

CASE STUDY

DRECO INCORPORATED

More Responsive Customer Service





CUSTOMER DETAILS

Manufactures injection molded plastic parts primarily for the vacuum cleaner industry

More than 800 hose end types and a full line of vacuum attachments

Family-owned company, currently run by the third generation

Also serves lawn and garden, health care, industrial cleaning, consumer products, and automotive customers

INDUSTRY

Plastics

APTEAN SOLUTION

DTR

CHALLENGES

- Existing ERP delivered a minimum of manufacturing functionality at the greatest possible expense.
- Needed an affordable, user-friendly software solution.
- Needed a solution specific to the plastics industry.

BENEFITS

- Faster time to market.
- Shortened production cycle times.
- Minimized waste.
- Elimination of repetitive calculations and paperwork.
- Reduced on-hand inventory and improved inventory management.
- Operational and sales force efficiencies.
- Improved customer service.
- Strengthened balance sheet.

KEEPING A PATCHWORK SYSTEM AFLOAT

Not long ago, executives at Dreco Incorporated found themselves burdened with general data tracking software that had outlived its usefulness. The original application the company purchased more than 10 years previously was not designed to properly account for sales orders in real time or effectively manage data on prospective sales. Moreover, it required so many updates over time that the company compared it to an inner-tube kept afloat with patches laid on top of patches. "To generate the different kinds of reports we wanted in the way we wanted them, the programmer would have to come out each time and enter a

new program into the system,” remembered Co-President Chris Draudt. “The application was choking itself, and we knew we had to dump it.”

Established in 1932, Dreco manufactures injection molded plastic parts primarily for the vacuum cleaner industry from its Cleveland, Ohio operations. The company offers a large product line with more than 800 hose end types and a full line of vacuum attachments. A family-owned company currently being run by the third generation, Dreco serves the needs of several industries, including lawn and garden, health care, industrial cleaning, consumer products, and automotive.

As a plastics molder, Dreco processes large amounts of material to produce small parts in varying shapes and sizes. The general enterprise resource planning (ERP) program that was in place delivered a minimum of manufacturing functionality at the greatest possible expense. Dreco required a software solution with multifaceted functionality that was affordable, user-friendly to personnel within sales, service, operations, and management functions, and could account for parts weighing as little as a few grams.

SELECTING A SYSTEM DESIGNED FOR THE NEEDS OF PLASTICS PROCESSORS

Dreco executives knew that general, off-the-shelf ERP software could neither account for variables that are unique to plastics processors nor seamlessly integrate all its business operations. After conducting thorough research on a variety of competitive industry products, the company selected DTR.

The product of more than 20 years of plastics-focused software development, DTR was designed to provide industry-specific manufacturing, distribution and financial management solutions that address the unique system requirements of plastics processors. “The software will do anything we want it to—bottom line,” said Draudt. “We know that if we put very good information into the system, it gives us valuable and accurate information that helps us get orders out the door.”

“With DTR and the way we manage it, when a customer calls and asks about the status of an order, we can tell them that status instantly on the phone within 10 seconds and feel 100 percent confident that it’s accurate information. In the past, we’d say, ‘Give me a half hour; I need to go to the warehouse and put my hands on the parts,’ before we could commit to saying something.”

Chris Draudt
Co-President,
Dreco Incorporated

IMMEDIATE IMPROVEMENTS AND OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCIES

Due to increasingly shortened lead times, injection molders like Dreco require a reliable system to easily and accurately determine required materials for production. DTR’s production scheduling functionality provides production management with valuable and detailed information for making strategic decisions about what to produce, when to produce it, and what resources to use. This information eliminates repetitive calculations and paperwork and is critical to shortening production cycle times, minimizing waste, and providing instant feedback in response to changing situations on the shop floor.

Once installed, DTR enabled Dreco’s management to predict required materials and subcomponents based on scheduled production, sales orders, and backorders. In the end, these efficiencies reduced the cost of on-hand inventory and now help Dreco to maintain work schedules. DTR also generates forward finite, queued, and just-in-time scheduling for all workstations and/or secondary operations. Users have the option of basing schedules on sales orders, forecasts, release orders, electronic data interchange (EDI), manual assignments, consolidations, and/or reorder points. Consequently, DTR’s plastics-specific functionality introduced an unprecedented level of accuracy for Dreco.

WHAT CUSTOMERS NOTICE

Before DTR, Dreco's sales force utilized different software systems from a smattering of developers, which hampered their ability to track the latest customer, prospect, and product data in real time. Likewise, customer service personnel were unable to track customer orders in a timely fashion. "When a customer used to call, we couldn't commit to them on the status of their order," Draudt said. "Today, the customer service functionality of DTR enables Dreco to track the status of an order instantly and with confidence in the accuracy of the information."

Utilizing DTR's real-time reporting function, Dreco can generate customized reports for its customers regarding shipping schedules, open orders, and other variables. This, in turn, enables customers to better track their orders through the system. "With DTR and the way we manage it, when a customer calls and asks about the status of an order, we can tell them that status instantly on the phone within 10 seconds and feel 100 percent confident that it's accurate information," said Draudt. "In the past, we'd say, 'Give me a half hour; I need to go to the warehouse and put my hands on the parts,' before we could commit to saying something."

DTR also enables Dreco to generate customized reports that track a customer's sales history. These reports help sales personnel anticipate what specific parts customers should be ordering based on what they have ordered in the past.

IMPROVED DATA VISIBILITY FOR BETTER DECISION MAKING

From a broader perspective, the data that DTR generates helps Dreco focus on what its actual overhead, labor, and material expenses are. This data visibility keeps current operations profitable and uncovers avenues for future growth and expansion. Dreco realizes that over time, DTR can easily accommodate increased capacity and a higher level of automation.

By converting to DTR, Dreco achieved a stronger balance sheet through improved inventory management and greater efficiency within its sales force. "There isn't anything that I've requested of DTR that it can't do—that's the one thing that really impresses me," Draudt said. "DTR can handle any information [and] any report because it has the capability built in and can accommodate you. Thanks to DTR, we now prepare weekly income statements, and I know each and every morning how much money we made during the previous 24 hours. It gets me information instantly."



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