

Ugitech Improves Enterprise Productivity

With companies spread across three countries in Europe, and between 30 and 40 machines manufacturing stainless steel wires at each site, Ugitech needed a way to simplify production and its supply chain processes. The ultimate goal was to increase productivity without impacting quality, to be accomplished by increasing visibility and standardizing operations across the organization. These objectives had to be accomplished while continuing its Lean program to reduce waste, while maintaining the highest levels of customer service.

Upgrading its information system was an obvious first step. Ugitech began by selecting SAP ERP at three of its wire-making sites in France, consolidating diverse, existing systems into one seamless solution. Project designers and facilities staff soon realized something was still missing – companion software to automate production, quality and supply chain processes. This was important, as work-in-progress was still being managed with paper trails. Every part running through the workshop from one machine to another was tracked manually with a paper document. With multiple orders fabricated on a single machine, or with a single order fabricated on several machines, traceability was cumbersome and time-consuming.

FlexNet Enhances SAP System

Apriso FlexNet was selected as a manufacturing operations management system to integrate seamlessly with SAP ERP, and has been operational at Ugitech's three sites since early 2007. The system complements ERP, by providing a real-time platform to manage operations, including resource and inventory management, follow-up tracking and notification, manufacturing process management, load balancing and enforcement, quality control and data collection. Apriso FlexNet now performs key performance metric and other related analysis.

Integrating ERP to the Shop Floor

ERP is working well as a corporate planning tool. Managing daily operations processes have been improved with Apriso FlexNet. As a machine is opened or closed for use, FlexNet makes a record and then tracks follow-up activities, such as an operator's attendance, materials used, or when business processes begin and end. The software manages inventory through production, noting when an operator removes material from stock. Bar codes and PLCs have minimized manual data collection. Most importantly, FlexNet controls and distributes assignments to avoid machine overloading, detailing each purchase order an operator must execute.

Quality control spans production and inventory processes. Data is collected across operations and throughout the supply chain. Supervisors view these activities through an actionable dashboard, enabling faster issue resolution, higher quality and improved productivity and performance.



Benefits Achieved

- On-time project implementation
- All fabrication processes at 3 sites modeled using just 8 operations standards
- Shared best practices among sites have simplified maintenance, improved quality and boosted productivity
- Reports provide easy, real-time visibility into production processes
- Homogenized systems can be quickly extended to more sites in future

Core Deployment Optimizes Global Operations

The FlexNet system processes 4,000 items of data daily, and over 400 manufacturing orders each week. It is used by 200 operators on 89 terminals across multiple locations – and is well accepted by workers and management team members alike.

Implementing and managing such a distributed IT system could have been a daunting challenge. Using FlexNet Process Builder and FlexNet Global Performance Manager, Ugitech condensed its fabrication processes into just eight operations standards, which became a 'Core' profile for deployment across multiple locations. This Core set of processes comprise operations best practices, while addressing compliance regulations. One example is standardizing various types of purchase orders so that individual machines no longer have their own protocol. Another is a universal packing statement for both shipping and distribution.

A major benefit of standardization is that Ugitech can now effectively deploy, manage and update best practices to other facilities. Business processes are easily configured to local parameters to accommodate machine differences. Standardization has helped Ugitech simplify maintenance processes. Based on the successes already achieved, plans are now underway for continued expansion of the FlexNet solution across the enterprise.

Better Quality and Delivery Cycles

"FlexNet allows us to effectively measure rate of return by grading each machine's contribution. It has greatly simplified the process of manufacturing orders, since supervisors and technicians no longer have to personally track each order. Operators like the new system because it's easy to use, reducing time spent on repetitive and administrative tasks. Supervisors like the system too, because they can spend their day managing the production process, rather than concentrating on completing paperwork," said Patrick Eygazier, Project Manager.

"Most importantly, customer service has benefited. Each operator sees production rules and product specifications on their screen, including details on packaging and shipping mode. This process improvement has enhanced accuracy, responsiveness and on-time deliveries – wonderful benefits to our customers."

About Apriso

Apriso Corporation is a software company dedicated to helping manufacturers achieve and sustain operational excellence. Apriso serves 180+ customers in 40+ countries across the Americas, Europe and Asia. Learn more at <http://www.apriso.com>.

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Patrick Eygazier
Project Manager,
Ugitech