



Epicor Success Story

Suncast Corporation

Epicor delivers unprecedented integration and production control for Suncast Corporation

Company Facts

- ▶ Location: Batavia, Illinois, United States
- ▶ Industry: Manufacturer and distributor of indoor/outdoor storage products, and lawn and garden products
- ▶ Web site: www.suncast.com

Success Highlights

Challenges

- ▶ Robust, comprehensive solution requiring minimal maintenance
- ▶ Enhanced, real-time production planning capabilities
- ▶ Tight integration between enterprise resource planning (ERP), shop floor monitoring, electronic data interchange (EDI), and forecasting functions

Solution

- ▶ Epicor® CMS, integrated enterprise business system for manufacturing and distribution
- ▶ Epicor Mattec MES, manufacturing execution, and real-time production monitoring system

Benefits

- ▶ Immediate resolution of over 500 outstanding enhancement issues
- ▶ 5 percent improvement in raw material, work in progress (WIP) and finished goods inventory accuracy
- ▶ 15 percent increase in on-time shipping performance
- ▶ Enhanced integration and visibility of production scheduling



Constant change relentlessly tests the short-term adaptability and long-term viability of an organization's enterprise software. All too often this change exposes the software's limitations and decision-makers are compelled to make a judgment call: To what degree are they willing and able to compromise their company's processes in order to work around those limitations?

Ed Booth, director of IT for Suncast Corporation, took a hard look at his company's 10 year-old, highly modified legacy ERP system, along with a list of over 500 additional system enhancement requests from his internal user community, and he decided the time had come for a new solution.

Epicor CMS enables integration from customer service to shop floor

"We could have either continued tackling those outstanding issues one-by-one, constantly enhancing the existing system, or we could identify a solution which inherently handled them," says Booth, who notes that many issues related to enhancing the integration, consolidation and visibility of production scheduling. "We'd reached a point where our system was very difficult to maintain and lacked essential functionality, so we determined it would be much more efficient to switch."



Suncast Corporation, a plastic injection molder serving big-box retailers with extremely tight shipping schedules and heavy EDI requirements, needed an ERP solution that not only boasted out-of-the-box and fully integrated functionality, but one enabling tight EDI integration and a solid interface with the company's existing third-party demand planning and forecasting solutions.

"When you have a three-day turnaround on orders, you better have a high finished goods inventory ready-to-ship, which is why we use specialized demand planning and forecasting applications," says Booth.

"But once we develop our inventory plan, our ERP application needs to handle the demand side—purchasing, processing orders and scheduling production, for example—dynamically and in real-time."

Equally important from Booth's perspective, given a manufacturing environment consisting of over 100 presses and the need to optimize those assets, was a robust shop floor monitoring system with tight integration between it and the ERP application.

Everything Under the Epicor Umbrella

He found everything he needed with Epicor. "We had two key systems, ERP and shop floor monitoring, that needed to be replaced, and we got it all—Epicor CMS and Epicor Mattec MES, plus robust EDI support—under one umbrella. Once we found out that Mattec was already integrated into CMS, the decision was pretty straightforward."

According to Booth, the depth of functionality CMS offered to an injection molder, as well as the technical integrity of the application's code and database also influenced Suncast Corporation's decision. He notes that with the implementation of the combined CMS/Mattec solution, his system enhancement to-do list immediately dropped from 500-plus to zero.

Among the areas most notably impacted by the CMS selection is production planning and scheduling. Throughout virtually every department, Suncast Corporation has replaced Microsoft® Excel® spreadsheets with CMS White-Board Scheduler, a graphical tool that enables managers to visually evaluate and adjust workload and resource allocation at each work station in order to most efficiently meet production and delivery goals.

"We used to have a lot of spreadsheets—customer service would use one set of data, purchasing another. Nobody was looking at one concise production plan," says Booth.

"And like most manufacturers our production plans might last a day before we have to modify it. CMS White-Board Scheduler integrates customer service and purchasing with production. So if an order comes in via EDI it interfaces directly with CMS, and if that order impacts the production schedule the change is communicated immediately to the shop floor. Purchasing also knows what they need to buy in order to fulfill a production plan. There are no gaps; we're not waiting for people to update a spreadsheet."

"With the click of a button, our planning and scheduling group can import the Mattec MES data into our ERP software that tells the salespeople exactly when their orders can be fulfilled."

Ed Booth, Director of IT



Total Macro and Micro-level Production Control

Suncast Corporation schedulers also exploit the integration between CMS and Mattec, with CMS managing and adjusting the manufacturing workload (work orders and scheduling of work orders) on a macro basis, based on the real-time shop-floor activity data provided by Mattec.

“The CMS White-Board shows how long a job is going to run based on a quantity and a standard cycle. Mattec records actual cycles at the machine-level, so if it’s slow or fast the MRP schedule is updated and everyone sees it,” says Booth, who points out that his schedulers work with two monitors, one displaying CMS and the other Mattec. “With our old system, there was a huge disconnect between the production monitoring system and our ERP once we sent the work order down to the shop floor.”

Booth characterizes Suncast Corporation’s deployment of CMS and Mattec as “jumping in with both feet.” “We feel like we’re pushing the limits of the software, and I don’t think we could have asked for anything better in terms of the solutions’ impact on our day-to-day operations, and in terms of Epicor as a partner and their willingness to make sure our needs are met. It’s an excellent functional and cultural fit.”

About Epicor

Epicor Software Corporation drives business growth. We provide flexible, industry-specific software that is designed around the needs of our manufacturing, distribution, retail, and service industry customers. More than 40 years of experience with our customers’ unique business processes and operational requirements is built into every solution—in the cloud, hosted, or on premises. With a deep understanding of your industry, Epicor solutions spur growth while managing complexity. The result is powerful solutions that free your resources so you can grow your business. For more information, [connect with Epicor](#) or visit www.epicor.com.



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