



Allied Bakeries rises on basket of savings

When Allied Bakeries wanted to improve its manufacturing performance and customer service across its 13 bakeries it had first to tackle its lack of reliable performance measures in order to

identify real hotspots.

Some of its bakeries had implemented manual and PC-based systems but, according to group project manager Rod Whenray, reliability of the data they produced

was at best reasonable. "We had lots of anecdotal information and half-truths on plant performance but no real plant history or analysis," he says.

Allied contracted MVI Technology to implement its Mainsaver and Eventsengine software – designed to provide a visual record and analysis of what happens when breakdowns and stoppages occur, and thus to prioritise improvement projects.

Implementation at Allied's largest, West Bromwich, bakery began in January 2004, initially in stores and purchasing. Whenray

says that led to eliminating duplicate parts purchasing from different suppliers, which in turn drove down costs as well as enabling improvements in equipment reliability and planned maintenance.

"We reduced carriage costs at the West Bromwich site by 80% because we stopped having to call out taxis in the middle of the night," he says. "That alone saved us £14,000 a year. And we've saved another £22,000 because we're buying more effectively. We can make better price comparisons; we know what we've got in stock; we know what usage has been and we can go out for more competitive prices."

Savings at West Bromwich were the justification for system roll-out across the group. "The downtime data will give us better plant reliability and we'll be able to supply our customers better."

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Printer presses ahead on integrated ERP and CAD system

Flexographic printing presses manufacturer Edale, in Romsey, Hants, has gone live with a new Syspro ERP system from K3, including advanced planning and scheduling (APS) and e-business.

It says it chose APS to reduce subcontract work through more efficient in-house capacity planning. It's also installed touch screens on the shopfloor to provide real-time visibility of the factory and improve progress tracking.

Edale finance director Mike Rodgers says he expects WIP (work in progress) to fall by up to 20% while significant time is saved in data entry and report generation.

The implementation was driven by expansion in Edale's product range and export markets, resulting in significant growth: its old DOS-based systems couldn't keep up.

Says Rodgers: "Our month-end reports [were] taking a full day to produce and it could take up to



two days to generate a BoM from a sales order – a process that involved key personnel."

The new ERP system has been configured for very wide ranging to-stock and to-order machine production operations, and the company is now considering linking it with its Pro/Engineer and AutoCAD IT using Syspro e.Net.

Rodgers: "We now have a system that reflects the progressive nature of our organisation and which can keep pace with our growth and development. It allows us to remove the manual processes and release our engineers and IT people to focus on their core jobs."

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Scheduling software solves bottlenecks at machining shop

Accurate delivery forecasts and huge efficiency and utilisation improvements are being recorded at Czech subcontractor Frencken's site in Brno, thanks to planning and scheduling software linked to its machining centres.

Frencken provides precision machining, using 'done in one' processes and just-in-time supply to customers like Airbus Industries, Thales, EADS and Bosch.

It runs two Mazak Integrex multi-tasking turning centres, three machining centres, two Super QuickTurn CNC lathes and a Variaxis five-axis machining centre.

The machines are now managed under Mazak's Cyber Production Centre (CPC) production management system.

Frencken managing director Pavel Sobotka says that prior to CPC, the shop floor ran under MRP control – an unsatisfactory situation since it couldn't deliver

the information needed to manage changing manufacturing demand and shopfloor processes.

Once installed, CPC began identifying bottlenecks and prompting corrective action. Two people now co-ordinate the entire shopfloor, resolving problems in advance of metal cutting.

CPC Cyber Scheduler is based on Preactor's advanced planning and scheduling (APS) system and provides dynamic scheduling as well as master parts data management.

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