also use a lot of Crystal reports because they give us more flexibility in how we format and manage the data.”



*The main shop floor, which contains 27 Star CNC Swiss screw machines.*

## Visibility of Data and Great Customer Service

According to Ray, real-time access to data – whether it’s related to inventory, purchasing, accounts receivable, or any other production or administrative activity – holds the key to a well-run shop floor.



*Setting up a 20-mm diameter capacity Star SR-20R-II, which is used for complex parts.*

“You can’t manage what you can’t see, and Global Shop Solutions makes it easier and faster to see what’s happening out on the shop floor,” she says. “The superb visibility of data saves time, lowers costs, and helps us all work more efficiently and effectively. And with Global Shop Solutions you know you can trust the data, which gives you more confidence when making decisions that affect the outcome of a job.”

“Another benefit is that even though the system has a wide array of sophisticated features and functions, it’s easy to learn and use,” she adds. “At Swissturn, just about everyone touches Global Shop Solutions one way or another, so it’s important that they know how to use the system as it relates to their specific jobs. Depending on the person and their job responsibilities, I can usually train them in a day or two.”

Mandile echoes the importance of having quick access to data you can trust.

“I don’t use Global Shop Solutions as much as Valorie, because she’s the one in charge of getting the work out the door on time,” he explains. “I mostly use it to keep tabs on inventory, sales order backlogs, and the financials. But there’s no question that it helps us compete more effectively in our markets.”

“These days, you have to do more than just make high-quality parts at a fair price,” he concludes. “You also need fast, efficient customer service in order to compete. Having all the data at our fingertips when we need it enables us to deliver better customer service. And that helps us build the long-term relationships we need to grow the business.”