

HOW AFC MAKES PROGRESS



BREAKTHROUGH PERFORMANCE WITH ENCOMPIX AND PROGRESS

Automatic Feed Company, Inc. (AFC) is a \$40 million premier machine tool manufacturer based in Napoleon, Ohio, that serves the major U.S. and Japanese automakers. To achieve breakthrough performance, AFC identified ten key areas in which they needed to be better than any of their competitors. In just 12 months, Progress and Encompix Software delivered breakthrough results.

TOP TEN LIST IS A TALL ORDER FOR NEW ERP

With 150 employees in two facilities, AFC designs, engineers, and manufactures multi-million dollar complex machines that have as many as 15,000 parts. AFC has faced increasingly heated global competition.

Their existing manufacturing system lacked the advanced integration capabilities necessary for CAD, materials, job costing and quoting, quality, and



CHALLENGE

Better compete globally with breakthrough technology to dramatically reduce project completion times and costs

SOLUTION

Integrated the entire manufacturing process with ERP system developed by Progress Application Partner Encompix

BENEFIT

20% cost reduction, vastly improved information access, 30% improvement in project cycle time

vendor performance reporting systems and, as a result, the company faced poor efficiency levels and high associated costs.

Nathan Weaks, AFC's Treasurer, explained, "Our existing system was integrated for its time, but the systems of today go even further. We wanted to better integrate our CAD system with the bill of materials, improve integration between our sales quoting and our costing and supporting processes, and make information about the best manufacturing times that we've done on a job more accessible to the team member who is involved in making that equipment."

In addition, AFC needed more flexible text and remarks capabilities and wanted to integrate their QS9000 quality system with the manufacturing system. AFC also wanted to integrate project management and scheduling to enable tracking and reporting progress on each project. Lastly, the company sought to improve their human resources record keeping, and they wanted to accomplish all of this in six months.

"Those were the tangible things we were looking for in our new software," said Weaks. "When it came to the software finalists, the intangibles were important. Trust takes business a long way. We want as high a degree of confidence and trust as possible in any company we deal with. We felt we could put that trust in Encompix."

ENCOMPIX PROVIDES COMPREHENSIVE, FLEXIBLE SOLUTION

AFC put their trust in Progress Application Partner Encompix's solid domain expertise, low cost of ownership, and commitment to accommodating AFC's unique requirements. "Encompix is set up to handle most of the issues that machine tool companies face," said Weaks. "The Encompix project managers have worked with other machine tool companies, so they have a pretty good idea of the business process involved. But our company is different from other machine tool makers in that the size of the project we work with is considerably larger than average."

AFC's average project is in the \$3 to \$5 million range, with literally thousands of parts manufactured for any given machine. "The Encompix team



"This Progress system is like the Energizer Bunny; it just keeps going and going."

*Nathan Weaks
Treasurer*

quickly gained an understanding that we weren't typical, and they were able to accommodate our unique requirements," said Weaks.

The AFC implementation team involved representatives from accounting, costing, sales, MIS, scheduling, production, service, project management, human resources, and purchasing. The team worked in close collaboration with their Encompix project manager and had clearly defined tasks and deadlines.

"We came up with a solid model of how our jobs should flow," Weaks explained. "We tested our model on past data, ran simulations, and trained end users. One of the things that stood out about Encompix was the training. Compared to other systems, Encompix has given us better training and better project management." AFC and Encompix completed the system implementation on time and on budget.



WELL-PLACED TRUST DELIVERS RELIABILITY AND RESULTS

Based on the Progress® OpenEdge® integrated business application platform, Encompix has produced several competitive advantages for AFC. Most significantly, Encompix has produced a 20% cost reduction and a 30% project cycle time reduction. AFC needed to reduce costs to maintain their leadership position when the U.S. economy slowed down and global competition heated up. They recently completed a \$4 million project in just seven months, or 30% less time than average. Their international business has flourished, with projects in progress throughout Asia, South Africa, and Russia.

"One area in which we benefit is in conversion of materials," said Weaks. "We may buy steel by the pound, but issue it by the inch. With the Encompix system, we have to do very little conversion. We can, in effect, buy in the same quantity that we issue. That reduces the chance of calculation errors and makes everything run more smoothly."

AFC has leveraged the system's text and remarks capabilities and eliminated the manual logs that were kept on the shop floor. "Now we can use the remarks capabilities in the Encompix system to attach notes about difficulties and ideas to improve projects right where the engineer can access them easily and where they can do the most good," Weaks said.

Today AFC is running Encompix using the OpenEdge database with 35 concurrent users. Because the fully integrated ERP system requires minimal administration, AFC has no dedicated database administrator. Three employees in manufacturing, administration, and engineering manage any system needs in their areas, as well as their regular duties. “This Progress system is like the Energizer Bunny,” quipped Weaks. “It just keeps going and going.”

AFC maintains a tradition of customer focus—they have never lost a customer—and they intend to keep it that way. Weaks concluded, “With more and better information at our disposal, we can accomplish more, and we can be better and faster than our competition. Encompix has given us state-of-the-art efficiency and performance. Now we have an integrated system that helps us operate with less redundancy and reliance on stand-alone systems or spreadsheets.”

ENCOMPPIX

Encompix provides enterprise resource planning software and services designed specifically for the complex business environment of engineer-to-order and project-based manufacturers. Believing that “one size does not fit all,” they provide customers with a competitive advantage by improving bottom-line results. Inherent in Encompix’s vision is the nurturing of partnerships to develop applications that match customers’ specific business processes. Encompix builds business relationships based on integrity and value that will last a lifetime

PROGRESS SOFTWARE

Progress Software Corporation (NASDAQ: PRGS) is a global software company that enables enterprises to be operationally responsive to changing conditions and customer interactions as they occur. Our goal is to enable our customers to capitalize on new opportunities, drive greater efficiencies, and reduce risk. Progress offers a comprehensive portfolio of best-in-class infrastructure software spanning event-driven visibility and real-time response, open integration, data access and integration, and application development and management—all supporting on-premises and SaaS/cloud deployments. Progress maximizes the benefits of operational responsiveness while minimizing IT complexity and total cost of ownership.

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